



# Internship in School Psychology

Accredited as a Doctoral Internship in Professional Psychology by the American Psychological Association  
APPIC Member

## Internship Manual 2020-21

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## **Overview of Psychology Internship**

The Department of Psychological Services in the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District has offered professional psychology intern training since 1984. The training program has been listed in both the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) and the Joint Committee for Internships in School Psychology since 1987. The Cypress-Fairbanks ISD Internship in School Psychology, accredited as a doctoral internship in professional psychology through the American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation, obtained full accreditation in 1992. We received our seven year reaccreditation notice in 2016.

The Department of Psychological Services offers a 10 month, 2000 hour Doctoral School Psychology Internship Program, which meets the requirements for doctoral level psychology students who may eventually seek licensure in the majority of states. Eight fully funded internships positions are available.

CFISD Psychological Services is a member of the Association of Psychology PostDoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC). We follow all APPIC guidelines ([www.APPIC.org](http://www.APPIC.org)) and Match Policies.

## **Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District**

The Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District (aka Cy-Fair ISD) is the twenty-third largest school system in the nation. It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest district in Texas and 2<sup>nd</sup> largest district in Region 4 (which is comprised of 50 districts). The Cypress-Fairbanks ISD's 186 square mile area has more than 850 subdivisions and apartment complexes within its borders. The social economic status of Cy-Fair ISD residents ranges from below poverty level to multi-millionaires.

There are 92 campuses currently open (56 elementary schools, 19 middle schools, 12 high schools, and 5 special program schools). There were 117,283 students enrolled in Cy-Fair ISD as of September 16, 2019. The ethnic breakdown of students is 45% Hispanic, 23% White, 19% African American, 9% Asian, 3% Multi-racial, .7% Native American, and .1% Pacific Islander. There are 101 languages and dialects spoken by students in our school district. 51% of our students are considered economically disadvantaged.

## **Department of Psychological Services**

The district's Department of Psychological Services employs thirty-six professional staff, all of whom are licensed by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP) as Licensed Specialists in School Psychology (LSSP). All professional staff members are doctoral level professionals with twenty staff also having dual licensure through the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists as Licensed Psychologists. Our school psychology internship program has ten doctoral intern positions in its APA accredited doctoral internship in school psychology. Two full-time secretaries and one part-time student assistant complete the members of our

department.

The CFISD Department of Psychological Services has been recognized three times in the past as the most outstanding psychological division of the Texas Psychological Association (TPA) and twice by the Texas Association of School Psychologists (TASP), including the most recent award occurring during the 2018-19 school year. The department received the last Award of Excellence for School Psychological Services given jointly by the American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). Members of the department have been named the "Outstanding School Psychologist" in Texas by the Division of School Psychology, Texas Psychological Association.

In 2004 the department opened a Family Counseling Clinic, now known as the Family Interaction Training (F.I.T.) Clinic, in order to serve students and families in our district. The department's psychology interns are able to act as therapists under the supervision of licensed staff through "live and video supervision" as well as supervision and processing after the night's sessions.

### **Notice of Nondiscrimination**

The Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District adheres to a policy of equal employment opportunities for all employees. On the basis of an individual's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or age, the school district shall not fail or refuse to hire or discharge, nor shall it otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment; nor shall the school district limit, segregate, or classify its employees, or applicants for employment in any way that would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect the individual's status as an employee.

### **Intern Benefits**

These are several of the benefits that are offered to the interns either through the psychological services department or the district as a whole:

- Annual stipend of \$28,000
- Health Insurance (partially paid by the district)
- Mileage reimbursement and funds for continuing education
- Office Space
- Laptop Computer
- School district holiday schedule
- Sick (5.5 days)/Personal Leave (5 days)
- Clerical and professional supplies and support
- Access to department professional library

### **Mission Statements**

#### *Sponsoring Agency*

The mission of the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District is to maximize every

student's potential through rigorous and relevant learning experiences preparing students to be 21st Century global leaders.

### *Department of Psychological Services*

The mission of the Department of Psychological Services is to provide quality, broadly based psychological services to the entire school district through a comprehensive service delivery system.

### *Doctoral Internship in School Psychology*

The mission of CFISD's doctoral internship in school psychology is to integrate the best available research, clinical expertise, and knowledge of complex client factors to train interns to provide comprehensive evidence-based practice in psychology during their internship year and beyond.

### **Training Model**

The Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District Department of Psychological Services follows a Practitioner-Scholar Model that provides psychology interns the skills and training necessary to become successful practitioners of child and adolescent psychology, with an emphasis on psychological services within a school district.

Interns provide a variety of psychological services for both general education and special education students. They provide pre-referral intervention that includes consultation with parents and school staff regarding behavioral, social, and academic concerns; social skills or other psycho-educational groups; and time-limited evidence-based interventions for preventative mental health concerns. Interns also provide direct psychological services, such as individual counseling and group counseling with students, and indirect psychological services, such as behavioral consultation with teachers, parents, and outside service providers.

Interns conduct evaluations for disability conditions such as Autism, Emotional Disturbance, and ADHD/Disruptive Behavior Disorders. They also conduct evaluations for special education programming, such as Related Services Evaluations and Functional Behavioral Assessments.

Interns practice thinking critically and evaluating the findings of empirically-based knowledge within the context of a broad base of practically applied experiences. Training also emphasizes the ability to use these skills in different settings and with a diverse range of children and adolescents; to act and present information in a professional, ethical manner; and to communicate recommendations effectively to students, parents, school personnel, and other mental healthcare professionals.

Interns also learn the importance of continuing their professional education by attending and/or presenting at conventions/workshops that increase their professional expertise, that maintain current knowledge in the profession, and that pursue areas of specialization within their chosen field. Additionally, interns are provided opportunities to develop and hone their own teaching and presentation skills by providing training and

staff development workshops to school staff, parents, and psychological services staff members. Interns are encouraged to pursue individual interests and research throughout the course of the year.

### **Internship Training Experience**

Interns engage in an organized sequence of activities under supervision. During the few weeks of internship, interns are oriented to the intern program and the department's services to the district. Assignments to both site supervisors and campuses are made during this time, and training plans are individually developed for each intern.

The typical work week for interns involves providing services at their campuses, receiving individual and group supervision, and attending targeted training colloquia. Monday through Thursday, interns provide comprehensive psychological services to the three to five campuses to which they are assigned. Interns are assigned to schools at various developmental levels with a varying degree of responsibility and task demands in each setting.

Interns have the opportunity to work with students in general education, as well as students with disabilities, from ages 3 to 21. The district provides several programs to meet various educational needs, such as Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), Life Skills, and Adaptive Behavior (AB).

### **Weekly Intern Schedule**

A typical week for an intern would include four days of providing psychological services in various school settings (including at least one elementary school and secondary school) and one day (Friday) dedicated to intern training as a group. Training opportunities will vary based on the individual goals of the intern, but each intern will have four days of experience in the school setting weekly. Interns will spend Monday through Thursday providing psychological services to campuses that may include consultation, counseling, assessment, and crisis prevention/response. One night a week is dedicated to Family Interaction Training Clinic. Fridays are dedicated to group supervision, colloquiums, research and additional professional development opportunities.

| <u>Role</u>                       | <u>% of Time</u> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Consultation                      | 15-20%           |
| Counseling                        | 20-30%           |
| Psychological Evaluations         | 20-25%           |
| Supervision                       | 10%              |
| Colloquium/Trainings              | 10%              |
| Family Counseling                 | 5%               |
| Research (including dissertation) | 5-10%            |
| Crisis Intervention               | As Needed        |
| Suicide Prevention                | As Needed        |
| Staff In-services/Presentations   | <5%              |
| School-Community Relations        | <5%              |

Professional Involvement <5%

### **Friday Training**

Fridays are dedicated to training and group supervision. Interns begin the day in group supervision with the Intern Coordinator/Training Director and the Director of Psychological Services, followed by Family Interaction Training (F.I.T.) clinic group supervision and then two hours of assessment or treatment case study groups.

Assessment group focuses on the conceptualization and evaluation of mental health disorders and educational disabilities. Topics include diagnostic taxonomies, assessment techniques, report writing, case conceptualization, and treatment planning.

Treatment group provides the interns training on interventions, data collection/monitoring, and the integration of individualized strategies within school-wide systems. Topics include individual and group counseling strategies, behavior consultation, evidence-based practices for internalizing and externalizing concerns, etc. Assessment group and treatment group provide didactic instruction, case studies, and open dialog about important issues.

Friday afternoons are spent in colloquiums, Write Club and/or Council of Houston Area Training Sites (CHATS).

### **Additional Training Experiences**

#### *Council of Houston Area Training Sites (CHATS)*

CHATS is a consortium of Houston area APA-accredited intern sites, comprised of the Baylor College of Medicine- Pediatrics; Baylor College of Medicine- Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences; Cypress-Fairbanks I.S.D.; Harris County Juvenile Probation Department; Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center, University of Houston Counseling & Psychological Services; University of Houston, Clear Lake Counseling Services; and the University of Texas Health Science Center McGovern Medical School. Approximately six times throughout the internship year, interns attend didactic training and networking workshops hosted by CHATS and each training site. Past CHATS events have included an ethics workshop and a preparation for the EPPP Examination.

#### *Diversity Seminar*

This seminar is aimed at strengthening cultural self-awareness, competence, sensitivity and critical thinking. To help achieve these goals, a total of four self-awareness and self-reflection activities will be completed.

#### *Family Interaction Training Clinic*

Interns provide family therapy services in the evening one day a week to families from the district. Services are rendered at minimal cost to the parents. Interns are expected to complete at least one semester in the FIT Clinic. Interns play an integral role in referral review, case selection, treatment planning, and progress monitoring. Finally, in addition to live supervision during sessions, interns are provided weekly small group

supervision with their FIT supervisors.

### *Write Club*

Write Club is the CFISD Psychology Department's research group. Staff and interns are involved in multi-year research projects. The primary goal of psychological research at CFISD is to improve clinical services provided to students and their families, while also enriching the training experience of psychology trainees and the practice of staff members. Write Club provides interns didactics concerning best practices and cultural competence in program evaluation, using data to inform practice, and dissemination/sustainability of projects and programs in schools. Members meet monthly to discuss their research interests, review journal articles, and monitor the progress of ongoing projects.

### *Other experiences*

In addition to the above, other experiences are provided, such as presenting 3-week parenting education series to community parents. Interns also have increased opportunities for research, dissertation, assisting in program development and evaluation, individual projects, and other opportunities agreed upon between the interns and the Coordinator of Interns.

### **Supervision**

Each intern will typically have two to three site supervisors. Each intern will receive a minimum of two hours of individual, face-to-face supervision per week (per APA guidelines). Typically this is spread across site supervisors, with one-half-hour of supervisory time spent with each assigned site supervisor for each day assigned with that supervisor/site. Group supervision is provided on Friday morning: with group supervision, Family Interaction Training Clinic supervision and either Assessment or Treatment group.

Interns will work with and be accountable to site supervisors together with the Intern Coordinator/Training Director and the Director of Psychological Services.

### **Profession-Wide Competencies**

- Research
- Ethical and legal standards
- Individual and cultural diversity
- Professional values, attitudes and behaviors
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Assessment
- Intervention
- Supervision
- Consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills

### **Goal Setting:**

In addition to profession-wide competency training, interns are asked to set goals for the year that fit within the framework of the internship experience. These goals include

individual projects relating to program development, program evaluation, community outreach, and professional presentations. Progress on individual goals is reviewed formally at quarterly evaluation sessions and on an on-going basis during individual and group supervision.

### **Intern Performance Evaluation and Feedback**

Informal, verbal evaluative feedback will be provided by each site supervisor at the completion of first and third quarters. A formal, written evaluation will occur at the finish of the second and fourth quarters. This evaluation will be based on written evaluations from site supervisors and the Internship Coordinator/Training Director. Copies of these evaluations will be forwarded to the directors of interns' university training programs. Evaluation criteria are based on skills related to the internship Goals and Objectives.

A copy of the evaluation form will be given to interns at the beginning of internship. Interns will be notified of any substantive changes to the evaluation form in advance of any evaluation.

### **Adequate Progress and Successful Completion of the Training Program**

Interns are formally evaluated by their site supervisors and the Intern Coordinator/Training Director two times a year. Interns may obtain a score of Novice (1); Beginner (2); Advancing (3); Competent (4); or Expert (5). For an intern's mid-year evaluation an intern should have a domain average of 3 (Advancing) or higher for each individual domain (direct services, indirect services and professionalism). If any domain averages below a three the site supervisors will list specific, quantifiable goals to reach success by the end of internship.

The minimal level of achievement expected for an intern to successfully complete the program is a domain average of 4 (Competent) or higher across each domain and a score of 3 (Advancing) for each competency.

### **Retention**

The Psychology department at CFISD prides itself on the high quality of training it provides its interns. When staff positions become available we highly encourage our current interns to apply. We currently have sixteen staff members who are former Cy-Fair interns.

### **Intern Grievances**

A psychology intern who has a problem or grievance about any aspect of the internship experience may seek informal resolution of the grievance. When informal attempts are inadequate in sufficiently addressing the grievance, a more formal procedure is available. For formal grievance procedures please see the Employee Handbook: <http://www.cfisd.net/en/staff/hr/employee-handbook/> ). Interns have a right to file a formal grievance at any time.

Outlined below is the informal process to address a psychology intern's grievance: Potential grievances may arise from various sources including but not limited to:

- Problem with a peer
- Problem with support staff
- Problem with immediate site supervisor
- Problem with FIT clinical supervisor
- Problem with other Psychological Services staff member
- Problem with other CFISD employee
- Problem with Internship Coordinator/Training Director
- Problem with Psychological Services Director
- Problem with some aspect of the internship program

Informal Process and Chain of Command:

1. The psychology intern should first directly discuss the problem with the individual involved (consistent with APA ethical and professional guidelines: <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>).
2. If the grievance is in regard to an aspect of the internship program, this should first be discussed with the intern's immediate site supervisor and the Internship Coordinator/Training Director. If the grievance is in regard to individually based clinical work at a campus, the immediate supervisor is the clinical supervisor at that campus. If the grievance is in regard to the FIT Clinic the immediate clinical supervisor is the psychologist supervising the FIT Clinic.
3. Grievances involving interactions or activities related to aspects of the CFISD Department of Psychological Services internship program should first be addressed with the Psychological Services Department staff (vs. complaining to an outside party), so there is ample opportunity to resolve the problem directly within the primary organizational setting. (This is consistent with APA ethical and professional guidelines and will help to prevent indirect communications, misunderstandings and triangulation between the psychology intern and Psychological Services Department staff.)
4. If the psychology intern has attempted to address the problem directly with the individual involved and has not achieved satisfactory resolution, OR the psychology intern does not feel safe (e.g., sexual harassment) discussing the problem directly with the individual involved, he/she should move to the next person in the chain of communication. The expected chain of communication is noted below:
  - a. Immediate site/clinical supervisor
  - b. Internship Coordinator/Training Director
  - c. Department of Psychological Services Director
5. At any point in this chain, it may be appropriate to involve the intern's university department in the resolution process. However, this decision should be made jointly with the psychology intern and a Psychological Services Department staff member (e.g., Immediate site/clinical supervisor, Internship Coordinator/Training Director, etc.).
6. When this informal process is inadequate to address the problem, a more

formal process may be engaged (see CFISD Employee Handbook: <http://www.cfisd.net/en/staff/hr/employee-handbook/> ). Interns have a right to file a formal grievance at any time.

## **Due Process**

### Informal Process and Chain of Command:

1. The psychology services staff member with the concern should first directly discuss the problem with the intern involved in an informal discussion (consistent with APA ethical and professional guidelines: <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>).
2. If the concern is not addressed through informal discussion then a formal written remediation plan can occur. This may be done through the Intern Evaluation that occurs two times per year, or at any point a remediation plan needs to be addressed. The Intern Coordinator/Training Director would be informed of the concern and would also communicate with the university supervisor. Goals for remediation would be created and a review would be set to occur no less than quarterly.
3. At any point in this chain, it may be appropriate to involve the intern's university department in the resolution process.
4. When this informal process is inadequate to address the problem, a more formal process may be engaged. See employee handbook (<http://www.cfisd.net/en/staff/hr/employee-handbook/> )
5. **Intern Termination** Cypress-Fairbanks ISD may terminate the contract of any intern who violates District policy, please see legal policy for CFISD "Termination of Employment" for reasons of termination.