

Postdoctoral Trainee Selection Process Frequently Asked Questions for Training Directors

There are a mix of internship and PD TDs in the audience so we are trying to give applicant and postdoc TD perspectives.

Difference Between Internship and Postdoc Selection

- There is an imbalance favoring applicants but nobody know how large since the universe of programs is not known.
- In the spring, there was a Postdoctoral Training Summit; one of the main recommendations was to move toward greater standardization to benefit the community of programs as well as the trainees. Recent initiatives include the new UPPD, APPA CAS and the Selection Guidelines. PD programs are still free to handle the application and selection process however they want to.
- In Neuropsychology, there is a national match system; however, not all programs participate. There are some recent efforts to open conversation between “match” and “non-match” programs. We advised trainees in our recent webinars to make sure they understand whether or not the program participates in the match, and if not, what is their timeline regarding interviews and offers.

Purpose and Type of Postdocs

1. What is the purpose of postdoctoral training?
 - Postdocs should be for advanced or specialized training. This is consistent with consensus at the PD summit and the new SoA
2. What do the terms “specialty training” and “emphases” mean? How are they different?
 - The term specialty refers to recognized specialties or recognized by the Council of Specialties. There are clear Education and Training Guidelines for recognized specialties. Emphasis can resemble areas of specialization but may include other areas of concentration or focus.

Universal Psychology Postdoctoral Directory (UPPD)

1. What is the UPPD?
 - The UPPD is a universal psychology postdoctoral directory. One recommendation that came from the recent postdoctoral training Summit was to have one place for applicants to search for all programs. There are advantages over the old APPIC directory in that there are nearly 3 times as many programs listed in the search functions are more specifically towards postdoctoral training using specialty and emphasis areas. WE ARE REALLY EXCITED ABOUT IT. DATA on # of programs listed to date.

2. What happened to the APPIC listserv and why is it not listing postdocs any longer? Will this impact my ability to attract applicants?
 - Success of the UPPD is crucial for organizing PD programs nationwide. For it to serve as the main source to market PD programs, we had to limit the other advertising venues such as the APPIC PD Network. The VA has also agreed to prohibit advertising of PD programs on its mail groups.
 - The effectiveness of posting on mail groups is questionable given the volume and people habituating to the multiple postings. The UPPD should be vastly more efficient since this is where applicants will look. Email postings were hit or miss if they actually got to potential applicants.
3. How much will trainees use the UPPD?
 - There is no way of knowing for sure but we have put great effort into marketing the UPPD and educating applicants about the postdoc selection process through emails, YouTube videos and webinar. We believe this is now the go to source to search for postdoctoral programs with well over 600 listings.
4. Will all postdocs be listed in the new UPPD?
 - The known universe of postdoctoral programs is not known. We are working hard to get all programs to list in the directory to provide more centralized search information.
 - Some but not all neuropsychology programs have listed their information. It is likely that heavily research focused programs may not be aware of or may choose not to list in the directory as are small private practice programs that may be more supervised hours in actual postdoctoral training programs.
5. Other logistical issues on the UPPD from the training director perspective.
 - We acknowledge there have been several glitches particularly for APPIC member programs logging in and editing their program listing. Part of this confusion is its hosted on the APPIC site and people are confused about what is the UPPD and the APPIC DOL.
 - The UPPD has some unique advantages over the APPIC DOL – fields for specialty areas, emphasis areas or tracks, and indication if the program is following the APPIC Guidelines, and what date they intend to make offers.
 - Many have asked if their administrative personnel can get access to the program listing. For now, there is only one log in per program. TD may choose to share their log in info with the administrative person.
6. What if I make changes or list my opportunities late, such as in December, January, or even later?
 - The UPPD is a work in progress. We have alerted applicants that opportunities continue to emerge as the year progresses. There is a button on the search result

page to sort by recently updated program listings.

Application Process

1. What is the optimal timeline for this process? When is program information available? When are applications due? When are interviews?
 - Since there is no formal structure to postdoctoral selection this varies by program. However, for most programs that have some clinical training component to them, it is recommended that applicants start searching in early fall. Deadlines for applications tend to fall in December and January. Interviews typically occur in late January and February. Although not all programs will adhere to the APPIC suggested guidelines, the date programs are asked to make offers is 2/27/17.
 - This can be variable for research positions depending on the source of funding.

2. What kinds of application materials do postdoc programs request?
 - Programs differ but most require a vita, some form of transcripts, a letter of interest or an essay, and letters of recommendation. Some will require work samples.
 - Check the program website or with the TD.

3. Why would I use the APPA-CAS as an application portal? (The centralized postdoctoral application)?
 - APPA CAS is free for both APPIC and non-APPIC programs. There are base application requirements such as demographics, education and training background, transcripts, and internship information.
 - APPA CAS is easily customizable for programs defining letters you require and any supplemental materials.
 - It is an efficient way to receive applications and letters of rec.
 - You can easily track and manage applications and sort by track or specialty. You can easily email applicants in categories or status you define.
 - Application can be access online in a single PDF File and easily rated and reviewed (online).
 - The only apparent downside would be becoming familiar with a new web-based application and modifying your review and selection process.

7. Should I consider offering phone/skype interview? Does that put my program “at risk” by interviewing people who may be less motivated, or may have issues that might come up in an in-person interview that we can’t observe over the phone?
 - The APPIC Selection Guidelines encourage programs to offer the option for phone/skype interviews based on the substantial financial burden of travel and the impact on time away from internship. Some programs will have more than one person conduct phone/skype interviews with a given applicant to provide a greater

sample of the person's fit for the program and interpersonal skills.

APPIC Postdoc Selection Guidelines

1. Brief overview of Selection guidelines

- Postdoc selection has become increasingly more challenging for applicants and programs
- The Postdoctoral Selection Guidelines are an attempt to provide some structure and organization to the postdoctoral selection. This is challenging given the heterogeneity of programs and the absence of a formal national structure or origination for postdoctoral training.
- Programs are free to choose whether they follow the guidelines since there is no mechanism to ensure compliance.
- VA has agreed that all of its programs will follow the guidelines, and APA Division 54 has publicized a list of child-focused programs that have indicated intention to follow the guidelines. ACTTA has encouraged all of its program to follow the guidelines

Simple Overview

1. Give applicants at least two weeks' notice
 2. Consider using remote interview formats.
 3. Wait to make offers until 10:00 AM Eastern Time on Monday February 27, 2017.
 4. Utilize the reciprocal offer option prior to February 27, 2017 only if the top applicant receives a bona fide offer from another postdoctoral training program. Program may require validation of the offer.
 5. Allow applicants to hold regular (non-reciprocal) offers for at least 24 hours.
 6. Notify applicants as soon as they are no longer under consideration and when all positions are filled.
 - ** Two-year clinical neuropsychology programs and predominantly research are exempt.
2. How do I let applicants know if our program is following the APPIC postdoc selection guidelines?
 - This can be indicated in the UPPD listing. You should also provide this information on your program's website or other public materials.
 3. How long can I let an applicant hold an offer?
 - The guidelines suggest that programs offer at least 24 hours but some applicants ask for longer. If it does not create undue burden or cause you to lose potential applicants, you may consider allowing more time.
 4. If my program is following the guidelines, what happens when someone requests a

reciprocal offer?

- Not all programs will use the guidelines and adhere to the 2/27 notification date. Such programs may make other applicants an offer at any time.
- If an applicant requests a reciprocal offer, if they are your top ranked applicant, you can make them an offer on the spot.
- You may request some form of verification of the offer such as an email. Some programs accept the applicant word. You can ask from what program.
- The applicant must accept the offer if you make it.
- If that applicant is not your top ranked applicant, you should not make them a reciprocal since they are your top ranked applicant. Ties are possible but rare, so you could potentially have two top ranked applicants. Some of this is governed by ethics and the honor system since there is no way to police or enforce compliance.
- The applicant may ask where they stand in your rankings. You can respond if you want to. It is recommended that letting the applicant know they are not highly ranked, if you believe there is little to no change that you would be making them an offer. With this information they may accept the original offer or another offer.
- The idea behind the reciprocal offer is so program will not lose their top rank applicant and applicants will not lose out on the opportunity to get their top ranked applicant, if they are also top ranked by the program.
- If you get a request for a reciprocal offer from a #2 or lower applicants, you should not contact your top-ranked applicant.

5. What do I do if I do not have positions filled on February 27th?

- Don't panic. The UPPD allows programs to indicate unfilled positions following 2/27. The UPPD allows applicants to then search for open positions. Many positions get filled after the suggested date.
- IT IS CRITICAL THAT PROGRAM UPDATE THEIR UPPD LISTING ON 2/28 WITH UNFILLED POSITIONS. WE WILL BE EDUCATING AND REMINDING PROGRAMS ABOUT THIS.

6. What do I do when all my positions for a program, track or specialty are filled?

- Notify all remaining applicants that your positions are filled and that you are releasing them from your pool. This will be very helpful in informing their current options.

7. What are the costs/benefits of following the selection guidelines for my program/the applicants/the field?

- As we mentioned earlier, there has been a strong push toward greater consistency in this process through a number of initiatives. At this point, over 900 programs have listed in the UPPD. 95% of non-except (neuro and research) programs listed in the UPPD indicate that they will follow the selection guidelines – overall, these data indicate a substantial increase in using these guidelines and a uniform notification date relative to prior years.

- Programs that don't follow the guidelines will likely be at a distinct disadvantage. If you choose not to follow the selection guidelines, it is possible that you will get turned down by your top applicant if you are not their top-ranked program since they can evoke the reciprocal offer option.
- For ethical reasons and the betterment of the profession. It is true that by following the guidelines, you do not get to make offers whenever is convenient for your program (i.e. if you would prefer to have things resolved earlier than late February
- As for applicants, we believe the more that there is consistency in the process and the offer date, the more it is of benefit to them as they are more likely to be able to make the best decision when their options occur on a coherent timeline – they do not have to accept a less-preferred offer early because they are afraid there won't be options. Overall, more consistency means some compromise on the part of the greater good to benefit the field.