



Policy for Professional Conduct (Psy.D. Program)

1.00 General

The Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) program trains doctoral-level clinical psychologists to practice in a wide range of settings through intensive course work and supervised experience with the goal of achieving professional competence and professional registration as a clinical psychologist. We have been accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association since 2017. Because of this, both students' academic performance and professional suitability to undertake and complete clinical training will be monitored and assessed.

In light of the above, the Department of Psychology needs to be satisfied that students in the program maintain both good academic standing as well as appropriate professional standards throughout their enrollment in the program. When concerns related to academic performance and/or professional suitability are raised, the following termination and appeals process will be followed.

Students undertaking this program will be required at all times to:

- Complete all necessary coursework and practica successfully,
- Complete their Psy.D. dissertation within an acceptable timeframe,
- Demonstrate relevant values and attitudes, and acceptable standards of conduct consistent with the Canadian Psychological Association Professional Code of Ethics, and
- Satisfy relevant health requirements set out by the Psy.D. Administration Committee.

These professional expectations apply to students throughout their period of registration in the program, both on and off campus, and at all times, including their clinical internship.

Please refer to the Office of the Registrar School of Graduate Studies Termination of a Graduate Program Policy (4.13) for grounds for termination of a graduate program (<http://www.mun.ca/regoff/calendar/sectionNo=GRAD-0031>).

In accordance with SGS regulations and the Psy.D. program's expectations, students are expected to successfully complete all program requirements within an acceptable timeframe (i.e., normally 4 years).

If a student is unable to meet the requirements within any of these professional and academic training activities, the Director of Clinical Training (if it is coursework or dissertation related) and/or the Practicum Coordinator (if it is practicum or internship related) should be made aware of the situation so that a remediation plan can be developed and implemented as soon as reasonably possible. The remediation plan should include: 1) the

area(s) of concern, 2) what performance requirement is necessary to successfully complete the training activity, 3) what learning activities will be used to improve the student's performance, and 4) timeline for the remediation plan including a deadline by which progress will be assessed.

If the remediation plan fails to result in satisfactory improvement, the case will be referred to the Psy.D. administration committee:

- If a remediation plan fails in the context of a course or practicum, the student shall be given a FAIL grade, which will trigger termination from the Psy.D. program.
- If a remediation plan fails in the context of the pre-doctoral internship, the student shall be given a FAIL grade at the internship site, which will trigger termination from the Psy.D. program.
- If a remediation plan fails in the context of failing to make acceptable progress in the dissertation, the student shall be given an unsatisfactory grade in their yearly review. This will trigger termination from the Psy.D. program.
- If a remediation plan fails in the context of lack of professional conduct or suitability, the student will be terminated from the Psy.D. program.

If a student wishes to appeal the Psy.D. Administration Committee's decision, the student can appeal the decision to the Termination and Appeal Committee (TAC).

1.1 Examples where professional conduct or suitability concerns may arise include but are not limited to:

- Evidence of a violation of the Canadian Psychological Association Professional Code of Ethics;
- Evidence of such conduct which, if participated in by a practicing professional would result in suspension or expulsion from the practice of the profession or other such disciplinary actions available to the governing body of the profession;
- Breach of confidentiality;
- Practicing incompetently in any clinical setting(s);
- Jeopardizing professional judgment through a conflict of interest;
- Attempting to gain advantage or deceive through falsification, forgery, fraud or misuse of any record or document, or through false statements or representations;
- Dishonesty or untrustworthiness;
- Harassment, or any threat, intimidation, or attempt to harm another person;
- Failure to treat others with dignity or respect, or to practice in a non-discriminatory way;
- Behavior which adversely affects the proper operation of placement/work-based settings;
- Behavior that poses a risk to the student's own health, safety or well-being and/or that of others;
- Persistent substance use that interferes with the student's ability to function within a professional context;
- A physical or mental condition which prevents essential skills and abilities required, recognizing that reasonable accommodation for the special

needs of individuals is required by the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Act (2010);

- Inconsistent, unreliable or inappropriate behavior that negatively impacts others in a learning or study environment;
- Other behaviours or inabilities which indicate unsuitability for the profession.

2.00 Termination and Appeal Committee (TAC) and Panel

- 2.1 There shall be established within the Department of Psychology a standing committee known as the Termination and Appeal Committee (TAC) to hear appeals from students.

Membership in the TAC shall be as follows:

Committee Members:

- At least five members chosen from tenured/tenure-track academic staff and from registered members of the profession, appointed by the Department Head on the recommendation of the Psy.D. administration committee, for a three (3) year term, which may be renewable;
- One or more Psy.D. student(s) currently registered in the programme;
- Dean of Science representative.

The TAC shall elect its own chair from amongst the tenured/tenure-track academic staff members.

- 2.2 Hearings shall be undertaken by a Panel of the TAC that shall consist of five members, including the Chair of the TAC, a student member, the Dean of Science representative, and two additional Committee members, at least one of whom is a tenured/tenure-track faculty member.

The Chair, in consultation with the Dean of Science representative, shall assemble TAC Panels to address termination appeals. Individuals whose presence may create bias or reasonable apprehension of bias, or whose other commitments would not permit a timely scheduling of the hearing will not be chosen to sit on the Panel. All panel members will be asked to report any conflict of interest -- real, perceived, or potential -- as defined in the University's Conflict of Interest Policy.

3.00 Procedure

The Department of Psychology recognizes that concerns regarding students' academic performance and professional conduct and suitability may arise in a variety of ways. The Psy.D. administration committee may consider and address concerns howsoever they arise and will endeavor to take action to deal with concerns promptly and fairly. The Department of Psychology recognizes that dealing with matters in this way is critical not only to ensuring consistency and that relevant professional standards are attained and maintained, but also to support student learning and academic achievement and to further a positive student experience.

While the Department of Psychology anticipates that most matters involving academic performance and professional suitability concerns will be dealt with under this **Process**, matters may arise where it is appropriate for the Department of Psychology to implement other University processes as an alternative to this **Process**.

The Department of Psychology may at its discretion suspend or delay taking action under this **Process** pending the outcome of any inquiry by legal authorities and/or criminal investigation/prosecution.

The Department of Psychology may take action in respect of a student under this **Process** notwithstanding their conviction or acquittal in legal proceedings. The Department of Psychology is not bound by the outcome of any investigation or prosecution although the Department of Psychology may at its discretion take any penalty imposed by a court or tribunal into consideration in determining any outcome to be imposed under this **Process**.

3.1 The Head of Psychology or delegate shall:

- i. review matters concerning termination from the Psy.D. program brought to their attention, and refer matters, which in their determination, involve conduct or circumstances described in 1.1 above, to the TAC Chair in a written report, setting out the name of the student involved, the alleged facts and the alleged ground(s) warranting a hearing;
- ii. notify the student that the matter has been referred to the TAC;
- iii. where a matter is referred to the TAC Chair, decide whether the alleged facts warrant a temporary suspension of the student's participation in the programme or limited participation in all or part of the programme, pending the disposition of the matter by the TAC Panel. Interim suspension or limited participation normally will be invoked only to:
 - a) prevent risk to the physical or emotional safety and well-being of patients/clients with whom the student has had or may have contact;
 - b) prevent risk to the physical or emotional safety and well-being of members of the University community;
 - c) prevent risk to the student's own physical or emotional safety and well-being;
 - d) prevent a real threat of disruption or of interference with the operations of the Department of Psychology and/or its programmes; or
 - e) prevent disrepute being brought to the University, the faculty/school or the profession.

3.2 The TAC Panel shall:

- i. hear the case and provide decisions, together with reasons for the decision, as soon as is reasonably possible;
- ii. send a Notice of Hearing to the student by registered mail to the last known mailing address of the student as noted on the files at the Department of Psychology, and to the official University email address of the student; determine whether any grounds requiring further action exist;
- iii. make a decision in accordance with 6.00.

3.3 Once a referral has been made to the TAC Chair, the proceedings may continue, at the discretion of the TAC Chair, notwithstanding that the student has subsequently voluntarily withdrawn from the programme, or has refused or failed, without

acceptable cause duly authenticated in writing, to participate in the proceedings. Where extenuating circumstances acceptable to the TAC Chair exist, the TAC Chair may defer the hearing and set new timelines.

4.00 Notice to Students

- 4.1 The TAC Chair shall inform the student via email to the student's @mun.ca email address, normally within two (2) working day (a day, other than a Saturday or Sunday, statutory holiday, or other day on which the University is not open for administrative business) of receipt of the referral, of the termination decision and related matters, and include
- the nature of the concerns that were used as grounds for termination,
 - documentation received with the referral,
 - the process to be followed,
 - possible outcomes of the hearing.
- 4.2 The TAC Chair shall confirm with the student the date, time and place for the hearing by the TAC Panel, and provide to the student the names of the TAC Panel members.
- 4.3 The TAC Chair shall inform the student that they shall be allowed to present their case in person (or by teleconference if the student is away on internship) and has the right to be accompanied by a registered student or a member of the faculty or staff of the University. The name and contact address of such person should normally be provided to the TAC Chair at least two (2) working days (a day, other than a Saturday or Sunday, statutory holiday, or other day on which the University is not open for administrative business) prior to the hearing date.
- 4.4 The student may provide a written response to the termination decision prior to the hearing. Such written response should normally be provided to the TAC Chair at least three (3) working days (a day, other than a Saturday or Sunday, statutory holiday, or other day on which the University is not open for administrative business) prior to the hearing date.

5.00 Hearing Procedures

- 5.1 In the interest of fairness, hearings should be conducted and decisions provided as soon as is reasonably possible.
- 5.2 The TAC Panel shall not proceed with the hearing in the absence of any Panel members.
- 5.3 If the student fails, without acceptable cause duly authenticated in writing, to appear for the hearing the TAC Panel shall proceed with the hearing on the basis of the material that has been filed.
- 5.4 The student shall not be required to give evidence but if the student elects to do so, then the student may be questioned by members of the TAC Panel.

- 5.5 The Head of Psychology or delegate and student may each call witnesses as needed. The names and contact information of all witnesses normally must be given in writing to the TAC Chair at least three (3) working days (a day, other than a Saturday or Sunday, statutory holiday, or other day on which the University is not open for administrative business) in advance of the hearing date, together with a written statement of the reason for their participation. The TAC Chair shall provide a written copy of each party's witness names and statements to the other party.
- 5.6 The Panel shall consider a matter referred to it without undue delay. Normally, the hearing will occur within ten (10) working days (a day, other than a Saturday or Sunday, statutory holiday, or other day on which the University is not open for administrative business) of the TAC Chair's receipt of the matter from the Head of Psychology or delegate.

While the order and procedure to be followed at a hearing will be at the discretion of the TAC Chair and will comply with the principles of natural justice, the following will normally occur:

- i. The Head of Psychology or delegate will outline the concerns that were used as grounds for termination and the evidence in support of the concerns.
- ii. Should the student wish to do so, they may respond at this stage.
- iii. The Head of Psychology or delegate may call and question witnesses.
- iv. The student may question these witnesses.
- v. The student will present their case.
- vi. The student may call and question witnesses.
- vii. The Head of Psychology or delegate may question these witnesses.
- viii. Any member of the TAC Panel may question any witness at any time during the hearing and may recall the Head of Psychology or delegate, the student or witnesses at any time.
- ix. The Head of Psychology or delegate may provide a summary.
- x. The student may provide a summary.

The TAC Chair, at their discretion, may waive any of the above.

- 5.7 At any time during the course of the hearing, the Chair may adjourn or postpone the hearing if it is reasonable to do so. If the TAC Panel determines that additional evidence is required for a fair determination of the complaint, the Chair may adjourn the hearing for the purpose of accepting the additional evidence:
- i. Any additional evidence shall be made available to the Head of Psychology or delegate and the student;
 - ii. Each party will be given the opportunity to respond to the new evidence within the time allotted by the TAC Chair.

- 5.8 The hearing shall be closed to all persons except the members of the TAC Panel, the Head of Psychology or delegate, the student, the person accompanying the student, and any witnesses. Normally, witnesses will attend only for the period they are being examined or cross-examined.
- 5.9 Members of the TAC Panel shall be bound by confidentiality in respect of information received with respect to the matter. Information will only be disclosed as is reasonably necessary to implement the investigation, the resolution or the terms of any disposition imposed, or as required by law.
- 5.10 A hearing under this **Process** shall not be considered invalid because of a defect in a form or a technical irregularity.

6.00 Decisions Respecting the Matter

- 6.1 The TAC Panel, after hearing all the evidence, shall meet in closed session to:
- i. consider the evidence;
 - ii. make its decision using a balance of probabilities standard.

A majority vote of the TAC Panel members is required for any decision regarding the matter.

- 6.2 The result of the hearing and the reasons therefore shall be conveyed in writing to the student and to the Head of the Department of Psychology.
- 6.3 The TAC Panel's decision will result in a recommendation to the Dean of Science on whether the student should be terminated from the Psy.D. program, including but not limited to, the following options, alone or in combination:
- i. Allow the student to remain in the program and attach conditions prescribing future conduct by the student, such conditions to remain in effect for any period of time the TAC Panel deems appropriate;
 - ii. Require the student to withdraw from the Psy.D. program for a specified period of time;
 - iii. Require the student to withdraw from the Psy.D. program indefinitely;
 - iv. Attach conditions which must be fulfilled before any application for readmission to the Psy.D. program can be considered;
 - v. Expel the student from the Psy.D. program with no right to apply for readmission to the Psy.D. program;
 - vi. Report the student to the appropriate professional body.
- 6.4 In cases in which the decision of the hearing is one of, iii, iv, v, or vi, as set out in 6.3, the results shall be conveyed in writing to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who shall make the appropriate notation on the student's transcript.

7.00 Appeals

- 7.1 Any appeal of the TAC Panel decision shall be heard by the Senate Committee on Academic Appeals in accordance with its Terms of Reference and Procedures.
- 7.2 In the event of an appeal, any interim suspension or limited participation applied under 3.1.iii shall remain in effect until a decision is reached by the Senate Committee on Academic Appeals.

8.00 Records

A record of any finding of academic failure and/or professional unsuitability and/or decision related thereto shall be securely stored in the student's academic file within the Faculty. All written information relating to the hearing before the TAC Panel shall be kept according to the University Information Management Policy and other applicable University policies and applicable legislation.

Approved by the Department of Psychology: *September 18, 2017.*