

# ACEPT

## Association of Chicagoland Externship and Practicum Training

### Practicum Application Process and Guidelines

#### Practicum Application Dates for 2011

- 2/11/11 Applications may be mailed by all practicum students
- 2/11/11 M.A. students may accept offers on a rolling basis
- 3/11/11 Students should be notified if they will be given an interview
- 3/28/11 at 9 AM – Notification Day for Psy.D. students
- 3/28/11 at Noon – ACEPT Clearinghouse Begins for Member Sites

#### Uniform Application and Notification Guidelines 2011

The Association of Chicagoland Externship and Practicum Training Sites (ACEPT) was formed in November, 2003 by psychology graduate programs and training sites seeking to improve the structure and ethical standards of the practicum application process for graduate students. The graduate programs and training sites that have agreed to adhere to the following standards have committed themselves to abiding not only to the letter of the guidelines, but the spirit as well.

ACEPT promotes ethical and respectful conduct throughout the practicum application process. Constructed in an atmosphere of mutual collaboration between schools, sites, and students, these guidelines clarify the responsibilities and roles of all parties, specify acceptable and unacceptable conduct, and promote professional courtesy.

**The Uniform Notification Guidelines apply only to doctoral level practica.**

**Master's Students may mail applications the same day as doctoral students; however, there is a rolling acceptance for Master's Students.**

#### Responsibilities and Expectations of Students

- Psy.D. and M.A. students may begin submitting practicum applications **on Friday, February 11, 2011.**

- Students may initiate contact with sites prior to Notification Day for the purposes of asking follow-up questions. Students should not communicate any promise of accepting an offer prior to Notification Day, and should not give any information regarding the place of the site within the student's rank order. Students should not ask the site for information regarding the ranking by the site of the student.
- Students may withdraw their application from a particular site prior to Notification Day. Students are encouraged to do so if they are certain they would not accept an offer from that site.
- Students must report any offers made prior to Notification Day or other inappropriate behaviors by sites to their school's Director of Training.
- When responding to a Notification of Intent to Make an Offer, the student should respond by e mail, and confine communication to confirmation that the Notification has been received, or rejection of the Offer. No other communication should occur.

## Responsibilities and Expectations of Schools

- Schools are responsible for educating their students about the ACEPT guidelines. Schools should review with their students the rules governing students, schools, and sites alike.
- Schools should provide their students with a database of practicum sites from which the students may select where to apply.
- Schools should facilitate matching their students with sites that fit their training needs.
- Schools should provide official transcripts, letters of recommendation, and evaluation materials to the sites.
- Schools should confirm that their students are "in good standing" at their institution throughout the application process and during the student's practicum year. Schools should alert training sites when a student's status changes.
- Schools should respect the request of sites to limit students' applications in number and date of submission.

## Responsibilities and Expectations of Training Sites

- Training sites can begin receiving practicum applications on **Friday, February 11, 2011**.
- Training sites may limit the number of applications they accept from any one school. Sites may also restrict the amount of time during which they will consider applicants (e.g., applications will be accepted between 2/11/11 – 3/12/11). It is the responsibility of the site to inform schools about any such restrictions.
- Sites may receive applications from conforming and non-conforming schools. It is recommended that all offers to students be made on Notification Day. However, training sites have the discretion to conduct separate application processes for students from conforming and non-conforming schools. While sites must abide by all the guidelines with students from conforming schools, they may make offers prior to Notification Day to students from non-conforming schools.
- Sites may structure interviews as they prefer. Sites should always consider the respectful treatment of students as a top priority.
- Sites are encouraged to notify students by **3/11/11** if they will be granted an interview.

- Sites should specify in their Program Description their policy with respect to students placing an offer on “Hold” on Notification Day.
- If a student has been eliminated from consideration by a site prior to Notification Day, the site should call the student and inform him/her of the site’s decision.
- Sites may initiate contact with students prior to Notification Day in order to:
  1. schedule an interview
  2. request missing application materials
  3. request additional information
  4. return students’ phone calls
  5. inform the student that they are no longer under consideration
  6. send the ACEPT Notification of Intent to Offer a Practicum Form
- If a site trains both M.A. and Psy.D. students, the site may choose to hold a uniform Notification Day for both M.A. and Psy.D. students. Alternatively, the site may offer M.A. placements on a rolling basis, as long as Psy.D. placements are offered on the Notification Day

Due to the power differential between sites and students, any other contact initiated by the training site may appear to be coercive. Sites should not attempt to solicit from students any information regarding whether or not the student will accept an offer.

- Sites may receive inquiries from students prior to Notification Day.
- “Informal Offers” are prohibited.
- Sites may not make any offers until 9:00 AM (Central Standard Time) on ***Notification Day, Monday 3/28/11***. There is no flexibility around this guideline. Students are instructed to report violations of this rule to their Directors of Training.
- Sites have the discretion to grant any amount of time to a student who is holding an offer. It is recommended as best practice that sites give 10 minutes to the students to accept or reject the offer. Sites should inform students at the time of the interview the policy of the site with respect to a “Hold Time” on Notification Day.
- Sites should report student violations to the school’s Director of Training.
- Sites may have positions reserved for students from a particular school, but these arrangements should not violate ACEPT Guidelines.
- Sites may send by e-Mail at any time the ACEPT Notification of Intent to Offer a Practicum.
- Sites are ethically bound to make an offer to the student on Notification day if the site has sent the Notification of Intent to Offer a Practicum Form to the student.
- Sites should specify in their Program Description all requirements to begin practicum training, including but not limited to any background checks, tests, vaccinations and procedures. Sites should specify in their Program Description the cost to the student of these requirements.

## Use of the Notification of Intent to Offer a Practicum Form

([Form attached here](#))

The practice of sites communicating to students a “Pre-Notification of an Offer “ began several years ago as an attempt by sites to avoid miscommunication during the hectic early minutes of the ACEPT Practicum Uniform Notification Day. Students and sites both had reported dismay when they would find out that a desired match was not made because of communication that got crossed or missed by a matter of minutes. Sites began to address those concerns by notifying students before the Uniform Notification Day that the site will make the student an offer on the Notification Day.

In order to keep the benefit of pre-notification and limit potential problems, the Executive Committee devised the Notification of Intent to Offer a Practicum Form. This form is designed to be sent by e mail so that there is a record of when it has been sent. The form can be sent at any point between the time a student is interviewed and 9:00 AM on Notification Day. The Executive Committee recommends that alterations not be made to this form to assure uniformity and avoid misunderstanding.

It is important that students not be expected or allowed to respond to the notification, beyond confirmation of receipt of the form. The purpose of this restriction is to avoid the misunderstandings that crop up when there is verbal interaction between the site and the student, with both parties trying to get a sense of the other. The more sites that use this form, the smoother and quicker the process should go on Notification Day. Therefore the Executive Committee recommends this form as a “Best Practice,” but it is not required.

## Uniform Notification Day: March 28, 2011

- Students may not accept any offer before 9:00 AM (Central Standard Time) on March 28, 2011. Any offer made prior to that time is in violation of the guidelines and can be revoked by the school. If a student from a conforming school is made an offer by a non-conforming site, students are instructed to remind the site that such an offer is premature and cannot be accepted at this time. Students then should report such activity to their school’s Director of Training.
- Students may respond to offers after 9:00 AM on Notification Day in one of the following ways:

### **Students may accept the offer.**

Verbally accepting an offer on Notification Day is binding. Students may not renege on their acceptance. Such behavior may result in serious consequences to the student’s standing at school. Furthermore, such unprofessional behavior directly impacts other students and may damage the relationship between the training site and the school.

### **Students may reject the offer.**

### **Students may place the offer on hold pending more information from other sites.**

It is the responsibility and role of the sites to clearly inform the student how long their offer may be held. Students may ask for more time when the initial period expires, but it is up to the discretion of the site to determine if an extension will be granted for the student to continue to hold an offer.

- Once students have accepted an offer, they should phone the other sites to which they have applied in order to withdraw their applications.
- If a student is allowed to place the offer on “hold,” it is the mutual responsibility of the site and the student to be clear regarding how the student and site will communicate during the “hold period.”
- Students should write a formal letter of acceptance to their accepted site after Notification Day.
- Schools should follow up with students’ and sites’ complaints regarding alleged ethical violations. Schools must maintain the anonymity of those making such allegations so as to respect their confidentiality.

### Examples of Acceptable Conduct

1. Greattraining Hospital interviews Ima Goodstudent prior to Notification Day. No levels of interest are shared by the site or the student, and an offer/acceptance may or may not occur on or after Notification Day.
2. Greattraining Hospital e-mails the ACCEPT Notification of Intent to Offer a Practicum Form to Ima Goodstudent prior to Notification Day. Ima Goodstudent confirms receipt of the e-mail. Greattraining Hospital calls at 9:05 on Notification Day and makes an offer. Ima Goodstudent either accepts, rejects, or “holds” the offer.
3. Greattraining Hospital offers Ima Goodstudent, an M.A. student, a practicum on March 16th. Ima Goodstudent either accepts, rejects, or “holds” the offer. If she “holds” the offer, Greattraining Hospital gives her a specified amount of time in which she must decide.

### Examples of Unacceptable Conduct

1. Greattraining Hospital interviews Ima Goodstudent prior to Notification Day. The hospital is impressed with Ima Goodstudent and tells the student that it will make an offer on Notification Day. On Notification Day, Greattraining Hospital does not call Ima Goodstudent with an offer.
2. Greattraining Hospital interviews Ima Goodstudent prior to Notification Day. The student chooses to tell the hospital that if an offer is made, it will be accepted. On Notification Day, the site calls to make an offer and the student accepts the offer. The student’s conduct violates the guidelines because it is an acceptance prior to the Notification Day.
3. Greattraining Hospital interviews Ima Goodstudent prior to Notification Day. The student chooses to tell the hospital that if an offer is made, it will be accepted. On Notification Day, the site calls to make an offer and the student rejects the offer. The student’s actions violate the guidelines in two ways. The student has made an acceptance prior to Notification day, and the student has broken her word.
4. Greattraining Hospital calls Ima Goodstudent at 9:00 a.m. on Notification Day, and the student from a conforming school informs the site that she has already accepted an offer.
5. Greattraining Hospital contacts Ima Goodstudent at 8:30 a.m. on Notification Day and makes an offer to her for a placement at the site. Ima Goodstudent clarifies that she may not accept an offer until 9:00 a.m. The site informs her that they will allow her 15

minutes to make her decision and if she does not accept by that time, that they will contact the next student on their list.

6. Greatraining Hospital contacts Ima Goodstudent at 9:00 a.m. and leaves her a message that she needs to call by 9:30 a.m. or they will give the position to another student. Ima Goodstudent calls at 9:20 a.m. to accept the offer and is informed that the position was filled.