

## **Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs Guidelines for Graduate School Offers and Acceptances**

At its August 3, 2013 Business Meeting, the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs (CCPTP) voted to adopt the following guidelines for CCPTP member programs and applicants to doctoral programs in counseling psychology. This policy is based on a revised policy approved in 2013 by the Council of University Directors of Clinical Psychology (CUDCP), and is designed to facilitate the matching process, protecting some students from inappropriate pressure to respond and protecting other students from not receiving offers in a timely manner due to some students holding multiple offers.

The following are adopted as best practices for all offers of admission to CCPTP member programs. They will be posted to the CCPTP website, and member programs are strongly encouraged to provide a link to this site on (a) web pages of information for applicants and (b) printed materials sent to applicants, particularly with admissions offers.

1. To facilitate decision making for students, training programs should inform students as soon as possible that they have been excluded from consideration for admission.
2. A student can expect to receive offers of admission to programs over a considerable period of time. The timing of offers to students largely is determined by the University's review schedule, which is a strictly internal matter. Regardless of when the offer is made, students are not required to respond to the offer before the decision date of April 15 (or the first Monday after April 15, if April 15 falls on a weekend), except as specified in Section 6 below.
  - a. Offers usually are made in writing prior to April 1st. Between April 1st and the decision date, universities may choose to facilitate the process by making offers to students over the phone or by email when a position comes up. These offers are official, but should be followed up by a written confirmation within 48 hours.
  - b. Offers, once made, cannot be withdrawn by the university until after the decision date and then can be withdrawn only if the student fails to respond to the offer by the decision date.
  - c. A program may make an offer after the April 15th decision date if it still has one or more open slots. Offers made after the decision date should clearly state how long the student has to decide on the offer. The student should be given sufficient time (at least a week) to visit a program before making a decision.
4. Offers with funding are treated like any other offer. There should be no stipulation by the University that the offer carries funding only if the student accepts by a specific date that precedes the decision date described above.
5. The Director of Clinical Training or the designated person in charge of graduate admissions should make every effort to inform students on the alternate list of their status as soon as possible.
  - a. The procedure of designating all students who have not been offered immediate admissions as alternates is inappropriate. The University Training Program should have a procedure for identifying those students who clearly will not be offered admissions.
  - b. A reasonable designation of the student's position on the alternate list is encouraged, if applicable (e.g., high, middle, or low on the alternate list). If such a designation is used, the operational definition of "high on the alternate list" is that, in a normal year, the student would receive an offer of admission (but not necessarily funding) prior to the April 15 decision date.
  - c. Once the class has been filled, students on the alternate list should be informed that they are no longer under consideration for admission. Students who were designated "high on the alternate list" should be informed by phone or email.
6. A student should not hold more than two offers for more than one week unless there is specific information (e.g. a visit is scheduled, funding decisions, advisor decisions) they are waiting to receive from the program. Difficulty making up one's mind is not considered an adequate excuse to limit the options available to other applicants. Holding multiple offers ties up slots, preventing programs from

making offers to other students. This is a complex principle operationalized in the points below.

- a. It is legitimate for students to want to visit a program, if they have not done so already, before making decisions among offers. Such visits should be scheduled as soon as practical after the offer of admission is received. If after a visit to a program, students decide that the program is rated lower than a program to which students already have been offered admission, students should inform the lower ranking program that they will be declining their offer.
  - b. Whenever possible, the student applicant should inform training programs by phone or email of a decision, following up within 24 hours with a written confirmation of that decision.
  - c. Once a student has accepted an offer of admission to a Graduate Training Program, the student should inform all programs in which they are currently under consideration that they are either declining outstanding offers of admission or no longer wish to be considered for admission. Students should contact by phone or email those programs that have offered them admission.
7. It is the responsibility of the Director of Clinical Training or the designated person in charge of graduate admissions to keep students informed of changes in their status. Ideally, the student should be informed immediately by phone or email. Offers of admission or offers of funding for students already offered admission should be made over the phone or email with a follow-up letter mailed within 24 hours.
  8. Students are permitted to resign offers they previously accepted up to the April 15th decision date by submitting the resignation in writing (preferably by email immediately followed up by a letter). The purpose of this policy is to avoid pressure on students to accept offers before they have heard from other schools. Although withdrawing an acceptance is legitimate, it is not good form and is very strongly discouraged. A much better approach is to accept a position only if you intend to follow through on your commitment. Students have the right to hold offers as described above if a preferable offer is still possible. Except in very unusual situations (e.g. serious illness or major personal problems), a student who accepts an offer of admission is expected to start the graduate program the following fall. Upon request, programs may grant a deferral but they are not obligated to do so. Training lines are severely limited and failing to use a line once it has been offered prevents other qualified students from obtaining training.