

Council of Chairs of Training Councils

Statement on Furloughing Doctoral Interns and Postdoctoral Fellows in Psychology Training Programs April 30, 2020

For the purpose of this guidance, furlough is defined as an involuntary and temporary separation of individuals from their employer without or at reduced salary and/or benefits. As a personnel matter, furloughs could be implemented through suspensions, terminations, leaves of absence, or other actions.

Like full-time, permanent employees, interns and postdoctoral fellows provide valuable patient care. Yet unlike them, trainees have a time-limited contract with the institution for the purposes of training and trainees earn far less income. Completion of the training program is required for trainees to graduate, become licensed, and/or board certified. Furloughing trainees would place them at a serious immediate financial strain, and could substantially delay their training sequence, result in 1-2 additional years of training, additional student debt, and delayed entry into the workforce, that needs psychologists now more than ever.

CCTC strongly encourages psychology training programs to avoid furloughs of interns/fellows at any time, and including as a result of pandemic-related reduction or cessation of patient care at one or more participating sites.

CCTC strongly recommends that when implementing patient care reductions or cessations in response to COVID-19, institutions and programs should honor the intern/fellow contracts. Conditions of intern/fellow contracts typically include a specified amount of clinical and supervision hours, didactics, salary, benefits, vacation, leaves of absence, grievance procedures, due process, and the provision of information related to graduation, licensure and/or board eligibility.

CCTC encourages programs to make every attempt to ensure that employee furloughs not interfere with the program's ability to ensure sufficient resources to fulfill the training contract, including appropriately supervised and evaluated training experiences. In the dire event that training programs or institutions should have to close due to extraordinary circumstances, institutions and programs should make every effort to ensure educational continuity and fulfillment of contractual obligations to interns and fellows in the clinical learning environment.

This statement was developed and endorsed by the **Council of Chairs of Training Councils** (members listed below). CCTC liaison organizations supporting this statement include the **Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology** (COGDOP) and the **Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education** (WICHE).

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