

Illinois School Psychology Internship Consortium (ISPIC)

COVID-19 Policy

Version 7-16-2020

The below guidance outlines the policies and processes enacted by the Illinois School Psychology Internship Consortium (ISPIC) to protect the safety of our interns during the COVID-19 pandemic, while also meeting their training needs and ensuring competencies. The paramount principle is ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of our interns and communities. ISPIC will never require interns to place themselves in an unsafe situation or environment. We will meet training needs with flexibility while maintaining our standards for high quality training. We understand that the pandemic requires we shed our “business as usual” mindset, but does not require deviation from our training aims.

OSHA Risk Level

A review of OSHA Risk Level for Exposure to SARS-CoV-2 classified ISPIC sites as Medium Exposure Risk. Per OSHA,

“Medium exposure risk jobs include those that require frequent and/or close contact with (i.e., within 6 feet of) people who may be infected with SARS-CoV-2, but who are not known or suspected COVID-19 patients.

- In areas without ongoing community transmission, workers in this risk group may have frequent contact with travelers who may return from international locations with widespread COVID-19 transmission.
- In areas where there is ongoing community transmission, workers in this category may have contact with the general public (e.g., schools, high-population-density work environments, some high-volume retail settings).”

Public Health and Personal Hygiene Practices

Regarding public health practices, interns are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures of their individual sites.

ISPIC highly encourages interns to educate themselves on and abide by personal hygiene practices and other precautions to reduce their risk of being infected with COVID-19. This includes:

- Conducting self-screening assessments for symptoms prior to going on-site to work and adhering to the site’s screening procedures.
- Practicing frequent hand sanitization with hand sanitizers (60-95% alcohol-based) or thorough hand washing for at least 20 seconds.
- Maintaining social distancing of at least 6 feet between individuals whenever possible. Where available, utilize physical barriers to minimize exposure risk.

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- When unable to practice social distancing, wearing PPE such as a mask and gloves (if applicable).
- Engaging in regular disinfecting of shared spaces and materials. This includes following disinfecting procedures for assessment materials established by the training site. If the training site has not established such procedures, following those provided by the CDC and/or testing publishers (e.g., Pearson) would be advised.

Interns have the right to a workplace that is designed to maintain their safety while performing their jobs. Sites have developed procedures to ensure such workplace safety, including environmental provisions and resources (e.g., tissues, no touch trash cans, hand soap, hand sanitizer, disinfectants, masks, gloves). If an intern has concerns for the safety of their workplace, these concerns should be communicated to their primary supervisor. See Intern Concerns for other individuals available to provide the intern with consultation and support.

Site-Based Internship Activities

ISPIC recognizes that each site has their own policy and procedures to ensure the safety of their employees, clients, and public and will defer to the judgement of those organizations, as long as interns' safety and training needs are met. As such, interns are expected to perform their job responsibilities and adhere to those policies, which include the modality of tasks (e.g., in-person, remote services).

If changes occur to the delivery system or structure of the internship activities within a training site, interns should work with their primary supervisor to ensure activities maintain adherence to ISPIC requirements. Interns will be responsible for communicating these changes to the ISPIC Training Director and their home universities.

Interns will be required to maintain professional liability insurance in the amount of \$1 million per claim and \$3 million in aggregate to ensure they are protected while engaging in their internship activities. Policies may be covered through university liability coverage or through independent policies, such as those purchased through NASP or APA. Copies of liability coverage should be provided to the ISPIC Central Office to be maintained in individual files.

See Intern Concerns for ISPIC's process of addressing any concerns that may arise related to internship activities.

ISPIC Training Events and Offerings

ISPIC aims to provide a high-quality training curriculum, foster a strong sense of cohort cohesion, minimize risk of exposure to COVID-19, and maximize intern wellbeing. In response to those aims, our consortium-wide training will consist of the following:

- ISPIC will continue to facilitate a training calendar with 1-2 full-day seminars per month hosted by various sites across the consortium. Training seminars (including Orientation)

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between August and February will be facilitated remotely. Remote format will be considered for later seminars as well, depending on the current safety concerns. To minimize “Zoom fatigue,” presenters will be encouraged to consider asynchronous training activities for interns to complete, as well as facilitate interaction and engagement during synchronous presentations. These training seminars will include an intern-only lunch break for socialization.

- The ISPIC Social Justice and Equitable Practice Curriculum will continue to involve monthly, remote meetings with smaller groups of interns to facilitate greater engagement and discussion.
- To enhance connection across the cohort and develop collegiality, interns will participate in monthly, remote peer consultation meetings.
- Interns will be highly encouraged to reserve time in their schedules for regular, optional cohort socialization. The Intern Representatives will direct the development of these activities. Ideas could include weekly wellness lunch breaks, monthly Zoom-based cooking challenges, game nights, and peer consultation meetings. Each training seminar will also include a one-hour lunch break for interns only.
- There will be a Training Director COVID-19 Questions & Answers Google doc available to interns to raise procedural or administrative questions and disseminate information to the intern cohort. Regular, optional Town Hall meetings will also be facilitated remotely for interns to raise any questions.
- Supervisors and interns will be provided training on telesupervision best practices during Orientation.
- Optional ISPIC supervisor metasupervision meetings will be initially scheduled on a monthly basis to discuss and problem-solve any barriers to training activities resulting from COVID-19. These meetings will likely revert to quarterly as the training year progresses.

Evaluation of Intern Perceptions and Wellbeing

Due to the increased uncertainty and stress brought upon by COVID, ISPIC will solicit monthly feedback from interns regarding their perceptions of their safety and wellbeing, and seek to identify any further support needed. If concerns are voiced, a member of the ISPIC Concerns Committee will work with the intern (and likely primary supervisor) to resolve.

Interns should feel no restrictions in sharing their concerns sooner, if support is needed.

Intern Concerns

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Interns are encouraged to share any concerns they have regarding their training to ensure a prompt and supportive response can be identified. These concerns can be raised to the Internship Representatives, primary supervisor, Training Director, or a member of the Intern Concerns Committee. Furthermore, interns may always contact their university supervisors and request advocacy on their behalf. It is our hope that any concerns can be resolved informally. This informal process, as well as the process for submitting a formal grievance is outlined in [ISPIC's Procedures of Evaluation, Grievance, and Termination](#).

In the Event of Illness or Quarantine

Interns are expected to follow site procedures should they (or a loved one) become ill or subject to a period of quarantine.

Requesting Accommodations

ISPIC recognizes that interns may seek accommodations for their internship activities related to the physical and/or social-emotional effects of COVID-19. These requests and decisions rest with the internship sites, though ISPIC can serve as a mediator or advocate on the intern's behalf. The ISPIC Training Director does not need to be notified of accommodation requests or provisions, unless further support from ISPIC is requested.

Interns are encouraged to educate themselves on their rights in the workplace. Below are links to information that may be helpful to consider.

- [The ADA and Managing Reasonable Accommodation Requests from Employees with Disability in Response to COVID-19](#)
- [What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](#)

Leave of Absence

ISPIC recognizes the unprecedented challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has presented to individuals, families, and communities. It is our intention to flexibly support our interns' wellbeing, and not introduce any feelings of coercion or scrutiny.

If an intern is feeling unable to meet the responsibilities of their internship, they are encouraged to seek a leave of absence. These requests and decisions rest with the internship sites, though ISPIC can serve as a mediator or advocate on the intern's behalf. The ISPIC Training Director should be notified of any submitted requests for a leave of absence, as well as the outcome of the decision and plan for return.

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Policy Revisions

This policy will be reviewed for updates by the ISPIC COVID-19 Committee on a quarterly basis or upon request for review by a Governing Board member or a membership or accrediting body (i.e., APA, APPIC). Policy revisions will be disseminated to all interns and home universities, as well as updated on the ISPIC website.

Questions

Paula Allee-Smith
ISPIC Training Director
(309) 438-7407
pjallee@ilstu.edu