



YALE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Department of Psychiatry / Psychology Section

Doctoral Internship Policy & Procedures

Probation & Termination Policy

Revised 04-23-2020

The Yale Medical School and its educational programs have an obligation to protect clients, other students, and employees, as well as an obligation to protect its educational, clinical and research missions from harm caused by actions or conditions of a fellow. Thus, the Executive Training Committee, comprised of the Chief of the Psychology Section, the Chiefs of Psychology in the training facilities, the Program Director of Training, and faculty representatives, reserves the right to require at any time, either Probation or Termination of a fellow. When in the opinion of the Executive Training Committee, and as documented through evidence available for review, a fellow has demonstrated lack of competency attainment/competency deficits and/or engaged in behaviors that create potential for harm or cause harm to clients, staff or community members, they may be subject to Probation or Termination.

Program Definitions

- 1. Probation:** Probation within the Yale Doctoral Internship in Clinical and Community Psychology, is an intermediate action step, in which an individual is provided with a written Skill Development Plan (that is, a remediation plan) to address lack of competency attainment and/or to intervene or address potential harm to recipients of psychological services, staff or community members. While on probation any limitations placed on a fellow's professional activities are clearly specified and the actions necessary to end probation status and correct areas of concern are outlined in the Skill Development Plan and agreed upon. The Fellow's graduate program Director of Clinical Training (DCT) is also notified of Fellow difficulties and of the Skill Development Plan as outlined in the Graduate Program Communications Policy.
- 2. Termination:** Termination within the Yale Doctoral Internship in Clinical and Community Psychology, is a final action step, in which an individual is withdrawn from the internship program.

Judging Deficits in Competency and Potential Harm

- 1. Lack of Competency:** As documented in the Evaluation of Fellows Policy, Fellows are expected to achieve an intermediate level of competency across each of the nine profession-wide competencies. Fellows who are unable, per documentation, to achieve an intermediate level of competency across each of the categories are subject to a final determination at the end of the internship that they have failed to complete the program successfully. The Evaluation of Fellows Policy process allows for identification of competency attainment problems at three points of the internship year. When identified, fellows may be provided with a written Skill Development Plan. Though they may (and do frequently) co-occur, a Skill Development Plan does not require that a fellow be placed on probation. Thus, it is possible that a fellow can participate in the program for a full 12 months without being placed on probation and yet still fail to successfully complete the program. However, being placed on probation, **necessitates** a Skill Development Plan.
 - a. Problems with Professionalism:** Though considered under the scope of the profession-wide competencies, the internship program outlines special considerations regarding deficits in professionalism. The program takes seriously any unprofessional conduct of its fellows.

Professional values, attitudes and behaviors include, but are not limited to: adherence to the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>); adherence to applicable rules, policies, and requirements of the program, training facilities, and School of Medicine; and appropriate respect for colleagues, faculty, staff and peers.

- 2. Potential Harm:** Potential harm may be described as arising from: behavior regarded by faculty, clients or the public as alarming, threatening, bizarre, hostile, or otherwise inconsistent with the duties and responsibilities of a fellow; behavior that is disruptive for working groups, clinical management and treatment of clients or educational process; or the inability to function adequately in the role of a fellow due to illness while refusing the option of medical leave. Potential harm to other people that occurs in the context of a fellow's professional or training duties is a legitimate concern of the program because they may indicate the existence of a potential hazard if the person continues in their role as a fellow (e.g., conviction for a criminal offense).

Procedures for Probation and Termination

- 1. Notification:** Serious concerns or allegations about lack of/deficits in competence, professionalism, or potential or actual harm to clients, staff or members of the community will be reported by the Primary Advisor immediately to the Director of Training and the Chief of Psychology of the training facility and the Department Psychology Section Chief. They will investigate the concerns, meet with the fellow, and present a report of the findings and recommendations for review and decision (probation or termination) to the Executive Training Committee and necessarily, the Chief of Psychology for the Section.
- 2. Decisions of Probation or Termination:** Final decisions for probation or termination are only to be made following the necessary investigation of concerns and allegations within the Executive Committee. A written justification will accompany any decision for probation or termination. Termination without a period of probation, while possible, is rare.
- 3. Documentation and Communication:** If it is determined that the fellow should be placed on probation, the fellow will be provided with a written notice of the probationary status that explains the terms of probation. They will also receive a Skill Development Plan that outlines the actions required of the fellow and the process by which the fellow's progress in meeting those required actions will be assessed. If it is determined that a fellow should be terminated and withdrawn from the program, a written notice of this decision will be immediately provided to the fellow.
- 4. Graduate School Communication:** As per the internships Graduate Program Communication Policy, the fellow's graduate school DCT will be provided with a copy of a written notice for probation. If, during the course of investigation it becomes clear that termination is a possible outcome, the internship will advise the Graduate Program's Director of Clinical Training of the investigation underway and the range of outcomes. In either circumstance, the program will receive a written communication of the ultimate outcome.
- 5. Fellows on Leave:** Fellows may be placed on paid administrative leave for the duration of the investigation provided that reasonable efforts are made by the Director of Training, in concert with the members of the Executive Committee to conclude their review in a timely manner.

Grievance and Due Process

Throughout the process of investigation and decision on matters related to probation and termination, the fellow is afforded the rights and protections as outlined in the program's Grievance and Due Process Policy. The only modification is that appeals of decisions made by the Executive Committee are not heard by an ad hoc committee but go directly to the Deputy Dean for Education within the Yale School of Medicine.