

CoS Guidance for Preparing Specialty Education and Training Taxonomies:
Clarifications to help recognized specialties use the APA-Taxonomy Grid ¹ in a consistent manner

Background

Education and Training Guidelines: A Taxonomy for Education and Training in Professional Psychology Health Service Specialties and Subspecialties

The *Education and Training Guidelines: A Taxonomy for Education and Training in Professional Psychology Health Service Specialties and Subspecialties* (hereafter referred to as the *Guidelines* ²) promotes the use of clear and consistent language when describing the educational and training opportunities provided by programs. The *Guidelines* address the type and intensity of specialized training opportunities offered by individual education and training programs in recognized specialties³ at the doctoral, doctoral internship, postdoctoral, and post-licensure stages of education and training.

The *Guidelines* specify that each APA recognized specialty is responsible for providing its own recommendations with respect to the types and intensity of the education and training opportunities offered at each stage of training, for that specialty. The type and intensity of the training experiences described in each specialty's Taxonomy are therefore *unique* to that specialty and determined *by that specialty* itself.

After each specialty's Taxonomy Grid achieves consistency with the *Guidelines*, individual education and training programs will be able to use them to guide their description of the learning opportunities offered within their specialty program. In doing so, all programs will be able to use a consistent set of terms to describe the education and training opportunities offered within each specialty.

¹ Taxonomy; www.apa.org/ed/graduate/specialize/taxonomy.pdf

² As per APA policy and as stated in the *Guidelines*, "The overarching goal of the *Guidelines* is to facilitate clear and consistent communication in the use of terminology for training programs, students, professional organizations, and members of the public. The *Guidelines* address the type and intensity of specialized training opportunities offered by individual education and training programs at the doctoral, doctoral internship, postdoctoral, and postlicensure stages of education and training. These guidelines are intended to be aspirational in nature."

³ APA Commission for Recognition of Specialties and Subspecialties in Professional Psychology (CRSSPP); www.apa.org/ed/graduate/specialize/crsspp

CoS and the *Guidelines*

CoS requires that each member-specialty submit an Education and Training Taxonomy Grid for review by CoS. Each specialty's Taxonomy is reviewed to assure consistency with the *Guidelines* before it is formally endorsed by CoS. It is important to note that CoS does *not* conduct an assessment of or make any decisions regarding the education and training criteria,

established by the specialty. Once a Taxonomy is endorsed by CoS, it is made available to the public on the CoS website (www.cospp.org).

CoS, CRSSPP, and the Taxonomy Summit Workgroup

The CoS, CRSSPP, and a workgroup comprised of members from the *Interorganizational Summit on Specialty, Specialization, and Board Certification* have been working together to increase awareness and utilization of each specialty's Taxonomy. Over the course of the last two years, these groups have 1) created new educational materials (e.g., FAQs, PowerPoint slides, and a video) to support broad awareness and adoption of each specialty's Taxonomy, and 2) conducted an extensive review of each specialty's Taxonomy to identify areas of inconsistency with the *Guidelines* and opportunities for increasing clarity. Based on the information learned from these reviews, a guidance document (see below: *Guidance and Recommendations*) was created to help specialties revise their Taxonomy. Definitions and criteria that are common across all recognized specialties were also identified and outlined on a new *Taxonomy Template* (see attached: *Taxonomy Template Grid*).

Future Directions

Goal:

- 1) Achieve consistent use of language in the description of educational and training opportunities provided by programs, within each recognized specialty

Action Steps:

- 1) Assist each specialty in revising their Taxonomy to achieve consistency with the *Guidelines*
- 2) Increase awareness of the *Guidelines* and each Specialty's Taxonomy
- 3) Facilitate the adoption of the *Guidelines* and the Specialty Taxonomies by all education and training programs
- 4) Help each specialty promote its self-defined education and training model

Guidance and Recommendations

When revising your taxonomy, please adhere to the below outlined processes and practices:

- Review the APA Guidelines: A Taxonomy for Education and Training in Professional Psychology Health Service Specialties and Subspecialties
www.apa.org/ed/graduate/specialize/taxonomy.pdf
- Use the attached *Taxonomy Template Grid* to revise your specialty's Taxonomy

- Review the *Common Definitions and Criteria Across All Recognized Specialties* (on page 2 of the *Taxonomy Template*). Use this information as a guide when revising your specialty's Taxonomy. Do not alter the information in this section.
- Limit the type and amount of information that your specialty includes in the Taxonomy Grid boxes. Provide numbered superscripts in your specialty's Taxonomy grid, with corresponding numbered explanatory footnotes under the *Specialty Specific Definitions and Criteria* (on page 3 of the *Taxonomy Template*) to increase the specificity and clarity of the criteria you include in the Grid.
- Under the *Examples of Program Descriptors for Stages of Training* (on page 4 of the *Taxonomy Template*) use your specialty's Taxonomy to provide an example of a program description using Taxonomy language and levels of training opportunity to illustrate a program at each stage of training (doctoral, doctoral internship, postdoctoral residency, post-licensure).

Levels of Opportunities, Broadly Defined (see page 10 *Guidelines* for additional detail):

- **Major Area of Study:** Use this level of opportunity to describe the highest level of education and training opportunity with respect to the types of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that would be developed and to the intensity and amount of involvement in training to acquire those competencies
- **Emphasis:** Use this level of opportunity to describe a structured in-depth opportunity for knowledge acquisition, practical experience, and scientific study in the specialty.
- **Experience:** Use this level of opportunity to describe an opportunity that goes beyond simply acquainting a student with a specialty, but that offers less knowledge acquisition and practical training than an emphasis.
- **Exposure:** Use this level of opportunity to describe an education or training opportunity that is limited in type and intensity (e.g., a structured learning activity and that would be seen an opportunity to acquaint an individual with that specialty area).

Levels of Opportunity: Percentage Ranges

- Confirm that the percentage ranges listed for each level of opportunity do not overlap with the percentage ranges of another level within the same stage of training. Confirm that each range is *discrete* by reviewing the “less than” and “less than or equal to” criteria your specialty established for each level of opportunity, within the same stage of training.

Example:

- Correct: Experience: $\geq 20\%$ - $< 30\%$ and Emphasis: $\geq 30\%$ - $< 50\%$
- Incorrect: Experience: $\geq 20\%$ - $\leq 30\%$ and Emphasis: $\geq 30\%$ - $< 50\%$
- Confirm that the percentage ranges listed for each level of opportunity within the same stage of training is **exhaustive**. Confirm that the percentage ranges are exhaustive by reviewing the “less than” and “less than or equal to” criteria your specialty established for each level of opportunity within the same stage of training.

Example:

- Correct: Experience: $\geq 20\%$ - $< 30\%$ and Emphasis: $\geq 30\%$ - $< 50\%$
- Incorrect: Experience: $\geq 20\%$ - $< 30\%$ and Emphasis: $> 30\%$ - $< 50\%$
- If your specialty offers an Exposure at any stage of training, confirm that the minimum percentage of time required to meet the criteria for an Exposure is greater than zero. Each Specialty needs to consider whether the minimum percentage is sufficient to provide supervised experience.

Example:

- Correct: Exposure: 5% - $< 20\%$ of training
- Incorrect: Exposure: Up to 20% of training
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Clinical Service Delivery Criteria

- Provide the specific percentage range of the **clinical service delivery** your specialty requires for each type of training experience (e.g., practicum, internship, post-doctoral, and continuing professional development experiences).
 - Provide the percentage range of the clinical service delivery your specialty requires for practica and continuing professional development experiences by using superscripts and footnotes.

Example:

- Correct:
(Grid): 2 specialty X practica¹
(Footnote): ¹The practicum experience includes at least 50% supervised clinical service delivery in specialty X.
- Incorrect: (*because footnote does not provide sufficient information*)
(Grid): 2 specialty X practica¹
(Footnote): The practicum in specialty X includes clinical service delivery.

- Provide the percentage range of the clinical service delivery your specialty requires for internship and post-doctoral experiences in the Taxonomy grid. Use superscripts and footnotes to provide additional specificity and clarity, if needed.

Example:

- Correct (Grid): $\geq 30\%$ - $< 50\%$ of supervised clinical experience in specialty X¹
- Correct (Footnote): ¹The internship must include at least 50% supervised clinical service delivery for the supervised experience in specialty X. The remainder of the supervised experience can include seminar attendance, readings, research, teaching, and program development.
- Incorrect (Grid): $\geq 30\%$ - $< 50\%$

Supervision

- If applicable, identify any specific training, credentials, and/or qualifications for training in the specialty required of those who provide supervision within your specialty. Use superscripts and footnotes to describe this information.
- Identify the types of education and training experiences at each level of opportunity, across all levels of training, that your specialty requires be supervised by someone with competencies in your specialty. Use superscripts and footnotes to provide additional specificity and clarity.

Example:

- Correct (Grid): $\geq 80\%$ of supervised experience in specialty X¹
- Correct (Footnote): ¹The post-doctoral must include at least 50% supervised clinical service delivery for the supervised experience in specialty X. The remainder of the supervised experience can include seminar attendance, readings, research, teaching, and program development.
- Incorrect (Grid): $\geq 80\%$ of supervised experience in specialty X¹
- Incorrect (Footnote): ¹At least 50% of the post-doctoral experience includes supervised clinical service delivery and seminar attendance, readings, research, teaching, and program development.

Postdoctoral Stage of Training

- Postdoctoral education and training in a specialty recognized by the Commission for the Recognition of Specialties and Subs specialties in Professional Psychology is by definition a Major Area of Study that requires that 80% or more of time be spent in the specialty area.

- Emphasis and Experience levels of opportunity are not applicable at the postdoctoral stage of training. As such, write N/A in your specialty's Taxonomy Grid for the Emphasis and Experience levels of opportunity at the postdoctoral stage of training.
- Determine if your specialty allows for an Exposure at the postdoctoral stage of training.
- If your specialty allows for an Exposure at the postdoctoral stage of training, confirm that the allowable percentage of time spent engaged in the training experience falls within 1% - 20%, inclusive, as determined by your specialty.

Example:

- Correct: Exposure: $\geq 1\%$ - $\leq 20\%$
- Incorrect: Exposure: Up to 20%

Continuing Education and Continuing Professional Development

- Utilize definitions of continuing education (CE) and continuing professional development (CPD) as provided by the APA Quality Professional Development and Continuing Education Resolution <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/improving-quality>.
- Provide ranges for each type of CE and/or CPD experience you included in your specialty's Taxonomy grid (e.g., academic course, CE, supervised clinical practice). Use superscripts and footnotes to provide additional specificity and clarity regarding the type and nature of each experience.

Example:

- Correct (Grid): ≥ 200 hours of supervised clinical practice¹ and 25 hours of CE or 1 academic course in specialty X
- Correct (Footnote): ¹At least 50% of the supervised practice experience includes supervised clinical service delivery in specialty X.
- Incorrect (Grid): 25 hours of CE and supervised clinical practice in specialty X
- Incorrect (Footnote): none

Approved by CoS Board of Directors, 2/20/2021