



Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks Psychology Internship Program

Psychology Internship Program (MHC 116A)
c/o James M. Fuendeling, Ph.D., Training Director
Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks
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MATCH Number Program Code: 233711
Applications due by November 9, 2023



The Psychology Internship at Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks (VHSO) is an APPIC member, APA accredited, full time, one-year internship in health service psychology where we emphasize a flexible, individualized approach to training and enjoy a collegial environment. Our program offers generalist training while also offering the opportunity to emphasize PTSD treatment, Neuropsychology, or Primary Care-Mental Health Integration as your primary area of clinical training. We also offer the opportunity for substantial minor experiences in Home Based Primary Care and Substance Use Disorders. Services are provided using a combination of face to face appointments, telehealth, and residential treatment. We offer our interns experience with medical and psychiatric inpatients as well as opportunities for a range of other experiences within a comprehensive VA medical center. As has always been the case at VHSO, faculty and interns will collaborate in selecting minor rotations and other clinical experiences that best suit each intern's needs and desired outcomes for training.

Training in Psychology at VHSO

We believe internship should be a year of intensive clinical training and growth, preparing students for generalist practice or subsequent specialized training. Quality internship training is necessarily challenging but should not be overwhelming. The experience should be a developmental one, in which interns grow from students, equipped with academic knowledge and able to practice under supervision, into professionals who are able to apply their knowledge and skills with the faculty functioning in a more consultative role. Consistent with the graded model of training within each rotation, interns have the opportunity to shadow their supervisors, followed by joint work and monitoring with feedback, and then by increasing independence in supervised practice. We believe clinical training is at its best when it is a collaborative process that honors both the intern's clinical interests and faculty's understanding of the intern's training needs and growth areas.

Mentorship and role modelling are fundamental teaching tools in our training process, and we seek to perform our roles as training psychologists in a largely transparent way that helps interns to understand both our approach to training and the professional roles for which they are preparing. We believe these roles include several values that are so pervasive that they constitute part of the ground upon which professional practice rests. These values include ethical behavior; an understanding of professional psychology as both a human art and the extension of science into clinical practice; and the importance of maintaining our own personal balance and humanity while doing this challenging work. The clinical practice of psychology draws upon multiple ways of knowing, and we respect this diversity of knowledge bases but give pride of place to the results of empirical research. We respect the diverse experiences, identities, and cultural values of our patients and recognize that our clinical work with them must utilize their cultural identity if we are to be effective agents of healing. We value diversity of identity, opinion, and theoretical orientation within psychology as well, and seek to model

that as a strength that allows us to draw on multiple approaches in our work. In line with this, we hope to expose interns to different approaches to supervision and teaching and to encourage interns' development of flexible thinking in clinical problem solving and application of clinical technique. We also respect the knowledge base and fresh perspectives that our interns bring, and welcome interns to freely share their ideas, questions, and feedback.

Strong Training Emphasis	Moderate Training Emphasis	Not Offered
Veterans Individual Therapy Group Therapy Assessment Evidenced Based Treatments Trauma & PTSD Military Sexual Trauma Combat Trauma Outpatient Treatment Neuropsychology Addictions Treatment	Research Admin / Program Development Geropsychology Serious Mental Illness Homelessness Personality Disorders	Child/Adolescent Treatment Training inside a prison Eating Disorders treatment Active Duty Military

The major training activity at VHSO is experiential learning through the direct provision of health services. This includes experience on multiple rotations, allowing a diversity of training in psychology and in various interdisciplinary treatment teams. Students will also have structured didactic experiences delivered by supervisors and other professional staff as well as some outside presenters. These will include topics presented in a single session and some presented across several sessions or in a recurring seminar format. Interns will engage in research and scholarly inquiry as part of clinical rotations that emphasize evidence-based practices, through independent and guided consultation of the literature to inform clinical decisions, journal club, and as part of preparing their own presentations. Interns may also have opportunities to engage in scholarly and research projects with faculty as clinical load, dissertation progress, and availability of projects allow. We intend to encourage interns' development as consumers of clinical research and, for those interested, contributors to the growth of the field.

Training Aims & Competencies

In order to prepare interns for entry level employment in a VA or other settings or for advanced training through postdoctoral fellowships, the Psychology Internship at VHSO provides training and/or supervised experience in the several recognized professional competencies of health service psychologists. These competencies include:

- Assessment
- Intervention
- Consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills

- Research
- Ethical and legal standards
- Supervision
- Individual and cultural diversity
- Professional values, attitudes, and behaviors
- Communication and interpersonal skills

Many of these competencies are integral to clinical work, and will thus be areas of training that are included in all clinical rotations and experiences. Some, such as individual and cultural diversity and supervision, will receive additional attention through seminars. In line with our setting in a VA Medical Center, all of our interns will gain extensive experience working with veterans. We expect that all of our interns will demonstrate competence in use of empirically based psychotherapies with an adult population. We also work to ensure that all of our interns have meaningful clinical experiences in integrated psychological assessments, group therapy, and working in interprofessional treatment teams. Naturally, a higher level of competence is expected in each intern's area of clinical emphasis.

Minimum Requirements for Hours

Based on a one year, full time internship, we follow APPIC's guidelines on minimum requirements for successful completion of the internship.

- Complete at least 500 hours (25% of full time effort) of direct patient contact
- Complete at least 200 hours (10% of full time effort) of supervision
- Complete at least 100 hours (5% of full time effort) of didactic training experience

As of this writing in summer of 2023, we are still operating under flexibilities in definitions of "direct patient contact" that APPIC and APA allowed during the pandemic. APA is currently formulating revised standards recognizing changes in the field since the pandemic, but final versions of these have not yet been published. Similarly, VA is working on new guidelines for clinical supervision in training that will better recognize changes in the field since the beginning of the pandemic. We will, of course, comply with new guidance from APA and VA when it is finalized, and this may effect what activities and modalities of service can be counted in clinical hours during the 2024-2025 training year.

Evaluation

Interns receive continuous evaluation and feedback through individual supervision. The Training Committee also reviews each intern's progress in our regular meetings. These discussions focus on each intern's strengths, challenges, and development during training with the goal of helping interns grow into the best psychologists they are capable of being. We have found these regular, informal reviews to be a valuable way of identifying growth areas that can then be addressed in individual supervision and sometimes by tailoring future clinical

assignments to address specific training needs. These discussions also allow the entire Training Committee to contribute to shaping the training of each individual intern, regardless of who the primary supervisor is. Concerns that are raised during these discussions are also shared with the interns by individual supervisors or the Training Director. Interns receive formal, written evaluation of their performance at or about the end of each four-month trimester. To successfully complete the internship, interns must have average ratings of at least “intermediate to advanced” (4 on a 5 point scale) for each competency area on their end of year summative evaluation. Interns are encouraged to provide continuous informal feedback about their rotations and their supervision experiences. This can be provided directly to individual supervisors or to the Training Director, who is typically available at least several times a week for informal meetings or consultation. Interns are also invited to provide formal feedback regarding their rotations and supervisors at the end of each rotation, during participation in a training committee meeting once each trimester, and through an exit survey completed near the end of the internship. In case these evaluation and feedback methods prove inadequate, the VHSO Psychology Internship does have formal, written grievance and remediation policies. These are included in the Orientation and Policy Manual that is provided to all interns prior to beginning internship and is also available on the VHSO webpage or the VHSO Mental Health SharePoint. Please email the Training Director if you would like to have this information sent to you directly by email.

Program Structure

The Psychology Internship at VHSO is a full-time, one-year internship. Starting with the 2024-2025 training year, we will be starting our training year on the last Monday in July. For 2024, that will be July 29. Our training year is divided into three trimesters of four months each. We are offering 3 positions for the 2024-2025 training year with an anticipated stipend of \$33,469. Interns will complete approximately 2000 hours of internship training during a twelve-month calendar year. As federal employees, interns are eligible for health insurance (for self, spouse, and legal dependents) and life insurance. Interns receive the standard 11 federal holidays and approximately 104 hours of annual leave. Interns also accrue 4 hours of sick leave for each two-week pay period. We are generally able to allow administrative leave for some training related activities such as meeting with dissertation committees, dissertation defenses, and interviews for VA fellowships. We are often able to allow administrative leave for some other activities as well, but this has to be approved on an individual basis.

Areas of Clinical Training

While this is a generalist internship, each intern does have an area of emphasis that they will generally train in throughout the academic year. We aim to have one intern assigned to each primary area of emphasis, Primary Care-Mental Health Integration (PCMHI), Trauma Recovery Program (TRP), and Neuropsychology. Applicants should identify their chosen area of emphasis

in the cover letter included with their application, and we promise to honor that preference in assignment of rotations. Interns will have considerable flexibility in the other clinical training experiences (a.k.a. minor rotations) that they complete in addition to their area of emphasis. Interns will generally work and train in their primary area of emphasis throughout their training year, and certainly during two of the three trimesters. During most or all of the year, interns will also see patients and have training in an additional clinical area. For example, an intern with a primary emphasis in Primary Care-Mental Health Integration may split their clinical time between Primary Care-Mental Health Integration and Substance Use Disorders during the first trimester, then split their clinical time between Primary Care-Mental Health Integration and Home Based Primary Care in the second trimester, and split their time between Trauma Recovery Program and Neuropsychology in the third trimester. Another intern may do clinical work in Neuropsychology roughly half time for the entire training year, but also train in PCMHI during their first and second trimester and complete a rotation in Home Based Primary Care during the third trimester. During the pandemic, we shifted to offering many of our therapeutic services by telehealth. Now, in a largely post-pandemic environment, we continue to offer a considerable amount of our therapy services by telehealth, though some rotations like inpatient SUD, neuropsychology, and Home Based Primary Care provide the majority of their services face-to-face. Notably, as we prepare for recruiting season in summer of 2023, we are awaiting new regulations from VA and APA on use of telesupervision and on counting telehealth hours for trainees. When new regulations are published, they may affect the balance of modality of services. New regulations may also allow us to expand our rotation offerings in the near future.

Trauma Recovery Program (TRP): Services in the Trauma Recovery Program (TRP) are provided primarily for outpatient Veterans who have PTSD related to military experiences, including combat and/or military sexual trauma (MST), but Veterans who have experienced trauma outside of their military service also receive treatment. The TRP has worked closely with the VA National Center for PTSD since early 2020 to increase our ability to reach more Veterans who need PTSD treatment, and for multiple quarters in 2020-2021, had the highest EBP reach of any VA PTSD clinical team in the country. The TRP has continued to work with the National Center in 2021 to implement an Intensive Outpatient Program for PTSD treatment. Veterans treated in the TRP often have co-occurring diagnoses or symptoms including alcohol/substance use disorders, mood disorders, or psychotic features. Core experiences for intern training include participation in team meetings, integrative clinical assessment, differential diagnosis, treatment planning, individual psychotherapy, and group psychotherapy. A core component of this rotation is training in EBPs, as providers in this clinic primarily offer Prolonged Exposure, Cognitive Processing Therapy, Written Exposure Therapy, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia. Opportunities to learn Narrative Exposure Therapy and Skills Training in Affect and

Interpersonal Regulation are also available. In addition to an emphasis on diagnostic evaluation and individual therapy, options for facilitating or co-facilitating group psychotherapies are available. Interns also have the opportunity to conduct comprehensive psychological assessments with patients to help guide treatment decisions within the TRP. Finally, the TRP typically has one or two psychology graduate practicum trainees during the majority of the year, which allows opportunities to provide layered supervision. **Supervisors: Hilary Casner, PhD, and Melissa Gowen, PhD**

Neuropsychology: Neuropsychology is largely a diagnostic and consultative service serving Veterans with complex organic and psychiatric presentations. Most assessments are provided on an outpatient basis, with limited opportunities for inpatient assessment also available. Typical referral questions include assessment of traumatic brain injury, differential diagnosis of dementias, and assessing relative contributions of behavioral and organic etiologies in impaired patients. Neuropsychology also has an important role in the interdisciplinary Memory Disorders Clinic, which interns may participate in as part of the rotation. There may be opportunities to conduct presurgical evaluations with organ transplant, spinal cord stimulator placement, and bariatric surgery candidates as well. Working closely with the supervising neuropsychologists, interns will carry out neuropsychological assessments from start to finish. This begins with evaluating and refining referral questions from providers in Mental Health, Primary Care, Neurology, Speech and Language Pathology, and Inpatient Medicine, as well as programs such as the Caregiver Support Program. The assessment process continues with gathering and evaluating historical and diagnostic information from medical charts and interviews then tailoring test batteries to address the specific patient's level of functioning and relevant differential diagnoses. Interns will achieve mastery in administration and scoring of tests and also in interpretation of test data. Writing neuropsychological reports that are informative and useful to both referring providers and patients will be a major emphasis of training. Interns will also provide feedback to the patients they assess and often to their families, an important and clinically sensitive task that often determines the final utility of the neuropsychological assessment. **Supervisors: Sarah Downing, PsyD, and James Fuendeling, PhD**

Primary Care-Mental Health Integration This rotation is focused on providing a wide range of mental and behavioral health services to Veterans who are referred directly from their Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) or primary care teams. Interns will gain experience in triage, suicide risk assessment and safety planning, functional assessments, brief interventions, and consultation with primary care and PCMH staff. Patients are often referred to PCMH via warm hand-off during their annual or follow-up primary care appointments and patients are seen both in clinic and via telehealth modalities. Typical episodes of care in PCMH consist of 30 minute appointments for 1-6 sessions with flexibility based on patient presentation and needs. Interns will have the opportunity to learn and implement brief EBPs including Brief CBT-

Insomnia and Prolonged Exposure-Primary Care (PE-PC). There are also opportunities for interns to participate in quality improvement projects and initiate new group offerings with Veterans in PCMHI. PCMHI is available as either a focus/major rotation or as a minor rotation.

Supervisor: Rachel Jones, PhD

Home Based Primary Care: The Home Based Primary Care rotation provides the opportunity for the intern to gain experience as an integral part of an interdisciplinary primary care team. HBPC utilizes an interdisciplinary approach in the provision of services to homebound Veterans with chronic and disabling medical illnesses. The intern has the opportunity to work with various specialties including nursing, occupational therapy, social work, dietetics, and pharmacy. The average age of our Veteran population is approximately 80 years old, therefore the rotation provides expansive opportunities for those interested in working with older adults. The rotation also offers the unique experience of providing a wide range of mental health services to our patient group in their home environments or through telehealth modalities. Interns provide individual and family therapy for depression, anxiety, end-of-life issues, and other forms of emotional distress as well as behavioral interventions and environmental modifications focused on the management of psychological problems in patients with varying levels of cognitive impairment. Interns can also learn and implement basic behavioral medicine interventions (behavioral sleep management, pain management, and smoking cessation techniques) with a medically complex patient population. Interns will gain experience providing support to caregivers caring for patients diagnosed with dementia utilizing the REACH model (Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers Health). Formal certification in REACH, which is an empirically based treatment, is available for the intern if desired. Interns will perform neurocognitive screenings and behavioral health assessments to identify level of functioning, inform treatment planning, and facilitate patient care. Consultation with other program staff about the role of psychological issues in the day to day management of patient care is also part of the psychology intern's role. Additional opportunities for working with the Disruptive Behavior Committee, including formal risk assessments and treatment planning to manage disruptive behaviors, are also available. **Supervisor: James "Chip" Long, PhD, ABPP**

Substance Use Disorder Clinic: The Substance Use Disorder Clinic (SUDC) comprises two programs within the Leroy Pond domiciliary, a free-standing building a short walk from the Mental Health Building. The Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) provides treatment five days a week. Veterans participating in this program are usually housed at a VA contracted residential facility. The Substance Abuse Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (MHR RTP) is a 20-bed, rolling-admission residential program designed for individuals with moderate to severe substance use disorder diagnoses who typically present with co-morbid psychiatric disorders. Length of stay is individualized to Veteran needs but averages about three months. Programming is seven days a week with residents receiving approximately 40 hours of

group therapy per week in addition to individual psychotherapy and case management. Interns' training experiences on this rotation will primarily be in the RRTP and include comprehensive substance use and psychiatric diagnostic evaluations; individual psychotherapy with Veterans (including completing a comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment, generating a collaborative treatment plan, and forming a continuing care plan after discharge); case management; and group therapy. Group therapy opportunities may vary but typically include DBT, CBT-SUD, Motivational Interviewing and Motivational Enhancement Therapy, Anger Management, Relapse Prevention, Process Groups, Seeking Safety, and various other groups that teach recreation, whole health, coping skills, and relapse prevention skills. Interns also have the option to participate in consultation to inpatient medical wards and to participate as a treatment team member in interdisciplinary treatment team meetings. Opportunities to collaborate with clinicians in the IOP and to provide continued care to veterans following discharge from the RRTP may be available as well. Interns may also collaborate on program evaluation and accreditation readiness tasks. **Supervisor: Niki Knight, PhD**

Other Supervised Training Experiences: Any roles that are appropriate to psychologists in professional practice are appropriate training activities during the internship. Specifically, these include assessment, interviewing, psychotherapy, consultation, administration, research, program development, and training. While any one intern may not gain experience in all of these areas during the internship, most of these experiences will be included in your internship through rotation assignments, psychotherapy, and assessment casework. Depending on interns' interests, other training experiences may be arranged and added to interns' training plans in addition to their major training emphasis and minor clinical rotations. As the VHSO psychology staff expands, we also continue working to develop new formal training opportunities for our interns, including additional minor rotations.

Supervision

Supervision is provided both formally and informally during the internship year. Supervision is a key component in the intern's training experiences and is often the difference between merely doing clinical work versus learning and growing in one's professional role. The feedback, guidance, and sounding board provided by a good supervisor are among the most valuable resources a trainee can have in facilitating their development. The faculty at VHSO take supervision seriously. In keeping with APA and APPIC standards, a minimum of four hours of formal, face to face supervision is scheduled each week. Additional hours are frequently accumulated and logged through informal or extra scheduled time. Our interns routinely report on their exit surveys that they received considerably more supervision than their scheduled four hours per week and that the availability of their supervisors was a major strength of their internship year. We believe this reflects the value that we as a faculty place on teaching. Providing supervision is also a core professional skill that interns will need as they move

forward in their own careers. Thus, learning to provide supervision is also part of the internship experience.

Individual Supervision: Interns will have a minimum of one hour of individual supervision with a licensed psychologist scheduled each week for each rotation. Typically, this will be one hour in their area of emphasis (major rotation) and one hour for their minor rotation. Interns will receive two hours of supervision in their area of emphasis (major rotation) during any trimester in which that is their only rotation. If interns are completing an additional clinical experience outside of their regular rotations (e.g., an intern with rotations in PCMHI and SUDC may also do some psychological assessments for the General Mental Health Clinic), they will receive additional supervision for that experience.

Group Supervision: The interns will meet for two hours of group supervision every Thursday morning. This time may be used to discuss clinical issues of interest to all the interns, critical events that have occurred in one of the intern's rotations, or group discussion of a particular case. Group supervision will also provide training in how to present patients in brief to frame clinical consultation and discussion. Faculty supervisors will rotate roughly every trimester, allowing the interns to experience different styles of group supervision and exposing them to a variety of faculty in this setting.

Training in Supervision: Training in supervision is provided partly through a seminar series in supervision. This may include faculty presentations on major topics in supervision, readings, group discussion, practice or role playing, and peer supervision. Each intern will also join a VHSO psychologist in their role as outside consultant to the local Vet Center for one trimester. During that trimester, the intern and supervising psychologist will provide consultation to the mental health and readjustment counselors at the Fayetteville Vet Center in weekly meetings. In this role the intern will gain experience in tailoring advice and supervision to other mental health professionals based on particular cases and on the other professionals' competencies and needs. There may also be opportunities to supervise practicum students.

Didactics

Formal Didactic Sessions: Clinical education includes formal weekly didactic sessions. These sessions are scheduled for two hours every week with a formal presentation and discussion. Didactic topics will include various subjects in evidence based therapies, assessment, culture and diversity, and professional and medical issues. Presenters will include internship faculty, other medical center staff, and some outside presenters drawn from the University of Arkansas and the surrounding community. Other mental health staff are invited and encouraged to attend to promote a collegial and training oriented environment.

Special Seminars: Two particular topics, Cultural and Individual Diversity and Supervision, will be the subject of ongoing seminars. The exact format of these seminars varies some from year to year, but for the past four years we have combined with the internship program at University of Arkansas Counseling and Psychological Services for an excellent seminar on diversity that includes a larger and more diverse group by drawing from both programs. Supervision seminar is taught by Drs. Fuendeling and Casner at VHSO. For 2024-2025, Supervision will likely be presented as a recurring topic within the didactic series.

Journal Club: Interns will have a monthly journal club meeting in which an intern will present an article for discussion. They will also invite a faculty member to attend as a discussant. Mental health staff are also invited to attend and participate.

Intern Presentations: The training schedule includes slots for approximately a dozen presentations by interns. Each intern can expect to give three or four presentations. Topics will be a combination of clinical case presentations and research presentations. We expect that interns will present on their dissertation research, but other topics are possible as well. These presentations can provide a valuable opportunity to practice conference presentations or job talks as well as providing a platform for interns to explore other topics of particular interest to them.

Accreditation Status

The psychology internship at the Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks (VHSO) began training our first class of interns in the fall of 2015. In July of 2018, we were granted APA accreditation with our next site visit scheduled for 2028. We are also an APPIC member site.

It is our intention to operate a psychology internship that provides quality generalist training in health service psychology and prepares interns for postdoctoral fellowships or entry level positions throughout the field and especially in the VA. We are proud of our track record placing interns in fellowships and entry level positions within VA following internship. We have had interns match with VA fellowships from every class. In fact, eleven of twelve interns from our last four classes, 2019-2020, 2022-2023, all stayed in VA, four of them as staff psychologists and seven as fellows at accredited VA post docs.

Questions regarding the program's accreditation status should be directed to the APA Commission on Accreditation.

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation
American Psychological Association
750 1st Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 336-5979 / E-mail: apaaccred@apa.org

Web: www.apa.org/ed/accreditation

Application to VHSO Doctoral Psychology Internship

Procedures

The VHSO Psychology Internship participates in the APPIC Internship Matching Program (the Match) and complies with the policies and rules of the Match. Application to the VHSO Psychology Internship can only be made with the APPIC Application for Psychology Internship Online (AAPI Online). Please refer to the APPIC web site at www.appic.org for information on completing the AAPI Online and registering for the Match. This internship abides by the APPIC policy that no person at the training facility will solicit, accept, or use any ranking-related information from an intern applicant. Internship applicants must be enrolled in an eligible doctoral program that requires internship training and must expect to complete practicum experience by the start of internship. We invite applications from doctoral students in clinical psychology, counseling psychology, combined clinical/counseling psychology, psychological clinical science, and from students in accredited respecialization programs.

The VHSO is an equal opportunity training program, and we are constantly seeking to increase the diversity of our trainees and faculty. We believe that our field is best served when it draws on the richness of a wide range of cultures, subcultures, personal characteristics, and theoretical perspectives. Diversity is inherent in all aspects of human relations, and we are committed to the ideal that recognizing and respecting our diversity improves our ability to provide quality training and clinical services as well as facilitating personal and professional growth. Applicant screening and selection is merit based, with no preference based on age, sex, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual or gender orientation, political affiliation, or disability status. Individuals of diverse backgrounds are particularly encouraged to apply and share their perspectives with the patients and staff.

We will consider all applications for the 2024-2025 training year that are received by or on **November 9, 2023**. Applicants should identify in their application material the area of emphasis (PTSD, PCMH, or Neuropsychology) in which they are most interested. We aim to match with one applicant in each of these three areas of primary training emphasis. The preference indicated in your application is used to help us arrange interviews with the most appropriate internship faculty and should not be viewed as a solicitation of ranking information. All eligible applications will be reviewed by multiple members of the Internship Training Committee.

We expect to conduct all interviews virtually for the current recruiting cycle. We will most likely conduct interviews by video conference on two days, one in December and one in January, that will feature panel discussions of our rotations, opportunities to meet and talk with our current interns, and two or three individual interviews with faculty for each applicant. We will make

alternative arrangements for applicants who do not have access to compatible technology. We may also offer separate, individual interview dates for applicants who are not available on either of our interview days. For the most up to date information on our interviews, please refer to the APPIC Directory on Line or to Match News, or contact the Training Director.

In order to apply for the VHSO Psychology Internship, you should:

- Register for the APPIC Match through National Matching Services.
- Complete the AAPI Online, including a cover letter, three letters of recommendation, a curriculum vita, and graduate transcripts.
- Inclusion of a psychological evaluation report is strongly preferred, particularly for applicants interested in a primary emphasis in neuropsychology. All patient identifiers should be scrubbed from this report before submission.
- Include a description of your rotation preferences or interests and your interest in the Psychology Internship at VHSO in your cover letter to the Internship Training Director.
- Ensure that all application materials reach us by November 9, 2023.

For questions about the AAPI Online or APPIC Match, please contact APPIC directly at (202) 347-0022, or see their webpage at www.appic.org for more information.

Applicants and prospective applicants are also invited to contact our current interns to discuss their experiences and perspective on the internship. They can be reached via their office phones at (479) 443-4301 x63079 or (800) 691-8387, ext. 63079 for the neuropsychology intern; (479) 443-4301 x65432 or (800) 691-8387, ext. 65432 for the PCMH intern; or (479) 443-4301 x63137 or (800) 691-8387, ext. 63137 for the TRP intern

Requirements to Apply

There are a number of requirements that applicants must fulfill prior to beginning internship at a VA training program. The following list is intended as a guide and may not be exhaustive.

Applicants are encouraged to consult the source documents at this site:

<https://www.va.gov/oaa/hpt-eligibility.asp> if they have any questions or concerns about their eligibility and also to ensure that they are reviewing the most up to date version of VA requirements.

- Doctoral student in good standing at an American Psychological Association (APA) or Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) accredited graduate program in Clinical, Counseling, or Combined psychology or at a Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS) accredited program in Clinical Science. Persons with a doctorate in another area of psychology who meet the APA or CPA criteria for respecialization training in Clinical, Counseling, or Combined Psychology are also eligible.

- Approved for internship status by graduate program training director.
- U.S. citizenship. We are unable to consider applications from anyone who is not currently a U.S. citizen. Verification of citizenship is required following selection. All interns must complete a Certification of Citizenship in the United States prior to beginning VA training.

Requirements of Federal Employment

Following the Match, additional requirements apply to applicants who match with a VA site as conditions of entering federal employment. Even if you match with VHSO, if you do not or cannot meet these requirements, you may be unable to begin your internship with us.

- A male applicant born after 12/31/1959 must have registered for the draft by age 26 to be eligible for any US government employment, including selection as a paid VA trainee. For additional information about the Selective Service System, and to register or to check your registration status visit <https://www.sss.gov/>.
- Interns are subject to fingerprinting and background checks. Match result and selection decisions are contingent on passing these screens. Please find additional information about the required background checks at the following website: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/10450.html>
- To comply with federal and VA rules and provide interns with liability protection, a current and valid Academic Affiliation Agreement between VA and the sponsoring doctoral program must be on file before the intern can be appointed. Most APA-accredited doctoral programs already have an agreement on file. More information is available at <https://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/DBReports/AH/ahPsyAffiliationList1.aspx>.
- VA conducts drug screening exams on randomly selected personnel as well as new employees. Interns are not required to be tested prior to beginning work, but once on staff they are subject to random or indicated selection for testing on the same basis as other employees. You will be asked to sign a form acknowledging that you are aware of this practice. See the section on “additional on-boarding forms” below. A verified positive drug test or refusal to be tested may result in termination of a VA appointment. A positive drug test may also result in suspension of clinical activities that would make it difficult for an intern to complete the required duties and clinical hours necessary for successful completion of the internship. [Please note that VA Medical Centers are federal facilities, and VA policies regarding staff treat cannabis as an illegal, controlled substance regardless of state and local laws.]
- To streamline on-boarding of interns, the Office of Academic Affiliations requires completion of a Trainee Qualifications and Credentials Verification Letter (TQCVL). An Educational Official at your doctoral program must complete and sign this letter. Your

VA appointment cannot be finalized until the TQCVL is submitted by your doctoral program and signed by senior leadership at VHSO. For more information about this document, please visit:

<https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaoaamiu/SitePages/TQCVL-2023--Updated-List,-Template,-and-Guide.aspx>.

- Among other things, the TQCVL confirms that you, the trainee, are fit to perform the essential functions (physical and mental) of the training program and are immunized following current Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and VHA policy. Annual tuberculosis screening, Hepatitis B vaccine, and annual influenza vaccine are required.
- Primary source verification of all prior education and training is certified via the TQCVL.
- Current federal policy also requires that essentially all VA employees be vaccinated against COVID-19 within 75 days of entering VA employment. This vaccine is available to employees from VHSO.
- Additional on-boarding forms will be required prior to actually entering VA employment as an intern. These include the Application for Health Professions Trainees (VA 10-2850D) and the Declaration for Federal Employment (OF 306). The general federal versions of these documents and others are available online for review at <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/VHAOAA/public/SitePages/Staffing.aspx>. The versions used at VHSO may vary slightly from the general versions.
 - You must have a US social security number prior to beginning the VA pre-employment on-boarding process.
 - On-boarding requires two source identification documents (IDs) to prove identity.
 - You cannot work in a Federal healthcare program (including serving as an intern at a VA) if you are on the list of excluded individuals compiled by the Department of Health and Human Services. You can check here to make sure you are not on the list <https://exclusions.oig.hhs.gov/>.
- There are infrequent times when the laws, policies, and guidelines posted for VA staff members can change during a training year. If employment requirements change during the course of a training year, HPTs will be notified of the change and impact as soon as possible and provided with options. The Training Director will provide you with the information you need to understand the requirement and reasons for the requirement in timely manner.
- Falsifying any of these documents or information required for federal employment will be grounds for dismissal from the internship.

Please direct questions about the VHSO's internship or application process to:

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Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks

Established in 1932, VHSO is a comprehensive, acute care facility that includes a 73 bed hospital, primary care clinics, and diverse outpatient clinics including optometry, dentistry, audiology, speech pathology, and—of course—mental health. In 2013, we opened a new clinical addition that allows us to provide a full continuum of patient-centered care through our primary and specialty care clinics in one location. A new, state of the art inpatient mental health unit is currently under construction adjacent to the outpatient Mental Health building. VHSO also includes Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCS) in Fort Smith, AR; Harrison, AR; Ozark, AR; Branson, MO; Joplin, MO; Springfield, MO; and Jay, OK. We serve Veterans and their families throughout northwestern Arkansas, southwestern Missouri, and northeastern Oklahoma, many of whom live in rural settings. Diversity in our patient population is enhanced by a high local density of Fortune 500 companies, the University of Arkansas, and Northwest Arkansas' status as a top retirement location. All of these factors attract Veterans who are not originally from the area and enhance the cultural, ethnic, and educational diversity of our patient population. At VHSO, we are proud of our culture of excellence in care. The facility has recently won VA's Robert W. Carey Award for Excellence and the Arkansas Governor's Quality Award. The VHSO has also been recognized by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation as a leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality. Most recently, VHSO was awarded Planetree Certification for Excellence in Person-Centered Care and received a 5-star rating from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Our programs consistently maintain the highest levels of accreditation (including Joint Commission and CARF) and score in the top tier of all VA facilities for patient care metrics. We also have multiple academic affiliations and training programs, including residency programs operated jointly with University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Within mental health, we have social work and physician assistant interns, practicum students in clinical psychology, and psychiatry residents, as well as psychology interns.

Psychology Faculty

Jenny Bivona, PhD, Clinical Psychology, University of North Texas, 2008. Licensed in 2010. Dr. Bivona specializes in provision of several evidence-based therapies such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), particularly when provided in a group psychotherapy setting. She

is a VA Regional Trainer for Motivational Interviewing, both the Local and VISN Evidence Based Psychotherapy Coordinator, and Supervisory Psychologist for VHSO.

Tammy Brazeal, PhD, ABPP, Clinical Psychology, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1998.

Licensed in 1999. Dr. Brazeal works out of our Springfield, Missouri, Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), providing psychological services to disabled and homebound rural Veterans through the Home-Based Primary Care program. Dr. Brazeal specializes in Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy and has numerous areas of professional interest.

Hilary Casner, PhD, Clinical Psychology, University of Arkansas, 2013. Licensed in 2015. Dr. Casner is Assistant Training Director for the VHSO Psychology Internship and specializes in treatment for combat-related trauma, military sexual trauma, and substance use disorders. She serves as a member of VHSO's EEO Diversity Committee and the Internal Review Board for the Central Arkansas Veterans Health Care System, of which VHSO is a part.

Sarah Downing, PsyD, Clinical Psychology, Forest Institute of Professional Psychology, 2007.

Licensed in 2007. Dr. Downing completed her internship and two-year residency in Neuropsychology from Togus Veterans Administration in Maine. She is a neuropsychologist but also has experience in acute rehabilitation and conducts presurgical psychological evaluations for the VA. Dr. Downing enjoys working with the geriatric population and their families. She has served as adjunct faculty at Viterbo University and the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse. She is a member of the Caregiver Support Advisory Workgroup. She also spearheaded creation of our Memory Disorders Clinic and serves as its coordinator.

James Fuendeling, PhD, Clinical Psychology, Michigan State University, 1998. Licensed in 2001. Dr. Fuendeling completed his fellowship in neuropsychology at UC Davis/VA Northern California Healthcare System in 2000. He serves as both a neuropsychologist and Training Director for the Psychology Internship. He also has interests in personality and interpersonal relationships, particularly attachment theory. He has previously served as faculty at University of Arkansas, adjunct faculty at the Forest Institute of Professional Psychology, and served a five-year term as a member of the Arkansas Psychology Board.

Melissa Gowen, PhD, Clinical Psychology, Seattle Pacific University, 2019. Licensed in 2021.

Dr. Gowen completed her internship at the Montana VA Healthcare System (2019) and fellowship at the Tennessee Valley VA Healthcare System (2020). Dr. Gowen specializes in the treatment of combat-related trauma and military sexual trauma, and has a special interest in moral injury/guilt and rural mental healthcare. Her clinical duties take place in the Trauma Recovery Program.

Rachel Jones, PhD, Clinical Psychology, Washington State University, 2014. Licensed in 2017. Dr. Jones currently serves as a PCMHI psychologist and has particular interests in treating trauma symptoms/PTSD, insomnia, and problematic substance use using brief EBPs in an integrative setting. She serves as external consultant to the Fayetteville Vet Center and is a VA National CBT-SUD consultant.

Niki Knight, PhD, Counseling Psychology, University of Southern Mississippi, 2018. Licensed in 2019. Dr. Knight completed her internship at the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (2018) and fellowship at the Kansas City VA Medical Center (2019). Dr. Knight provides psychological services at the Substance Use Disorder Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (RRTP) at VHSO. Professional interests include: health disparities among those with severe mental illnesses, EBPs for severe mental illness, patient centered care, recovery model and recovery oriented services, provider burnout/compassion fatigue, and positive psychology. She has a strong foundation in CBT but uses an eclectic and person-centered approach to choose interventions and individualize treatment.

James “Chip” Long, PhD, ABPP, Counseling Psychology, Texas A & M University, 2004. Licensed in 2005. Dr. Long is board certified in Geropsychology and works as a licensed psychologist with the Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) program at VHSO. His clinical duties on HBPC include providing a range of mental health and supportive services to older adults and those who assist with their care needs. Dr. Long also serves as the chair of the Disruptive Behavior Committee (DBC) and the Employee Threat Assessment Team (ETAT).

Adjunct Faculty

Katherine Wetzel, MSW, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, 2006. Licensed Clinical Social Worker since 2008. Ms. Wetzel is a therapist on the TRP with interests in both group and individual EBPs for PTSD and related disorders. She is certified in EMDR.

Living in Northwest Arkansas

Fayetteville, Arkansas is a city of about 95,000 in the Boston Mountains region of the Ozarks. It is part of the Northwest Arkansas corridor, which has a population of about a half million. Fayetteville is consistently ranked as one of the best college towns in America and one of America’s best places to live. Fayetteville is also frequently featured in rankings of the least expensive places to live in America. We benefit from relatively low housing costs and overall cost of living while still enjoying educational and recreational opportunities well beyond expectations for a city of our size. There is a variety of reasonably priced rental housing near the medical center, meaning interns don’t have to spend much time commuting. Outside of work, we have an entertainment district that includes several small music venues in downtown

Fayetteville that attract numerous regional and national touring bands. The Walton Arts Center and nearby Arkansas Music Pavilion attract national touring acts, Broadway musicals, and national caliber jazz and classical music. Theater Squared in downtown Fayetteville is home to one of America's best regarded emerging theatre companies. We are also near the landmark Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the Amazeum hands-on discovery museum, and the Museum of Native American History. Fayetteville and Northwest Arkansas are also growing centers for local food and craft brewing movements, and our downtown Farmer's Market has been named one of the best in the country. Northwest Arkansas is rich in year round opportunities for outdoor recreation, too. A growing and well integrated regional trail system allows bicycling and walking on dedicated trails throughout the region. Numerous state parks and the Ozark Highland Trail system also offer extensive camping, hiking, and backpacking opportunities. Northwest Arkansas has also become an international center for mountain biking as well as road biking and recently for cyclocross. A variety of water sports are within easy reach, including white water rafting and kayaking on the Mulberry River and the Buffalo River (America's first National River), as well as world-class trout fishing in the tail waters of the Beaver Lake and Bull Shoals Lake dams or bass fishing in the reservoirs themselves. Beaver Lake, with over two hundred miles of shoreline and numerous state parks and boat ramps, can be reached in twenty minutes from the medical center. Climbing, either at local gyms or on our many limestone bluffs and canyon walls is also a major draw. Many of our staff have very active lives outside of work and will be happy to share their favorite recreational and scenic sites, restaurants, museums, and cultural events.

A Few Final Thoughts From Our Interns and Alumni

"This internship gave me every experience I could have hoped for in a capstone training year: unique and individualized clinical training, the ability to continue my line of research, and the opportunity to form new memories and connections that will last a lifetime."

"I have nothing but positive things to say about the mentoring – the supervisors go above and beyond. They challenge you appropriately and take a vested interest in your intellect. Wonderful mentoring with a great work-life balance."

"Thank you so much for this training year. I feel significantly more confident and competent in my work, while also still feeling like "myself." I feel that this training did well combining a respect for my personal "voice" as a therapist with structured training in EBPs. Everyone here treated me and my fellow interns with respect. I never felt talked down to or patronized."

"I felt the training committee really listened to my needs as a trainee to help develop a training year which would meet my needs. They also pushed me to try new experiences which were

outside my comfort zone to fully develop into a well-rounded entry level psychologist. I appreciated their willingness to adapt my training year to fit my needs as they changed throughout the year.”

“In my opinion, the internship’s biggest strength was balancing individualized and generalized training to develop well-rounded psychologists prepared for specialization. Faculty at VHSO went above and beyond what we expected from supervisors to foster growth in our individual strengths and weaknesses. Each rotation was tailored to our needs and interests. They also created additional opportunities for each of us to gain novel interdisciplinary experiences relevant to our career goals. Clinical training was supplemented with interesting and engaging didactics across a wide range of topics. Most importantly, I felt that my supervisors were personally and truly invested in my success.”

As a native New Yorker, I will admit I was nervous to make the move to Arkansas for internship. I was surprised to learn just how much a city like Fayetteville reminded me of the suburbs outside of NYC I grew up in, but a lot more spread out, significantly less traffic, and much more greenspace. I probably had the shortest commute to work I’ve ever had while in Fayetteville (about 45 minutes door-to-door using the local bus route, about 10 minutes by Uber). The Fayetteville public trail system – a network of inter-connected nature trails throughout the city – provides a significantly improved alternative way to get around compared to crossing busy city streets and doing your best to avoid the noise pollution from nearby traffic. Overall, I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of life Fayetteville, Arkansas had to offer, and it has certainly opened my eyes to other opportunities in my future.

“I think this internship did a great job of navigating the transition to telehealth. I did not feel like I was lost or unsure of how to do my job when it came to using telehealth. I appreciate that you quickly adapted neuropsychology to telehealth so that I could get the training I came for in a timely manner.”

A primary rotation in the VHSO’s Trauma Recovery Program was the highlight of my internship year. I not only got to participate in the VISN 16 Regional CPT Workshop and consultation program, but also got to provide care in the Accelerated PTSD Treatment (APT) program. No other clinical experience has revitalized me more than getting to speak at my own patient’s graduation from the APT as they conquered decades worth of trauma in just 4 weeks of intensive outpatient treatment.

“Everyone has so much personality as well. That really should be in your brochures. I found everyone here to be extremely generous in time and spirit. Thank you.”

Internship Admissions, Support, and Initial Placement Data

Date Program Tables are updated: August 5

Program Disclosures

As articulated in Standard I.B.2, programs may have “admission and employment policies that directly relate to affiliation or purpose” that may be faith-based or secular in nature. However, such policies and practices must be disclosed to the public. Therefore, programs are asked to respond to the following questions.

Does the program or institution require students, trainees, and/or staff (faculty) to comply with specific policies or practices related to the institution’s affiliation or purpose? Such policies or practices may include, but are not limited, admissions, hiring, retention policies, and or requirements for completion that express mission and values.	No
If yes, provide website link (or content from brochure) where this specific information is presented:	N/A

Internship Program Admissions

<p>Briefly describe in narrative form important information to assist potential applicants in assessing their likely fit with your program. This description must be consistent with the program’s policies on intern selection and practicum and academic preparation requirements:</p>
<p>The VHSO’s Psychology Internship offers a full time, one year internship. It is open to US citizens who are currently enrolled in accredited doctoral programs in clinical, counseling, combined clinical/counseling psychology, or in psychological clinical science. Our overarching aim is to prepare interns for entry level employment or further specialized training. We emphasize a generalist approach to training while also offering the opportunity to emphasize PTSD treatment, Primary Care—Mental Health Integration, or Neuropsychology through the intern’s choice of primary training emphasis. Obviously, we emphasize treatment of adults who are veterans of the US uniformed services. We enjoy a collegial atmosphere and emphasize a flexible, individualized approach to training. It is not unusual for interns to adjust their choices of minor rotations as the training year progresses, reflecting development in their interests and skills during the internship year.</p>
<p>Does the program require that applicants have received a minimum number of hours of the following at time of application? If Yes, indicate how many:</p>
<p>Total Direct Contact Intervention Hours: No, Amount N/A</p>
<p>Total Direct Contact Assessment Hours: No, Amount N/A</p>
<p>Describe any other required minimum criteria used to screen applicants:</p>
<p>We do not use minimum criteria for number of hours or cases. We do prefer more supervised clinical experience, rather than less, but we are aware that there are local and individual differences in how hours are counted that can affect totals. We also recognize that there can be value in experiences (e.g., work experience or experience at the master’s level) that may not be counted under practicum hours on the AAPI. Therefore, we prefer to be flexible about applicants’ total hours.</p>

Financial and Other Benefit Support for Upcoming Training Year

Annual Stipend/Salary for Full-time Interns:	\$33,469
Annual Stipend/Salary for Half-time Interns:	N/A We do not have half time internship positions.
Program provides access to medical insurance for intern?	Yes
If access to medical insurance is provided	
Trainee contribution to cost required?	Yes
Coverage of family member(s) available?	Yes
Coverage of legally married partner available?	Yes
Coverage of domestic partner available?	No
Hours of Annual Paid Personal Time off (PTO and/or Vacation):	approximately 104 hours—4 hours per 2 week pay period
Hours of Annual Paid Sick Leave:	approximately 104 hours—4 hours per 2 week pay period
In the event of medical conditions and/or family needs that require extended leave, does the program allow reasonable unpaid leave to interns/residents in excess of personal time off and sick leave?	Yes

Other Benefits (please describe):
We allow administrative leave for interns to participate in professionally relevant activities, such as presenting at conferences, defending their dissertation, and interviewing for postdoctoral fellowships, without using their Annual Leave. Term life insurance is also available.

Initial Post-Internship Positions
(Aggregated Tally for Preceding 3 cohorts)

	2019-2022
Total # of interns who were in the 3 cohorts:	9
Total # of interns who remain in training in the internship program	0
Academic teaching	0
Community mental health center	0
Consortium	0
University counseling center	0
Hospital/Medical Center	0
Veterans Affairs Health Care System	6 post doctoral residency, 2 employed position
Psychiatric facility	0
Correctional Facility	0
Health maintenance organization	0
School district/system	0
Independent practice setting	0
Other	1 employed position