

Postdoctoral Training in Clinical Neuropsychology

A tip sheet provided by the Educational Advisory Committee (EAC) of the Society for Clinical Neuropsychology (SCN/Div. 40) in collaboration with the Association of Post-Doctoral Programs in Clinical Neuropsychology (APPCN) and Association of Neuropsychology Students in Training (ANST)



Why do a postdoctoral residency in Clinical Neuropsychology?

According to Houston Conference Guidelines (HCG), a two-year postdoctoral residency is required for independent practice in clinical neuropsychology. Additionally, for those who earn doctoral degrees after December 31, 2004, completion of a two-year formal postdoctoral training program is required in order to be eligible for board certification through the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP). Eligibility for board certification through ABPP is specified in the postdoctoral exit criteria included in HCG (available at: <http://www.div40-anst.com/downloadable-materials.html>).

What things should I look for in a postdoctoral residency?

There are many postdoctoral programs. Once you get acquainted with program materials, you should consider applying broadly to programs that meet your training needs (e.g., practice populations/disorders, clinical-research balance, courses and seminars). Questions to ask about the program:

- Does the program follow HCG?
- How is supervision offered (e.g., in-person, individual, on-site, frequency)?
- How many supervisors will I work with, and how many are board-certified?
- How is the program associated with other clinical services, and how do residents interact with faculty and trainees in other professions?

What do I need to do to increase my chances of getting a postdoctoral residency?

The strongest candidates have accumulated clinical and research experience in neuropsychology through graduate school and internship. Attend a doctoral program with clear curricula in neuropsychology and faculty who can supervise neuropsychology research. During graduate training, present and publish research, and complete practica in neuropsychology with multiple supervisors. Become a student member of neuropsychology organizations, and participate in professional activities. Complete a dissertation or major research project in neuropsychology. Apply to multiple postdoctoral programs. Make sure that your graduation is on-track as you are applying to programs and interviewing.

How do I know if a program provides sufficient neuropsychology training?

You should see if the program meets HCG, and whether they are reviewed by any outside group. Programs with specialty accreditation in clinical neuropsychology through APA go through the most rigorous review, including a site visit. Programs that are members of APPCN go through an extensive paper review of their offerings for consistency with HCG.

My site list is complete. Now what?

Check with all of the sites to which you plan to apply, but most will require a cover letter, letters of recommendation, CV, and sample reports. Find out application deadlines. Most applications are due by January, but some deadlines may be earlier. Many programs interview applicants at the International Neuropsychological Society meeting (INS; www.the-ins.org), usually in February, and some programs may interview on-site and/or by phone.

How are offers made?

Many programs (including all APPCN-member programs) use a matching program. A number of non-APPCN programs are in the match, and before each match the National Matching Services (NMS; www.natmatch.com) maintains a listing of programs with positions in the match. Some programs elect not to participate in the match, and make offers individually. The deadline for turning in match rank-order lists varies from year to year, and applicants are encouraged to check the NMS website for details.

Places to find fellowship programs with training in neuropsychology:

Society for Clinical Neuropsychology,
APA Division 40
<https://www.scn40.org/trainee.html>

Association for Postdoctoral
Programs in Clinical Neuropsychology
www.appcn.org

Association of Psychology and
Postdoctoral and Internship Centers
www.appic.org

APA Commission on Accreditation
<http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/about/coa/>

Special Questions Often Asked by Applicants:

Is it acceptable to do a postdoc at the same place I did my internship? Absolutely! This is perfectly appropriate.

What if I'm geographically restricted and can't find a postdoctoral residency in my region? This is a common concern of many fellowship applicants. Unfortunately, neuropsychology postdoctoral residencies are far less common than psychology internships, and applicants have the best chances when they apply to multiple established programs. Because of geographic limitations, some individuals have been able to arrange formal postdoctoral training in their area. However, this may impact eligibility for board certification.