



**Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System**  
**Purpose, Organization, Policies, and Procedures**

**POPP Manual**

**2012**

**Authorized by PCSAS Board of Directors: 05/26/2011**  
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# Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System

## Purpose, Organization, Policies, and Procedures

POPP Manual - 2012

### I. Purpose

#### A. Overview

The Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System, Inc. (PCSAS) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental body established to provide rigorous, objective, and empirically based accreditation of Ph.D. programs in psychological clinical science (the terms *psychological clinical science* and *scientific clinical psychology* are used interchangeably). PCSAS's ultimate purpose is to serve the public interest by using the leverage of accreditation to promote superior science-centered education and training in clinical psychology, to increase the quality and quantity of clinical scientists contributing to the advancement of public health, and to enhance the scientific knowledge base for mental and behavioral health care.

Psychological clinical science is an applied science dedicated to generating new knowledge regarding the nature of psychological problems, and to translating that knowledge into applications that improve the human condition. PCSAS's focus on promoting training that integrates research and application is predicated on the assumption that public health will be served best by clinical psychologists who are trained as *scientists* and who use their knowledge and skills to advance basic knowledge as well as to develop, evaluate, and disseminate more cost-effective interventions, assessments, and prevention strategies.

PCSAS accreditation is awarded in only one domain: to doctoral training programs that grant Ph.D. degrees in psychology with a core focus on the specialty of psychological clinical science. The scope of PCSAS accreditation is limited to programs housed in departments of psychology (or their equivalent) within accredited, non-profit, research-intensive universities in the U.S. and Canada. PCSAS accreditation is not intended for programs with a sole or chief mission of training psychologists for specialized careers in applied clinical work. To be accredited by PCSAS, a doctoral program must demonstrate that it provides students with high-quality, science-centered education and training in research and application, and that it has established a clear record of producing graduates who have demonstrated that they are competent (a) to conduct research relevant to the assessment, prevention, treatment, and understanding of health and mental health disorders; and (b) to use science methods and evidence to design, develop, select, evaluate, deliver, supervise, and disseminate empirically based assessments, interventions, and prevention strategies. The program's commitment to integrative training in research and application must be evident and coherent in its curriculum and operation, apparent in the accomplishments of its faculty and graduates, and explicit in its documents, public disclosures, and website.

PCSAS-accredited programs will prepare their graduates to assume independent responsibility for ensuring the delivery of mental and behavioral health care of the highest quality—whether the graduates themselves are delivering the care or are overseeing its delivery by others. The structure of tomorrow's health care system—who delivers what services to whom—should be decided based on the best scientific evidence available. Clinical psychologists trained as scientists in PCSAS-accredited programs will be qualified to play leading roles in designing, building, overseeing, and evaluating the science-driven health-care system of tomorrow.

PCSAS accreditation is voluntarily. Its positive influence stems from the trust and authority accorded to it by applicants, and from the value of the information it provides to the public. Because PCSAS awards its distinctive imprimatur only to high-quality, science-centered clinical programs that arm their graduates with the essential skills and knowledge to be productive and competent psychological scientists, the PCSAS “brand” provides prospective students, health-care consumers, policy makers, and the public at large with the information they need to discriminate among the diverse and often confusing array of clinical psychology and other mental health programs, graduates, and services. If a clinical program lacks PCSAS accreditation, this does not necessarily mean that it offers low-quality training, as some good programs may not have applied for PCSAS accreditation. However, the public can rest assured that every PCSAS-accredited program has been evaluated thoroughly and has a proven record of providing high-quality, science-centered doctoral training in clinical psychology.

Two hallmarks of the PCSAS system are: (a) an emphasis on proximal and distal *outcome evidence* to evaluate a program's quality and success; and (b) *flexibility* in evaluating how programs structure their training to produce psychological scientists who effectively integrate research and application, which is the core PCSAS training objective. The flexibility hallmark reflects the fact that different programs may employ different pedagogical strategies and methods to achieve similar positive results. However, just as grant review panels typically find when evaluating diverse grant proposals, PCSAS expects the most successful accreditation applicants to have key characteristics in common—namely, clearly articulated goals, coherent plans for achieving the goals, and records of achievement that augur well for continued success. The burden of proof regarding the success of a program's pedagogical approach rests with the applicant program.

## **B. PCSAS Mission Statement**

The PCSAS mission is to advance public health by using the leverage of accreditation to promote science-centered education and training in clinical psychology. Thus, PCSAS accredits only doctoral programs that graduate psychological clinical scientists who generate new knowledge relating to mental and behavioral health problems, and who actively use this knowledge to help advance public health. The PCSAS mission is supported by five inter-related sub-goals:

1. To advance the field of scientific clinical psychology by promoting the highest standards of education and training in psychological clinical science. Although PCSAS accreditation is

limited to Ph.D. programs, it is expected to have a ripple effect, encouraging science-centered education in clinical psychology and other mental health disciplines across the spectrum of educational institutions, levels, and programs.

2. To increase the number of well-trained psychological clinical scientists who actively contribute to the advancement of knowledge and methods related to the origins, nature, diagnosis, amelioration, and prevention of mental and behavioral health problems.
3. To produce a new cadre of integrative and trans-disciplinary psychological clinical scientists who, in their research and application, employ scientific methods and theories from across a broad range of scientific perspectives to help advance our knowledge about important public health problems; and to develop, deliver, and evaluate cost-effective solutions for such problems.
4. To promote education and training aimed at enhancing the quality, availability, and reliability of up-to-date, empirically supported, cost-effective, efficient, and safe services in mental and behavioral health care.
5. To contribute to the dissemination of knowledge and cost-effective services that will help reduce the incidence of mental and behavioral health problems; promote adaptive functioning; improve the quality, availability, safety, and impact of mental and behavioral health-care delivery; and improve the public's general health and well-being.

### **C. PCSAS Functions**

The primary functions and activities of PCSAS are these:

1. To formulate and implement accreditation policies, procedures, and criteria in support of PCSAS's stated accreditation mission and goals, and to adapt and refine these activities through a process of continuous quality improvement.
2. To review and evaluate the performance records and overall quality of the education and training provided by the doctoral programs in psychological clinical science that apply for initial or renewed PCSAS accreditation.
3. To coordinate site visits to applicant doctoral programs as an integral part of the review and evaluation process.
4. To appoint leading psychological clinical scientists and science educators to the PCSAS Review Committee, and to take responsibility for the accreditation decisions rendered by this committee, based on the collective expert judgments of its members.
5. To provide applicant programs and the public with timely and informative summaries of the Review Committee's evaluations and accreditation decisions.

6. To obtain and maintain annual reports from PCSAS-accredited programs; analyze and evaluate the data in these reports; and provide programs and the public with useful summaries of the information gleaned from these reports.
7. To engage in self-study and self-evaluation of PCSAS operations for the purpose of enhancing the performance and assuring the quality of PCSAS accreditation, and to provide the public with summaries of these self-studies.
8. To sponsor science-centered educational activities, such as conferences, workshops, publications, continuing education programs, or research, for the purpose of improving the quality and impact of educational activities, methods, and services in scientific clinical psychology.
9. To maintain active communications with relevant stakeholders regarding PCSAS accreditation and shared interests in scientific, educational, and public health issues.
10. To build and maintain a sound fiscal foundation and business plan that will help to ensure PCSAS's viability and performance over time.

#### **D. Guiding Principles**

Four principles serve as the cornerstones for the PCSAS organization:

Transparency: For PCSAS accreditation to achieve its mission, the public must have timely access to the organization's purposes, operations, policies, and procedures, as well as its criteria, evaluations, and actions. Thus, PCSAS is committed to operating with maximum transparency and openness, even as it balances this commitment with the need to protect the privacy rights of individuals and institutions and to ensure the confidentiality that is essential to safeguarding the integrity of the accreditation review process itself.

Clarity: PCSAS is committed to the principle of clear and efficient communications. Thus, PCSAS pledges to represent itself as clearly and fully as possible. PCSAS's most public voice is its website ([pcsas.org](http://pcsas.org)), which provides an accessible overview of the organization's purposes, operations, policies, and procedures, as well as its achievements. The website is updated regularly and provides links to relevant supplementary information. The official spokespersons for PCSAS—the Executive Director (ED) and President of the PCSAS Board of Directors—strive to respond promptly and fully to inquiries and requests for information. This manual offers the most comprehensive and detailed summary of PCSAS.

Integrity: PCSAS is committed to the principle of integrity. Thus, PCSAS pledges to represent itself accurately to the public, to fulfill its promises, to behave ethically, and to be held accountable for its actions and results.

Responsibility: PCSAS is committed to the principle that PCSAS, as an accreditation agency, is a public trust. Thus, PCSAS pledges to promote the highest standards of doctoral

education, to base its actions and decisions on the best empirical evidence available, and to serve the public's interests above all others.

## **II. Corporate Organization**

### **A. Legal**

1. PCSAS is represented by the legal firm of Morris, Nichols, Arsht & Tunnell LLP, PO Box 1347, 1201 N. Market St., Wilmington, DE 19801.

2. PCSAS was incorporated in the State of Delaware on December 26, 2007.

3. PCSAS's Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) is #26-3018654.

4. PCSAS's bylaws, drafted and filed in the incorporation process, were approved by the PCSAS Board of Directors at its inaugural meeting in January of 2008. The Board amended the bylaws in March of 2010 and again in September 2011.

5. The IRS granted PCSAS tax-exempt status as a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation on April 3, 2010, effective retroactively to December 26, 2007, making contributions to PCSAS from that date forward tax deductible. The organization's public charity status is 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

6. The organization's fiscal year ends June 30. PCSAS currently files annual reports in two states: Delaware, where it is incorporated; and Indiana, where its offices now are located. PCSAS is recognized as a tax-exempt corporation by both states. PCSAS also files as required with the IRS.

7. PCSAS maintains Professional Liability Insurance coverage with AXIS Surplus Insurance Company, purchased through the agency of Willis of Maryland, Inc. This insurance is intended to protect the corporation and its directors, officers, employees, agents, and others related to the corporation against any expense, liability or loss.

8. From the corporation's start, in December 2007, until August 2010, PCSAS offices were located at 1133 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20005-2727, in space provided through the kindness of the Association for Psychological Science. In August 2010, PCSAS offices were moved to their current location, 1101 East Tenth Street, IU Psychology Building, Bloomington, IN 47405-7007, in space generously provided by Indiana University's Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences.

### **B. Structure & Personnel**

1. PCSAS was founded by the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science (the "Academy"), an organization of science-centered doctoral training programs and internship programs in clinical psychology. The PCSAS bylaws stipulate that the Academy's Executive Committee, which is elected by the Academy's member programs, is responsible for

appointing the members of the PCSAS Board of Directors. To ensure the independence of PCSAS and to safeguard the objectivity and integrity of PCSAS accreditation, the bylaws built a “fire-wall” to separate the two organizations. No Academy Executive Committee member may serve on the PCSAS Board of Directors. Programs are not required to be members of the Academy to apply for PCSAS accreditation. The Academy has no direct control over PCSAS’s operations, procedures, or accreditation decisions. The PCSAS Board has independent authority to repeal or amend PCSAS’s bylaws, and to determine its operations, policies, and procedures.

2. PCSAS is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors (the “Board”). Board members serve staggered, three-year, renewable terms. Board members serve without compensation, although their Board-related expenses are reimbursed. Board members are granted indemnification. Five Board seats are filled by psychological clinical scientists affiliated with Academy doctoral programs. The remaining seats are filled by one representative from each of four other stakeholder groups: (a) a current or recent clinical science doctoral student from an Academy program; (b) a non-clinical psychological scientist from a department with an Academy program; (c) a current or former chair of a Psychology Department with an Academy program; and (d) a public member with credentials in a field other than psychology. No more than one Board member affiliated with a given university or institution may serve on the Board at any one time. A Board member may be terminated prematurely only for “due cause,” as defined in the bylaws, and only by the procedures specified in the bylaws. The Board is self-organizing, electing a President from among its members, and filling other positions as the Board sees fit (e.g., recording secretary; finance committee). Except when appointed to fill a vacancy, a new Board member’s term begins with the Board’s annual May meeting. Current Board members, their seats, affiliations, and terms, are as follows:

Clinical Scientists:

Timothy B. Baker, University of Wisconsin (2009-2012)  
Richard R. Bootzin (Pres.), University of Arizona (2010-2013)  
Constance Hammen, University of California-Los Angeles (2010-2013)  
Robert W. Levenson (Sec.), University of California-Berkeley (2011-2014)  
Robert F. Simons, University of Delaware (2009-2012)

Clinical Science Current or Recent Graduate Student:

Rebecca L. Siltan, (Univ. of Illinois grad) Loyola Univ. Chicago (2009-2012)

Non-clinical Psychological Scientist:

Henry L. Roediger III, Washington University in St. Louis (2011-2014)

Current or Former Psychology Department Chair:

Joseph E. Steinmetz (Finance), The Ohio State University (2011-2014)

Non-psychologist Public Member:

Douglas W. Rae (Finance), Yale School of Management (2010-2013)

3. Applications for PCSAS accreditation are evaluated by a nine-member Review Committee (RC)—a standing committee defined in the PCSAS bylaws. RC members are appointed by the PCSAS Board to serve staggered, three-year, renewable terms. Board members are eligible to serve on the RC. RC members serve without compensation,

although their committee-related expenses are reimbursed. RC members are granted indemnification. Except when appointed to fill a vacancy, a new RC member's term begins February 1<sup>st</sup>, which allows participation in the review process leading up to the May RC meeting. RC members are selected based on their scientific qualifications; areas of expertise; and educational, professional, and administrative credentials. In keeping with the policies of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) regarding equal opportunities to serve on governing bodies, RC members are selected without regard to their race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, affiliations, or other factors not directly relevant to their qualifications for this service. RC members are selected to represent the cutting edge in psychological clinical science, with the collective breadth and expertise to evaluate the quality of applicants' doctoral programs. An RC member may be terminated prematurely only for "due cause," as defined in the bylaws, and by the procedures specified in the bylaws. The RC is self-organizing, electing a Chair from among its members, and filling other positions as the committee sees fit. With Board approval, the RC may be assisted by ad hoc reviewers, who may attend the review sessions and contribute to discussions, but only as advisory, non-voting participants. Current RC members are:

Timothy B. Baker, University of Wisconsin (2010-2013)  
Deanna M. Barch, Washington University in St. Louis (2010-2013)  
Dianne L. Chambless, University of Pennsylvania (2011-2014)  
Daniel N. Klein, Stony Brook University (2010-2012, filling vacated term)  
Gayla Margolin, University of Southern California (2011-2014)  
Richard J. McNally, Harvard University (2009-2012)  
Gregory A. Miller, University of Delaware (2009-2012)  
Robert F. Simons (RC Chair), University of Delaware (2010-2013)  
Teresa A. Treat, University of Iowa (2011-2014)

4. The on-going business affairs and accrediting operations of PCSAS are managed by a paid Executive Director (ED) hired by the Board as a part-time (40%), independent contractor. The ED serves at the Board's pleasure and under its direction. The ED is granted indemnification. The ED and Board President are the official spokespersons for PCSAS. The ED is custodian of the corporation's finances, records, and other corporate business. The ED deals with government officials as necessary to maintain the corporation's non-profit status; manages PCSAS's relationships with "recognition" agencies (e.g., CHEA, Veterans' Affairs, Licensing Boards); oversees the website ([pcsas.org](http://pcsas.org)); coordinates the Board meetings (in consultation with the Board President); attends Board meetings as a non-voting participant; serves as the RC's executive secretary; organizes all RC activities (in consultation with the RC Chair); attends RC meetings as a non-voting participant; and manages the corporation's correspondence with applicants, organizations, governmental agencies, and the public. The PCSAS bylaws state that the Board should attempt to select an ED "with a Ph.D. in psychological clinical science (e.g., clinical psychology), experience in training doctoral students in clinical psychology for research careers, a record of scientific contributions, and a commitment to advancing the cause of psychological clinical science." The current ED is Richard M. McFall, Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, Indiana University.

5. The ED is supported by a paid, part-time (estimated at 100 hours per year), Administrative Assistant (AA) hired by the Board as an independent contractor. The AA assists the ED, under his direction, in managing incoming mail and phone calls, bills and receipts, correspondence, and financial and other records. The AA is granted indemnification. The current AA is Lana G. Fish, whose primary employment is Assistant to the Chair, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, Indiana University.

6. In the fall of 2010, the Board appointed a computer consultant to help the ED, on an as-needed basis, in designing, building, and maintaining PCSAS's website and server. The current consultant is Steven Salter. His primary appointment is as a software specialist on the technical support staff of the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, Indiana University.

7. In December 2010, the Board appointed Gregory Stokes, CPA, of Monroe Shine Co., 1227 15th Street, Bedford, IN 47421, on a fee-for-services basis, to provide PCSAS with financial services and support, including preparing and filing the corporation's taxes and required corporate reports, and conducting an annual audit.

8. As noted previously, PCSAS has secured the legal services of Morris, Nichols, Arsht & Tunnell LLP. PCSAS's primary attorney in that firm is Mary B. Graham, who has provided her legal services with support from Kimberly Gill and other specialists in the firm, as needed.

9. The PCSAS Board has sought the support and council of distinguished clinical scientists on a variety of important matters, ranging from funding, to organizational issues, to educational and scientific issues. To formalize this advisory role, the Board created the Advisory Council. The following distinguished scientists have agreed to serve on the Council without compensation for open-ended terms.

David Barlow, Boston University  
Aaron Beck, University of Pennsylvania  
Edna Foa, University of Pennsylvania  
Peter Lang, University of Florida  
Walter Mischel, Columbia University  
Peter Salovey, Yale University  
Lee Sechrest, University of Arizona

### **C. Finances**

1. Expenses: The projected PCSAS operating budget for 2011-2012 is \$279,610. This total is broken down as follows: (a) Personnel & Services: \$104,000; (b) Corporate Indemnity Insurance: \$10,000; (c) Travel & Meeting Expenses: \$127,500; (d) Office Expenses: \$6,110; (e) CHEA Recognition: \$12,000; (f) Other: \$20,000.

2. Income: To the extent it is feasible, PCSAS is intended to be self-supporting. However, until the number of applicants and accredited programs reaches a critical level,

the revenues generated by fees and dues alone will not be sufficient to cover PCSAS's operating costs. In the interim, PCSAS must obtain income from additional sources. To date, these sources have been sufficient to meet the organization's expenses; PCSAS ended the 2010 fiscal year in the black. To ensure the organization's long-term survival, PCSAS hopes to build an endowment fund of \$5M. The current funding sources are these:

(a) *Fees from Applicants and Dues from Accredited Programs.* The non-refundable application fee for PCSAS accreditation is \$10,000. A \$1,000 "eligibility-initiation" fee is submitted with an applicant's Letter of Intent; if the program is deemed eligible to apply, the fee balance is due with the program's full application. Annual dues for accredited programs are \$2,000. (*Note: until PCSAS has earned "recognition" from the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, CHEA, these fees and dues are discounted 50%.*)

(b) *Founders' Circle Fund: For Universities.* Universities sympathetic to the PCSAS mission are urged to underwrite PCSAS by contributing to the Founders' Circle Fund. To join the Founders' Circle, institutions pledge to contribute \$15,000 per year for five years. To date, 16 pioneering universities have joined the Founders' Circle:

Harvard University  
Indiana University  
Northwestern University  
Purdue University  
Stony Brook University  
The Ohio State University  
University of Arizona  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of Delaware  
University of Illinois—U/C  
University of Kentucky  
University of Missouri  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Southern California  
University of Wisconsin  
Washington University in St. Louis

Founders' Circle contributions have no influence on the PCSAS Review Committee's evaluations of applications; all applicant programs are held to the same high standards. However, if Founders' Circle members wish, they may move to the head of the review queue when applying for accreditation. When they apply, all their application fees are waived. If they are accredited, they pay no dues for their first five years. They also are recognized publicly for their pioneering support. Above all, they may take pride in knowing that they helped advance public health through their support of science-centered doctoral education in clinical psychology.

(c) *Patrons' Fund: For Private Individuals and Estates.* Individuals who support PCSAS's mission may donate to the Patrons' Fund, contributing whatever their

circumstances permit. These donations are tax deductible, within the limits of the current tax code. Donors may remain anonymous if they wish; otherwise, PCSAS gratefully acknowledges donors on its website. Contributions to the Patrons' Fund are categorized into five levels: Crystal (up to \$999); Silver (\$1,000 to \$2,499); Gold (\$2,500 to \$4,999); Platinum (\$5,000 to \$9,999); and Diamond (\$10,000 or more). Larger contributions will receive special recognition. Donors may channel their contributions either toward underwriting PCSAS's annual expenses or toward building PCSAS's Endowment Fund.

(d) *Benefactors' Fund: For Corporations and Institutions.* Corporations and institutions sympathetic to the PCSAS mission are encouraged to show their support by contributing to the Benefactors' Fund. These gifts are tax deductible, within the limits of the applicable tax code and individual circumstances, and may be designated for particular purposes.

(e) *Grant Funds:* PCSAS also is seeking grant funds from Federal agencies, private foundations, and other sources of grant support. To date, PCSAS has received one grant of \$45,000 from the Dana Foundation.

### **III. Operational Policies & Procedures**

#### **A. Board of Directors**

1. Powers & Responsibilities. The Board is responsible for directing and overseeing the business affairs and accrediting functions of PCSAS, and may act as it sees fit—except as proscribed by law or as might jeopardize the corporation's tax-exempt status—to fulfill these responsibilities. The Board has the authority to revise the corporation's aims, organization, principles, guidelines, policies, and procedures. This includes amending or repealing the corporate bylaws, which requires an affirmative vote of at least six Board members. The Board will inform accredited programs, CHEA, interested organizations, and the public of such changes and their purposes.

2. Board Meetings. The PCSAS bylaws require the Board to meet—in person, by phone, or by some other electronic means—at least once each year. Provided all participants can hear one another, remote participation constitutes “presence at the meeting.” Special meetings may be called, either by one-third of the members or by the President, at a specified place, date, and time. These also may be attended in person, by phone, or by other electronic means. Each member of the Board must be given notice of the arrangements for regular and special meetings, including the business to be transacted, at least seven days in advance, if given in writing, or at least five days in advance, if transmitted by facsimile or electronic mail. The ED, in consultation with the President, coordinates plans for Board meetings. Board business is conducted in the order and manner set by the Board President. The participation of six Board members is required to constitute a quorum for all purposes. In the absence of a quorum, the majority of those present may adjourn the meeting to another place, date, or time, without further notice. All matters are decided by the affirmative vote of at least five Board members in attendance.

Board matters may be decided without a meeting, if all members of the Board consent in writing, and the written consent is filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Board.

To date, the Board has held an annual in-person meeting each May, plus one annual telephone meeting in January or February. In addition, the Board has conducted other business as necessary via e-mail exchanges or by special teleconference meetings.

3. Accreditation Role. The Board holds the legal responsibility for the operation of the accreditation system, and for safeguarding the integrity of the accreditation process and its decisions. However, the Board neither reviews applications nor makes accreditation decisions. To insulate the accreditation process from outside influences and to protect the independence, objectivity, and validity of PCSAS's accreditation decisions, the Board delegates the authority for all reviews and decisions to the independent review committee of selected experts in psychological clinical science research, application, and education. The Board appoints the RC members; establishes the policies, procedures, standards, and criteria governing the RC's operation; and monitors the RC's performance to ensure compliance with the Board's guidelines. However, the Board may not interfere with the RC's reviews of individual cases; nor may it overrule or alter the RC's accreditation decisions. Applicants cannot appeal the RC's decisions; the committee's decisions are final (except in the case of error, as noted below) and are not open to review by the Board or by any other entity.

Before the RC's decisions are official, however, the RC must provide the Board with a written or oral report of its procedures and actions, including a brief summary of its evaluation and accreditation decision for each application, and this report must be ratified by the Board. The Board's ratification is a formal declaration that the RC's review procedures and decisions were in compliance with PCSAS's established policies, procedures, standards, and criteria. The Board's ratification decision applies to the entire RC report, and requires an affirmative vote by five Board members present. The ratification step serves two functions. First, it helps the Board exercise its quality control responsibility by highlighting aspects of the review process that might need improvement. Second, in the unlikely event the Board deems the RC's actions to be in serious non-compliance, the Board may fail to ratify the report. The RC then would need to correct the non-compliant parts of its review process—for *all* applications in the reported group, except where the fault pertained to particular site visits—and report again to the Board.

## **B. Review Committee**

1. RC Meetings. The two functions of the RC are (a) to review and evaluate applications for accreditation and (b) to decide which applicant programs merit PCSAS accreditation. RC members meet twice each year to review applications and make accreditation decisions—in late May and in late November or early December. The ED, in consultation with the RC's Chair and members, schedules the RC meetings and coordinates all arrangements. If RC members are unable to attend in person, they may participate by telephone or video conferencing. The RC normally devotes one full day to conducting its business meeting. Each fall, the RC also reviews required annual reports from accredited

programs. At every meeting, committee members discuss their experiences with the review system and consider proposals for making quality improvements.

To prepare for RC meetings, committee members must do a significant amount of homework. They read the application materials from each program under review; write and submit draft reviews of the programs for which they are assigned as Primary or Secondary Reviewer; read other RC members' draft reviews of the applications; and, if appointed to a Site Visit team, conduct the visit and co-author the team's report. Essentially, RC members do the heavy lifting in the PCSAS accreditation system. If the committee's workload requires, ad hoc reviewers approved by the Board may be enlisted to help with reviews or site visits. Ad hoc reviewers are expected to participate in the discussion of any program they reviewed, but they do not have a vote.

Site visits are a critical and required part of all accreditation reviews. Each site visit is conducted by a two-person team appointed by the RC Chair, in consultation with the ED. All current RC members have the experience and training to qualify as PCSAS site visitors. New RC members and ad hoc site visitors will receive training, if necessary, by studying sample reviews and/or by serving as the secondary member of a site visit team, paired with a veteran team leader. The special role and focus of PCSAS site visits is summarized in the "preface" of PCSAS site visit reports. (See Appendix A.)

Because the RC has the sole responsibility for all PCSAS accreditation reviews and decisions, protecting the integrity of the review process is essential. Thus, to isolate the RC reviews and decisions from outside influences that might undermine their objectivity and independence, RC meetings are not open to the public, and the proceedings are not recorded. Votes on all accreditation decisions are by secret ballot. The identities of the Primary and Secondary reviewers for each program are confidential. All participants are required to keep the proceedings and votes of RC meetings confidential. Upon appointment to the RC, each new member must read and sign the PCSAS *Conflict of Interest Policy* (see Appendix B). Prior to each RC meeting, RC members also must sign two other forms: (a) the *RC Confidentiality & Communications Policies* (see Appendix C), in which they pledge to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings; and (b) the *RC Conflict of Interest Policy* (see Appendix D), on which they must inform the RC Chair of any potential conflicts of interest they may have in relation to each of the specific programs under review. Some cases are clear-cut, such as when a committee member is on the faculty of an applicant program; in such a case, the person must be absent during the review of that program. Individuals may recuse themselves for any other reason, if they feel it appropriate. The RC Chair may decide whether a potential conflict warrants action. If the Chair is uncertain, the issue will be decided by a simple majority vote of the unaffected RC participants via a secret ballot. The committee has two options: (a) the individual may be required to recuse herself/himself and to be absent during the review of the affected application; (b) the individual may be judged to have no significant conflict, and be allowed to participate fully in the committee's review and decision.

The ED, in consultation with the Chair, coordinates plans for the RC meetings. RC reviews are conducted in the order and manner set by the committee's Chair. The review process is

similar to that of a grant review panel at NIH or NSF. Applications are considered one at a time, and are judged against absolute standards. The Primary Reviewer starts by summarizing her/his written report; next the Secondary Reviewer offers a briefer summary covering additional information or offering other perspectives; then the Site Visit team presents its report, emphasizing on-site information that might shed light on questions or concerns raised by the first two reviewers. Following the three reviews, the whole committee discusses the case. Committee members vote on the application only after they feel satisfied that the program has been examined thoroughly and fairly.

2. RC Decisions. All official RC decisions and actions require a quorum of at least six (6) members participating. A favorable accreditation decision requires the approval of at least five (5) RC members. Only those RC members present throughout the entire review of a given application are eligible to vote. Participants cast secret ballots, voting for one of three options. If no option initially receives the required votes, the committee votes again, choosing between the two options with the most prior votes:

Accredit: The majority of the committee may vote in favor of accreditation. PCSAS confers only one level of accreditation status: *fully accredited*. Barring significant negative changes in a program, accreditation is for a period of ten years. However, the RC monitors accredited programs by requiring an *Annual Report* each fall (see Appendix E). If the information in the annual report raises questions about a program's stability or quality, the committee may ask for a more extensive interim report. Based on the new information, the committee may decide to (a) take no action, (b) require remedial steps, or (c) terminate the program's accreditation.

Defer: The majority of the committee may vote to defer final action on an application pending further clarification or receipt of additional information. The committee will explain in detail the basis for its deferral, the nature of the concerns, and the conditions—including a timetable—the applicant must meet. Once the program has satisfied these conditions, the committee will resume its review and decide either to accredit or to deny accreditation.

Deny: The majority of the committee may vote to deny accreditation. In that case, the program may "revise and resubmit" its application without prejudice. Although RC decisions are final, with no provisions for an appeal, in the rare event of a factual or procedural error, the RC may elect (by a positive vote of at least 3 members) to re-review a program's original application, without amendment, at the committee's next opportunity.

3. Appeal Policy. Applicants denied accreditation may file an appeal of the decision within 20 days of receiving written notice of the decision. Grounds for an appeal are: (1) that PCSAS's denial was arbitrary and capricious (i.e., its underlying findings, based on the evidence of record, have no reasonable basis); or (2) that PCSAS failed to follow its governing procedures in a way that may have materially affected the outcome. All appeals must be in writing, and must specify in detail the grounds for the appeal. The appeal must be submitted electronically to the Executive Director, who will forward it to the Board of

Directors for consideration and action. The same appeal process applies to programs notified that their accreditation has been terminated; in case of such an appeal, the program's accreditation status will be continued until the final decision on the appeal has been rendered. Because appeals procedures are intended to correct procedural errors, they carry no separate costs to the programs.

If a majority of the Board of Directors concludes that the appeal has no potential merit, the Board will not forward the appeal to the Review Committee for consideration and possible action, thereby ending the appeal process. The program will be notified of this decision in writing. If a majority of the Board of Directors concludes that the appeal has potential merit, the Board will forward the appeal to the Review Committee for consideration and possible action. If, based on the written appeal, three or more Review Committee members vote to reconsider the appealed decision, the Review Committee will review the original application based solely on the original record. The Review Committee will report its final decision on the appeal to the Board of Directors for ratification and the program will be notified in writing. If the initial denial is upheld, there is no further appeal. (Adopted by the PCSAS Board of Directors, January 27, 2012.)

4. **Feedback.** Only the ED is empowered to communicate with applicant programs on behalf of PCSAS regarding the review process, evaluations, and outcomes. These communications must be presented in a manner that protects the confidentiality and integrity of the process. Following each RC meeting, the ED prepares a report that summarizes for each applicant program the RC's evaluations and decisions regarding its application. The RC Chair reviews and approves the accuracy of these summaries before they are sent to the programs. To promote continuous quality improvement, PCSAS invites feedback from all applicants regarding their experiences with the accreditation process.

5. **Public Information.** Accredited programs are expected to publicize their PCSAS accreditation on their websites. The PCSAS website publicizes the names of programs that have been deemed eligible to apply for accreditation and that have been accredited. PCSAS does not wish to stigmatize unsuccessful applicants; on the contrary, PCSAS hopes its positive focus on the outstanding achievements of the high quality accredited programs will inspire all programs to strive for excellence. To this end, PCSAS vigorously promotes its accreditation mission, "brand," and activities through a variety of outreach and public relations efforts. (See the *Relevant Publications and Links* page of the PCSAS website.)

### **C. Application Process**

1. **Inquiry.** Programs interested in applying for PCSAS accreditation will contact the ED (rmmcfall@pcsas.org), who will send them an *Initiation Packet*, which explains the application process, the associated fees, and the requirements for programs to be deemed eligible to apply. The *Initiation Packet* includes instructions and a template for the *Letter of Intent* plus a legal *PCSAS Agreement Form*, which is a waiver of applicants' rights to sue PCSAS over its accreditation decisions. (See Appendix F for the *Initiation Packet* and accompanying *Template for Letter of Intent*. See Appendix G for the *Agreement Form*.)

2. *Initiation.* Programs that remain interested must submit a three-page Letter of Intent, sign and return the PCSAS Agreement, and pay the “initiation fee.” (Initiation and application fees are waived for Founders’ Circle members.) In the Letter of Intent, programs must declare their intent to apply, must explain how the program satisfies PCSAS’s eligibility requirements, and must agree that if deemed eligible for PCSAS accreditation, they will (a) conduct a detailed self-study prior to preparing their application and provide an accurate summary of our self-study results in their application materials; (b) provide the PCSAS Reviews Committee with all the information it requires; (c) arrange and host a site visit of their program; and (d) accept and abide by the Review Committee’s eventual accreditation decision.

3. *Eligibility Criteria.* To be eligible to apply for PCSAS accreditation, the program must be a doctoral training program that grants the Ph.D. degree in psychology with a core focus on the specialty of psychological clinical science. The program and its home institution must have the legal authority to confer Ph.D. degrees. The program must be housed in a department of psychology (or the equivalent) within an accredited, non-profit, research-intensive university in the U.S. or Canada. It must be able to document its record of successfully training graduates who pursue careers as psychological clinical scientists. Its application must have the signed endorsement of the program’s home department and of the appropriate institutional administrative authorities.

4. *Eligibility Decision.* Each Letter of Intent is read by two reviewers who independently judge whether the program meets PCSAS’s eligibility requirements. If the reviewers disagree, the Letter is read by a third reviewer. Questionable cases may be evaluated by the full RC. When a decision is reached, the ED notifies the program of the decision and, if the program is deemed eligible, provides the program with a template for submission of the full application. (See Appendix H for the *Application Template*.)

5. *Submission.* The deadlines for submission of applications are February 1, for May review, and September 1, for November/December review. Application materials are submitted electronically. Each eligible program is assigned a user name and password, allowing it access to a secure, reserved space in the “applicants’ portal” of PCSAS’s website. When the program is ready to submit the application materials, it simply uploads them to the website as PDF files and toggles a button to indicate when the upload is complete. All applications should include the following: (a) a cover page signed by the relevant institutional officials; (b) a one-page abstract summarizing the program’s aims and achievements; (c) faculty pages, listing all active program faculty members and providing CVs/bio-sheets for each; (d) a 20-page narrative describing the program in detail; (e) and several appendices. The appendices should include the CVs of current students and all graduates over the past ten years. The program faculty should add a brief narrative describing each graduate’s career trajectory and clinical science contributions. The faculty also should evaluate each graduate’s career outcome as a “clinical scientist.” One appendix should provide a table (without providing names) of every student who entered and/or graduated from the program over the past ten years, showing each individual’s year of entry, undergraduate institution and GPA, and GRE scores. Finally, one appendix should provide the syllabi for all of the program’s core courses.

6. *Site Visits.* After submitting its application materials and prior to the RC's meeting to review the application, the program must host an official site visit. The two-person Site Visit team is appointed by the RC Chair, in consultation with the ED; one visitor is designated as the team leader. Applicants have no choice regarding these appointed visitors, although applicants may inform PCSAS if they believe a visitor has a conflict of interest. The Chair and ED would evaluate any such concerns, rule on the question, and make changes if necessary. The team leader is responsible for working with the program's spokesperson to schedule the visit and make all necessary arrangements. Following the visit and prior to the RC meeting, the team drafts its report and sends it to the program with an invitation to correct any factual errors.

7. *On-line Reviews.* RC reviewers have easy access to the application materials programs have uploaded to the secure PCSAS website; they simply enter their user names and passwords. Reviewers also are able to upload their reviews to the secure website, where only the other RC reviewers can access them. To promote independent reviews, reviewers for a given program are allowed access to the other reviews for the same program only after they have uploaded their review.

8. *Application Evaluations.* The RC makes qualitative evaluations of each program's application in five general areas: (a) conceptual foundations; (b) design and resources; (c) quality of the science; (d) quality improvement; and (e) outcomes. (See Appendix I.) The RC gives the greatest weight to the program's record of successful outcomes—essentially asking, “to what extent do the activities and accomplishments of the program's faculty, students, and graduates exemplify the kinds of outcomes one expects of programs that successfully educate high-quality, productive psychological clinical scientists?” (Exemplars of each of the five criteria categories are presented in detail on the PCSAS website.)

PCSAS relies most heavily on explicit outcome criteria—i.e., the career records established by the program's graduates—to evaluate the quality of education achieved by applicant programs. The *sine qua non* of PCSAS accreditation criteria is clear evidence that the majority of a program's graduates over the past ten years have been successful in pursuing careers as *clinical scientists*. In the end, each of the RC members independently examines, integrates, and evaluates the evidence across these five areas and arrives at a qualitative judgment regarding whether the program deserves to be awarded the distinctive recognition of PCSAS accreditation. At least five RC members must vote in favor of accreditation.

9. *Feedback.* The ED will inform applicant programs in writing of the RC's decision within one month following the meeting. Copies of the ED's cover letter and summary of the committee's reviews and decision are sent, as well, to the program's department chair and to designated university administrators. The names of newly accredited programs are posted on the PCSAS website once the programs have been notified.

10. *Annual Report.* Accredited programs must submit annual reports each fall during the first nine years of their accreditation. (See Appendix E.)

11. *Renewal.* To maintain accreditation without interruption, accredited programs must apply for renewal during their tenth year of accreditation. Currently accredited programs automatically are deemed eligible to reapply.

12. *Archives.* After the RC completes all of its business for a given review cycle, all of the application files and RC reviews uploaded to the website for that review cycle are removed and placed in archival storage on the secure PCSAS server.

#### **D. Policies on Accountability & Responsibilities**

As stated at the beginning, the ultimate purpose of PCSAS accreditation is to serve the public's interest. Thus, PCSAS regards its accreditation responsibility as a public trust. PCSAS uses the leverage of accreditation to promote superior science-centered education and training in clinical psychology, thereby increasing the quality and quantity of clinical scientists advancing scientific knowledge regarding mental and behavioral health problems and actively applying this knowledge to improving the public's access to the most cost-effective mental and behavioral health care. As a public trust, PCSAS and the Ph.D. programs it accredits must be held accountable for adhering to the highest standards of public responsibility and integrity.

Specifically, each PCSAS-accredited program is expected to fulfill these responsibilities:

(a) Inform the public of its accredited status, the standards and significance of PCSAS accreditation, and the intended public benefits; regularly provide the public with reliable and accurate information on the performance, achievements and contributions of the program's students, graduates, and faculty; and provide data on the number of applicants and acceptances, entering class size, average years to degree, level of student support, graduation rates, internship placements, publication rates, and job placements.

(b) Inform the public that the PCSAS accreditation is specific to this program, and does not extend to other programs at the same institution not accredited by PCSAS.

(c) Maintain a clear and accurate public record of the institution's graduates who were students in the program and who met all of the program's requirements and standards.

(d) File the required annual report with PCSAS.

(e) Be accountable for maintaining the high quality of the accredited program, reporting any changes affecting the program's quality, and voluntarily relinquishing the program's accreditation status if its quality falls below PCSAS standards.

(f) Strive continuously for quality enhancement of the program, rather than resting on its laurels as a PCSAS-accredited program.

As an accrediting organization, PCSAS is expected to fulfill these responsibilities:

(a) Provide the public with clear and accurate information about the PCSAS accreditation system—its purpose, organization, policies, procedures, criteria, and actions.

(b) See that its accreditation standards and policies apply only to the institutions or programs seeking accreditation and do not extend to other offerings.

- (c) Provide the public with clear, accurate, and consistent information about the academic quality and student achievements of PCSAS-accredited programs.
- (d) See that PCSAS-accredited programs fulfill their responsibilities to the public.
- (e) Include representatives of the public in the organization's decision making and policy setting.
- (f) Respond in a substantive and timely manner to legitimate public questions, concerns, and complaints.
- (g) Consult as appropriate with relevant entities to resolve concerns regarding possible conflicts between PCSAS accreditation standards and state or local laws governing the institutions or programs seeking PCSAS accreditation.
- (h) Communicate and consult with the governmental and non-governmental entities responsible for accreditation and quality assurance in the U.S. and Canada.
- (i) Strive continuously for quality enhancement of PCSAS, its operation, and results.

## **E. Fiscal Policies & Procedures**

1. The PCSAS Board has the ultimate responsibility for establishing and overseeing the organization's fiscal policies and procedures. The ED, in turn, is responsible for managing the organization's on-going fiscal affairs, as directed by the Board, with the help of the AA.
2. The Board must approve the annual budget and any significant changes in it. The Board President, in consultation with the Board's finance committee, is responsible for providing budgetary oversight and for resolving budgetary issues.
3. PCSAS funds will be deposited in a checking account in an amount sufficient to cover pending obligations. The balance will be placed in one or more secured savings accounts or money market accounts where it will draw a guaranteed rate of interest. PCSAS funds may not be invested in any other form of account without prior Board approval. Money may be deposited in multiple banks to avoid exceeding the limits on FDIC insurance. The ED, AA, and Board President will have the designated authority for signature access to PCSAS's accounts for purposes of depositing or withdrawing funds. *(Currently, PCSAS funds are in checking and money market accounts at the United Commerce Bank, 211 S. College Avenue, Bloomington, IN 47401.)*
4. The ED must give prior signature authorization for all financial transactions handled by the AA, including (but not limited to) the writing of reimbursement checks to Board and RC members for their reported travel expenses to PCSAS-related meetings or site visits, the payment of bills and invoices, and the purchase of services and equipment. However, the ED may not authorize expenditures in excess of \$1,000 for unbudgeted items without prior Board approval.
5. All financial transactions should be accompanied by invoices, requisitions, or similar documentation. In the rare instances where transactions lack such documentation, detailed written explanations are required. All financial transactions, with their supporting documentation, will be entered in the corporate records in a timely manner.

6. The ED will provide the Board with regular financial and operational reports, as well as reports on corporate achievements, difficulties, or unsettled issues. Board members may request access to the corporation's financial records at any time.

7. An independent auditor will examine the corporation's financial records and fiscal procedures annually. The auditor's report will be transmitted to the Board and made available to the Academy, to PCSAS contributors, and to the interested public.

#### **IV. Self-Assessment & Quality Improvement**

PCSAS is committed to achieving continuous quality improvement through on-going self-assessments and system refinements. The assessments include regular and extensive data collection; outcome monitoring; solicitation of input and feedback; and periodic operational reviews by the Board, RC, and external agencies. Refinements arise from participants' experiences with the system, and are fostered by a corporate climate that encourages innovation, creative problem solving, and the pursuit of excellence. Notable examples of PCSAS's commitment to self-assessment and quality improvement are these:

##### **A. Data Collection**

Although PCSAS's data collection efforts are described throughout this manual, it is illuminating to gather them here. In addition to maintaining corporate records, as required by governmental and other agencies, PCSAS gathers a variety of data to help with quality improvement. Here are some key examples:

1. The RC maintains archival records of application files and program reviews; these data are essential for examining the system's performance and consistency over time.

2. The RC provides the Board with a report of its procedures, accreditation decisions, and operations at the end of each review cycle. The Board's required ratification of this report provides a check on the RC's compliance with Board guidelines. The report also provides the Board with operational information it needs to develop and improve the overall system.

3. At the end of each review cycle, applicant programs are invited to provide feedback about their experiences and to offer suggestions for ways to improve the system from a "customer's" perspective.

4. Accredited programs are required to file annual reports. These allow the RC to monitor the stability and quality of accredited programs over time. All accredited programs are expected to make quality improvement a priority.

5. PCSAS gathers data to assess the validity of the indices it uses to evaluate applicant programs. For example, doctoral programs traditionally use applicants' undergraduate institutions, GPAs, and GRE scores to make admissions decisions. PCSAS

also looks at these data when evaluating programs. However, PCSAS is asking, “Are these indices predictive of successful outcomes among the graduates of clinical science programs accredited by PCSAS?”

6. Careful records of PCSAS’s financial and business activities are maintained for examination as part of an annual audit.

## **B. Monitoring Outcomes: Milestones**

Data collection is fundamental to self-assessment, but the data do not speak for themselves; they must be analyzed and interpreted. Detecting meaningful patterns and trends in the data starts with a clear grasp of where the organization intends to go (its purpose); its chosen path to get there (its structure and organization); and its chosen means of moving along this path (its operational policies and procedures). Essentially, assessing *progress* involves monitoring movement over time through milestones, or checkpoints, along the intended path to a goal. By monitoring interim outcomes, PCSAS can evaluate how well the organization is staying *on course* and the *pace* at which it is progressing. Viewed from this perspective, “Quality Improvement” means learning to keep the organization efficiently on course and moving forward at an optimal pace. Some of the key milestones and outcomes for PCSAS, to date (September 2011), are these:

1. Financial Milestones. PCSAS was launched with few financial resources and only a trickle of an income stream. The primary start-up plan was to ask universities that supported the PCSAS mission to underwrite PCSAS’s operating costs by pledging to contribute \$15,000 per year for five years. If 17 universities pledged this support, and with the addition of monies from fees and dues, PCSAS’s projected annual budget could be fully funded for the first five years. Unfortunately, the 2008-2010 economic crisis hit just as PCSAS was being launched, so universities that otherwise might have contributed financial support were unable to do it; they faced serious financial problems of their own. In the first year, PCSAS survived by being very frugal. Despite this challenging start, by September 2011, PCSAS had reached a significant fiscal milestone: 16 universities had pledged underwriting support, contributions had come from other sources, and funds from fees and dues were flowing. As a result, PCSAS ended the 2010-11 fiscal year in the black. PCSAS now has a financial base that assures its stability and viability for several years. Still, PCSAS is a fiscally prudent and efficient operation, and is working to strengthen its financial security, aware that long-term funding pictures always are hazy due to the fog of unpredictable events.

2. Accreditation Milestones. PCSAS started accepting applications for accreditation in July 2009; the first submission deadline was September 1, 2009. Due to the tight timeline, the Review Committee reviewed and accredited only one applicant program (University of Illinois—U/C) that November. Fortunately, this “pilot” application allowed the newly appointed committee members to use the first round of reviews as a “shake-down cruise”—to test and refine the criteria, policies, and procedures. RC members devoted the morning of the inaugural RC meeting to reviewer training—answering questions, discussing issues, becoming familiar with the PCSAS accreditation system—

before undertaking the first review. The RC reviewed two applications in May 2010, four in December 2010, and four in May 2011. By the end of 2011, the RC will have conducted five review cycles, and will have reviewed 14 applicant programs. Canadian universities have submitted two of these applications. Looking ahead, PCSAS already has received three Letters of Intent from programs hoping to submit applications for review in May 2012. The RC has used the gradual acceleration in accreditation activity to its advantage, refining and improving the quality of its procedures and performance.

The Board initially had projected that PCSAS would be a success if it attracted 40 applications from top-quality programs during its first ten years. At the current pace—a pace that seems to be increasing—PCSAS should exceed the Board’s projection, processing more than 50 applications in ten years. Thus far, all applications have come from clinical science programs widely recognized as leaders in the field; thus, it is not surprising that the RC has yet to deny accreditation to any applicant—although the committee has been deliberate, voting to defer a decision in two cases. The strong applications reviewed to date have given the committee clear benchmarks against which to judge future applicants.

3. Administrative Milestones. By the summer of 2010, it was clear that PCSAS’s administrative operations needed quality improvement. PCSAS’s offices initially were in Washington, DC, in space provided by the Association for Psychological Science. The corporation’s business was being managed on a daily basis by the ED, who lived in Bloomington, IN, with the kind assistance of APS staff members in Washington. As PCSAS ramped up its activities, the ED found it increasingly difficult to manage and coordinate operations long distance. Thus, in August 2010 the Board voted to consolidate operations; PCSAS offices moved to Bloomington. The Board also hired an Administrative Assistant, a CPA to handle taxes and audits, and a software specialist to redesign the PCSAS website. These administrative changes led to significant qualitative improvements at PCSAS.

4. Website & Review System Milestones. The original PCSAS website, which was very basic, was overhauled completely in the fall of 2010 by the newly hired computer consultant. He not only created a new site with a more appealing face and a much improved functionality, but also added an important new element: a web-based system for managing applicant submissions and RC reviews of the PCSAS accreditation applications. Programs now upload their application materials to a secure space on the website, where all reviewers have ready access to them. Reviewers then upload their reviews, where they can be read by the other RC members. At the close of a review cycle, all application materials and reviews are moved into archival storage. The new web-based system was used for the first time in the May 2011 review cycle, and has been refined in several ways since then based on feedback from applicants and reviewers. It has yielded significant quality improvements in the PCSAS application system—in its user friendliness, security, reliability, efficiency, and processing pace.

5. Recognition Milestones. From the outset, PCSAS has been determined to gain recognition as a legitimate accrediting agency by respected, independent, external agencies. Foremost among these is the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Even before PCSAS was incorporated, the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science,

PCSAS's parent organization, and representatives from the Association for Psychological Science began meetings with CHEA representatives to chart the course toward gaining recognition. On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, PCSAS initiated the process of applying for CHEA recognition by submitting its Letter of Intent, seeking to be deemed eligible to apply. CHEA's Committee on Recognition initially voted to defer a decision, pending additional information and clarification, but in March 2011, the committee reviewed PCSAS's eligibility application and voted to recommend approval; in May 2011 the CHEA Board officially deemed PCSAS eligible to apply. The next milestone is the submission and review of PCSAS's application for CHEA recognition. As part of that process, CHEA is scheduled to send observers to the December 10, 2011, meeting in Chicago of the PCSAS Review Committee. If all goes well, PCSAS could gain CHEA recognition by May of 2012. In the future, PCSAS will pursue recognition from the Office of Veterans Affairs, from State Licensing Boards in Psychology, and from other appropriate oversight agencies.

### **C. Self-Studies**

At every Board meeting and every RC meeting, time is set aside for thoughtful discussion and analysis of the organization's performance, progress, challenges, and improvement. PCSAS also has conducted a self-study as part of its CHEA application. PCSAS will assess the organization's overall performance and achievements in detailed and systematic self-studies periodically, not only in connection with maintaining CHEA recognition, but more frequently as needed to deal with challenges, opportunities, and changes. When PCSAS makes organizational changes aimed at achieving quality improvements, it will inform all relevant parties of the changes and the reasons for them.

## **V. Communications & External Relations**

### **A. Outreach**

To succeed in its mission, PCSAS must garner public support through vigorous outreach efforts. It must make a compelling case for why its mission is important to the public's welfare, and why its remedy is promising. This is not a simple or easy story to tell. Persons unfamiliar with mental health education and practice tend to have difficulty seeing how improving the scientific standards for doctoral education in clinical psychology will have any effect on their daily lives; they're inclined to see PCSAS as the product of a parochial turf battle. The reality is much more complicated. PCSAS accreditation is not expected to have an immediate and direct public impact; its intended public benefits will occur only as the secondary effect of its success in transforming the quality of science-centered education and practice in the mental and behavioral health care system.

Outreach efforts are essential to the organization's ultimate success. A recent monograph by Baker et al. (2008) discussed the current problems in mental health education and practice; described PCSAS, its history, rationale, and importance; and outlined how PCSAS is a promising effort to address these problems. This monograph has received extensive media coverage, both on radio (e.g., NPR's "All Things Considered") and in the press (e.g., *Newsweek*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Science Magazine*, *Nature*, *Los Angeles Times*,

*Psychology Today, Washington Post*). (See Baker, T.B., McFall, R.M., & Shoham, V. [2008]. Current status and future prospects of clinical psychology: Toward a scientifically principled approach to mental and behavioral health care. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 9(2), 67-103.)

The ED has given invited talks (e.g., seven at universities, four at annual meetings or conventions of psychology groups); written an invited article; and corresponded with individuals, organizations, foundations, and granting agencies. PCSAS, accompanied by APS, also has met with government officials and organizations (e.g., NIMH, NIDA, SAMHSA, OBSSR, VA, NAS, Congress). These contacts seem to have had an impact. In September 2011, U.S. Senate Report 112-84, which accompanied the appropriations bill for SAMHSA, said this about Clinical Training: "The Committee is aware that a new clinical accreditation program is being developed by the Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System to ground training of practitioners in empirically supported treatments. SAMHSA is encouraged to continue its collaboration with relevant professional organizations regarding this program so that those seeking services are assured of receiving scientifically sound treatment" (pp. 118-119).

## **B. Relationships**

PCSAS was not created to be an end in itself; it was created for a higher purpose: To serve the public's interest by promoting advances in public health through science education. PCSAS is a valuable entity only to the degree that it succeeds in this cause. It was founded on the belief that raising the standards of science education in doctoral programs in clinical psychology will strengthen the scientific foundations of mental and behavioral health care, and that this, in turn, will benefit the public by increasing access to the most cost-effective care. PCSAS is not alone in this cause. Others are working in their own ways to achieve similar objectives. PCSAS has close ties to some of these other groups. These relationships are noted here in the interest of full disclosure.

PCSAS must safeguard the independence and integrity of its accreditation system by maintaining a "firewall" between itself and other organizations. Nevertheless, it remains an active partner with its parent organization, the *Academy of Psychological Clinical Science*, in collaborative efforts to promote science-centered educational and practice that furthers their common goals. Another strong alliance is with the *Association for Psychological Science* (APS). APS has no legal control or direct influence over PCSAS, but it is a leading advocate for psychological science, and has been a staunch supporter of PCSAS from the beginning; PCSAS would not be where it is today without the backing of APS. Another organization with which PCSAS enjoys a supportive historical relationship is the *Society for a Science of Clinical Psychology*, an organization of individual clinical scientists.

In addition, PCSAS is eager to build strong relationships with other groups with shared interests and values. Most notable among these are entities with a significant influence over the recognition, regulation, funding, policies, licensing, and curricula of doctoral programs in psychological clinical science and the graduates of those programs. Here is a partial list of such entities:

Council for Higher Education Accreditation  
U.S. Office of Veteran Affairs  
National Institutes of Health  
National Academy of Sciences  
U.S. Department of Education  
State Licensing Boards in Psychology  
Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology  
Council of University Directors of Clinical Psychology  
American Psychological Association  
Canadian Psychological Association

### **C. End Note**

As stated at the front of this manual, PCSAS is guided by, and has pledged to uphold, four cornerstone principles: *Transparency, Clarity, Integrity, and Responsibility*. The aim of this manual is to provide a detailed, comprehensive, and accurate account of PCSAS—its purpose, organization, policies, and procedures—in a clear, accessible, and responsible way. PCSAS hopes this manual reflects the organization’s commitment to the cornerstone principles. The manual is intended to be an evolving document, updated periodically as the organization evolves, charting the organization’s growth, achievements, and challenges across time. Readers are invited to send questions, comments, or suggestions for improving the organization and this manual either to the ED ([rmmcfall@pcsas.org](mailto:rmmcfall@pcsas.org)) or to the Board President ([bootzin@u.arizona.edu](mailto:bootzin@u.arizona.edu)).

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## APPENDIX A

### Site Visit Report Preface (Sample):

By design, PCSAS site visits are intended to differ significantly from the site visits by APA's Commission on Accreditation. During the recent site visit of the \_\_\_ program, these differences were apparent. First, because PCSAS accreditation is concerned primarily with an applicant program's outcomes, rather than with its inputs, this site visit was not devoted to evaluations of the \_\_\_ program's adherence to any particular list of course requirements or other such requirements, but was devoted instead to examining closely the degree to which the current students within the program were committed to careers as clinical scientists, and to the quality of the historical evidence regarding whether graduates of the \_\_\_ program over the past ten years actually functioned as clinical scientists, broadly defined, after leaving the program. The site visit team's approach to evaluating this evidence is summarized in the Outcome section below.

Beside this primary aim, a secondary focus of the site visit team was a comparison between the program's self-study report and the observational information gathered on site. That is, does the program function the way it says it does? By integrating the self-study and observational information, the team sought to develop a portrait of how the \_\_\_ program actually functions—how it manages to achieve its reported outcomes. Much of the following site visit report, therefore, is devoted to a description of the program. In the long run, PCSAS might expect that the cumulative information gleaned from the larger sample of site visit reports would provide a valuable data base from which clinical science faculties might draw inspiration, find models for innovation, and engage in continuous quality improvement. Finally, the site visit team felt that a valuable side benefit of this review might be that it could provide the program and department with an external review. Thus, the site visit team concluded their visit by providing the program's leaders with constructive feedback aimed at reinforcing the program's obvious strengths while encouraging further refinement and improvement. This feedback was not given in a way that suggested that the program's accreditation would hinge on modifications to the current program, but simply was offered as information for the program's leaders' consideration and possible action as they thought appropriate.

**APPENDIX B: CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY  
OF  
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINICAL SCIENCE ACCREDITATION SYSTEM INC.**

Article I  
**Purpose**

The purpose of this conflict of interest policy is to protect the interest of The Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System Inc. (the "Corporation") when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the Corporation or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Article II

**Definitions**

**1. Interested Person**

Any director, principal officer or member of the Corporation, or member of a committee with powers delegated by the board of directors, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

**2. Financial Interest**

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

- a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Corporation has a transaction or arrangement,
- b. A compensation arrangement with the Corporation or with any entity or individual with which the Corporation has a transaction or arrangement, or
- c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Corporation is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Article III, Section 2 hereof, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the board of directors or committee, as appropriate, decides that a conflict of interest exists.

Article III  
**Procedures**

**1. Duty to Disclose**

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors of the Corporation and members of committees with powers delegated by the board of directors considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

**2. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists**

After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he or she shall leave the board of directors or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

**3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest**

a. An interested person may make a presentation at the board of directors or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he or she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.

b. A majority of the disinterested members of the board of directors, or committee members, shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.

c. After exercising due diligence, the board of directors, or committee shall determine whether the Corporation can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the board of directors or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Corporation's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

**4. Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy**

a. If the board of directors or committee has reasonable cause to believe that an interested person has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall inform the interested person of the basis for such belief and afford the interested person an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

b. If, after hearing the interested person's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the board of directors or committee determines the interested person has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Article IV  
**Records of Proceedings**

The minutes of the board of directors of the Corporation and all committees with powers delegated by the board of directors shall contain:

a. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.

b. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

Article V  
**Compensation**

a. A voting member of the board of directors of the Corporation who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Corporation for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

b. A voting member of any committee of the board whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Corporation for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

c. No voting member of the board of directors of the Corporation or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Corporation, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to the board of directors or any committee regarding compensation.

Article V1  
**Statements**

Each director, officer and member of a committee with powers delegated by the board of directors, other than those persons who are serving as a director adopting this policy, shall sign a statement which affirms such person:

- a. Has received a copy of the conflict of interest policy,
- b. Has read and understands the policy,

- c. Has agreed to comply with the policy, and
- d. Understands the Corporation is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

#### Article VII

#### **Periodic Reviews**

To ensure the Corporation operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's length bargaining.
- b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the Corporation's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

#### Article VIII

#### **Use of Outside Experts**

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Article VII hereof, the Corporation may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the board of directors of the Corporation of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted as provided in this conflict of interest policy.

**THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINICAL SCIENCE ACCREDITATION SYSTEM INC.**

**Acknowledgement of Receipt of Conflict of Interest Policy**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Conflict of Interest Policy of The Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System Inc. (the "Corporation"), I have read and understand the Conflict of Interest Policy, I agree to comply with the Conflict of Interest Policy and I understand that the Corporation is a non-profit corporation and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C:**

**PCSAS REVIEW COMMITTEE (RC) CONFIDENTIALITY & COMMUNICATIONS**

Confidentiality Policy. To protect the integrity, credibility, and stature of PCSAS Accreditation, PCSAS Policy requires that all participants in RC proceedings adhere to a code of absolute confidentiality. RC participants must never reveal to anyone outside of the Review Committee privileged information obtained in connection with a program’s application materials; its site visit; or the RC’s reviews, evaluations, and ultimate accreditation decisions. Nor should any RC participant disclose outside of RC meetings, without prior authorization, any information relating to comments, opinions, evaluations, or votes that occurred during an RC meeting.

Communications Policy. To promote clear, accurate, and coherent communications with applicant programs and the public, PCSAS Policy requires that all communications regarding the RC’s reviews, evaluations, and decisions be handled through officially designated channels. If RC participants have questions about an application, they should not communicate directly with the program, but should channel their queries through the PCSAS Executive Director and/or the RC Chair. Site visitors necessarily will communicate with members of applicant programs, but they must not discuss the RC’s pending evaluation or speculate about the RC’s decision. Only the PCSAS Executive Director and/or the RC Chair are authorized to communicate with programs or others about the RC’s processing, evaluation, and decision regarding applicant programs.

**I HAVE READ AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THESE PCSAS POLICIES.**

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**Print Name**

---

**Signature**

---

**Date**

## APPENDIX D:

### PCSAS Conflict of Interest Policy for the Review Committee

It is essential that the PCSAS Review Committee (RC) carry out its accreditation responsibility in a manner that avoids anything that might undermine the real or apparent integrity and credibility of its accreditation procedures and decisions. Therefore, each participant in RC review process must disclose to the Review Committee, prior to taking part in the review of a specific application, possible relationships to that program that might be perceived as raising a conflict of interest (COI). Thus, in addition to signing the standard PCSAS-COI form, participants in RC meetings also are expected to sign the RC-COI form, on which they disclose their relationships to all applicant programs and evaluate their possible COI status.

What are the criteria for identifying relationships that raise possible conflicts of interest for participants in PCSAS RC meetings?

It is a clear conflict of interest if the RC participant could benefit financially from the RC's accreditation decision regarding an applicant program.

It is a clear conflict of interest if the RC participant's career or professional standing could be enhanced by the RC's decision for an applicant program.

It may raise a potential conflict of interest if the RC participant feels that s/he is unable to make an objective evaluation of a program due to her/his relationship to the institution, the program, or the faculty and students. Therefore, it is the RC participant's responsibility to disclose such relationships on the RC-COI form, and to examine honestly his/her ability to evaluate that application fairly and objectively. Relationships that may bias participants' reviews could be historical or current, positive or negative. Realistically, however, many RC participants are likely to have close ties to the institutions, programs, and individual faculty members and students at many applicant programs; if such relationships automatically precluded participants' involvement in the review of individual programs, it would be all but impossible for the RC to carry out its review role. The existence of personal relationships alone, therefore, is not grounds for recusal; the critical criterion for recusal is the influence of the relationship on RC participant's ability to render a fair and objective evaluation of the application's merit for accreditation.

Unlike the COI criteria enumerated by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association, PCSAS's criteria do not regard the following relationships as automatic grounds for recusal:

Former employment by the program.

Former student in the program.

- Having an "old" friend associated with the program.
- Having a former classmate on staff at the program.
- Having a close professional or personal relationship with a person in the program.
- Being a former site visitor to the program.
- Having one's own program site visited by a staff member of the applicant program.

PCSAS's COI policy clearly states that each RC participant is expected to reveal the existence of such relationships on the RC-COI form, and then to evaluate and declare whether such relationships actually create a personal conflict that impairs the participant's ability to perform the review function with integrity, fairness, and objectivity. Participants who recognize that they cannot perform the review as expected must recuse themselves.

Recusal may take two forms: In cases where it is anticipated that the RC participant's presence in the room during the application review may unduly influence the outcome, the participant should leave the room. In cases where such influence is not anticipated, the participant may remain in the room as an observer, but must abstain from contributing to the discussion and must abstain from voting on the accreditation decision. The reason for allowing the participant to remain in the room as an observer, in the latter case, is the belief that there is value in arranging for all RC participants to share a common history and data base, leading to a shared set of norms for applying the PCSAS accreditation criteria.

If a participant does not see a significant COI problem, but the majority of the RC members nevertheless decide that the participant's relationship to an applicant program does raise a significant COI problem, the RC may ask the participant to be absent during the discussion, review, and judgment of the program. If at any time the majority of the RC feels that the presence of a participant who has recused her/himself from participation in the discussion of an application, but has remained in the room, is interfering with a free and fair evaluation of the application, the RC may ask that the participant leave the room.

The rationale for these COI criteria—which differ from those of the APA's CoA—is that the most critical determinant of an applicant's suitability for PCSAS accreditation is the program's objective track record of having graduated a significant number of psychological clinical scientists over the past ten years. The evidence on this criterion is public, so the RC's evaluations and judgments of all applicant programs is open to review, and can be examined for evidence of bias and inconsistency, thereby making RC decisions less susceptible to COI influences that would undermine the Committee's integrity and credibility. The PCSAS Board of Directors is charged with performing periodic integrity reviews.

**THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINICAL SCIENCE ACCREDITATION SYSTEM INC.**

**Acknowledgement of Receipt of PCSAS Conflict of Interest Policy**  
**Acknowledgement of Receipt of PCSAS RC-COI Policy**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Conflict of Interest Policy of The Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System Inc. (the "Corporation"); have received a copy of the PCSAS Review Committee Conflict of Interest Policy; and have received a copy of the PCSAS Review Committee Policy on Confidentiality and Communications. I have read and understand all three of these PCSAS Policies. I agree to comply with all of these Policies of the Corporation, and I understand that the Corporation is a non-profit corporation and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX E: 2011 ANNUAL REPORT FOR PCSAS ACCREDITED PROGRAMS**  
(8-3-11)

This report may take as little as five minutes to complete if there have been few *significant* changes in your program this *past academic year (Sept thru Aug)*. If either **positive or negative changes** have occurred please explain them on a separate attached page, and describe their effects on the program and your program's responses to them.

1. **Faculty:** Were there any changes in the program's core faculty—e.g., new hires, promotions, resignations, retirements, program leadership—or changes in the faculty's level of program involvement, mentoring, or scientific activity?  
\_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes (Explain)

2. **Students:** How many new students were admitted \_\_\_; how many received their degrees \_\_\_? Were there increases or decreases in your typical number of applicants, or admissions offers and acceptances; in students' credentials, program fit, satisfaction, or progress; or in the pattern of graduates' placements or clinical science activities?  
\_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes (Explain)

3. **Department & University:** Were there departmental or university changes (initiated or forthcoming) that would have either a positive or negative impact on the quality or stability of your doctoral training program in psychological clinical science?  
\_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes (Explain)

4. **Curriculum:** Were there changes in either your program's or department's curriculum—e.g., requirements, courses, structure, mentoring, or applied training?  
\_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes (Explain)

5. **Resources:** Were there changes in the program's level of support or resources?  
\_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes (Explain)

6. **Other:** Were there other changes—e.g., in the program's model, mission, philosophy, structure, operation, outcomes, intra- or inter-departmental relationships, etc.?  
\_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes (Explain)

PCSAS Program \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Title \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS BRIEF REPORT. PLEASE RETURN TO:  
Richard M. McFall, 1101 E. 10<sup>th</sup> St., IU Psychology Bldg, Bloomington, IN 47405

## **APPENDIX F: INITIATION PACKET**

### **INITIATION PACKET INSTRUCTIONS**

Last Revised 9-16-2010

Thank you for your interest in participating in the accreditation process of the Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (“PCSAS”). Accreditation procedures are designed to take applicant programs through several stages of documentation, review, and analysis. Depending on the outcome of a review, PCSAS may require varying amounts of additional follow-up reporting. The normal review cycle for programs receiving positive evaluations is ten years; however, PCSAS will expect annual reports and may request a more detailed intra-cycle review if concerns from annual reports or other information warrant closer monitoring. A program’s accreditation status may be changed at any point during the ten year cycle if the Review Committee should determine, based on new evidence, that the program’s performance no longer merits accreditation. PCSAS reserves its right to alter its accreditation process, including but not limited to eligibility standards for applying for accreditation, at any time.

The first step in the PCSAS accreditation review and decision-making process requires the submission of an “Initiation Packet” including (1) a notice of intent, (2) payment of an Initiation Fee, and (3) an executed version of the attached Applicant Agreement. An application template will be provided to programs that properly submit the Initiation Packet and are deemed eligible to apply. This letter describes the three requirements for the Initiation Packet and represents the Applicant Agreement required to be included in the Initiation Packet.

Your Initiation Packet, including a copy of the Notice of Intent, the Initiation Fee, and an executed version of this Applicant Agreement, should be sent to the following address:

Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System  
1101 East Tenth Street  
IU Psychology Building  
Bloomington, IN 47405-7007

#### **Notice of Intent:**

Potential applicants must submit a Notice of Intent in which they not only indicate their interest in applying for accreditation, but also provide sufficiently detailed preliminary information to allow a determination of whether they meet PCSAS’s *eligibility standards* for applying for accreditation. The preliminary information contained in the Notice of Intent is reviewed by the Executive Director. If eligibility seems unclear, the materials also are evaluated independently by one or more other PCSAS reviewers. If a program is deemed ineligible, it may appeal this finding to the full Review Committee, beyond which there is no other appeal. Ineligible programs must wait at least one year before submitting a new notice of intent. There are no appeals in the case of a negative eligibility or accreditation decision.

The Notice of Intent should not exceed three pages, single spaced, should be drafted to address the minimal requirements below in order to be judged eligible to apply for PCSAS accreditation, and should be submitted in electronic form to the Executive Director ([rmmcfall@pcsas.org](mailto:rmmcfall@pcsas.org)). The Agreement should be submitted both electronically and in paper form as part of the Initiation Packet to the PCSAS office (see above).

### **Eligibility Criteria:**

- (1) The scope of PCSAS accreditation is limited to doctoral training programs that grant Ph.D. degrees in psychology with a core focus on the specialty of psychological clinical science, and that are housed in departments of psychology (or their equivalent) within accredited, nonprofit, research-intensive universities in the U.S and Canada.
- (2) In addition, accreditation is limited to programs that subscribe to an empirical epistemology and a scientific model—*i.e.*, an epistemology and an educational model in which the advancement of knowledge and its application to problems are driven by research evidence, and in which research and application are integrated and reciprocally informing.
- (3) Accreditation also is limited to doctoral programs with a primary mission of providing all students with high-quality, science-centered education and training that arms them with the knowledge and skills required for successful careers as research scientists in clinical psychology.
- (4) Accreditation is limited further to programs within the intellectual and educational domain of clinical psychology, broadly defined. This domain may include hybrid varieties, such as clinical-health-psychology, clinical-neuroscience, clinical-behavioral genetics, etc. However, to be acceptable the hybrid model must involve the integration of clinical psychology—*i.e.*, a focus on psychological knowledge and methods to research and application relevant to mental and behavioral health problems—with one or more complementary scientific perspectives for the purpose of gaining added leverage on specific target problems. In all cases, clinical psychology must be the core component of the model.
- (5) Finally, accreditation is limited to programs with the primary goal of producing graduates who are competent and successful at (a) conducting research relevant to the assessment, prevention, treatment, and understanding of health and mental health disorders; and (b) using science methods and evidence to design, develop, select, evaluate, implement, deliver, supervise, and disseminate empirically based assessments, interventions, and prevention strategies.
- (6) In their notice of intent and in their public documents, potential applicants must demonstrate an established commitment to providing an education within the limited boundaries that define PCSAS accreditation—*i.e.*, in scope, epistemology, mission, goal, and domain.

### **Initiation Fee:**

The Initiation Packet must include an Initiation Fee in the amount of \$1,000. The Initiation Fee should be paid by check made out to Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System. The Initiation Fee will be applied toward the Application Fee for programs deemed eligible to apply and is not refundable to programs that are deemed ineligible.

## **Template for Letter of Intent and Request for Eligibility Review**

(Revised 6-1-2011)

The Letter of Intent should be brief (no more than three pages). It should address eligibility standards (see *Review Criteria, Eligibility Standards* at [www.pcsas.org](http://www.pcsas.org)), but need not offer detailed documentation. Include the following information:

1. An explicit statement of the program and institution's intention to apply for PCSAS accreditation; a request to be deemed eligible; and a general time line for the intended submission, if deemed eligible.
2. An identification of the program and institution, and an explanation of their fit to the eligibility criteria.
3. A brief description of the program's philosophy, scope, educational goals, and general approach to doctoral education and training, with an emphasis on the science-centered commitment of the faculty and students.
4. A brief statement of the program's outcome goals for graduates, with an agreement to provide detailed outcome evidence in an application to document the program's success in achieving these goals.
5. The program's website address.
6. An endorsement of the following statement:  
We agree that if deemed eligible for PCSAS accreditation, we will (a) conduct a detailed self-study prior to preparing our application, and will provide an accurate summary of our self-study results in our application materials; (b) provide the PCSAS Reviews Committee with all the information it requires; (c) arrange and host a site visit of our program; and (d) accept and abide by the Review Committee's eventual accreditation decision.
7. Signature, title, and contact information for the person submitting the Letter.
8. Eligibility is contingent on the institution's signed acceptance of the terms of an "Agreement" designed to protect PCSAS from crippling lawsuits.

The Letter of Intent document should be submitted electronically (as a Word file or PDF file) to Richard M. McFall, PCSAS Executive Director ([rmmcfall@pcsas.org](mailto:rmmcfall@pcsas.org)). The Letter of Intent must be supported by payment of a \$1,000 Initiation Fee. (This fee is waived if the institution has joined the PCSAS Founders' Circle. If the institution joins the PCSAS Founders' Circle after submitting the Letter of Intent and Initiation Fee, the Fee will be credited toward the Pledge to the Founders' Fund.) Payments of Initiation Fees, Application Fees, and Founders' Circle Pledges may be made either by electronic bank transfers (after appropriate arrangements); or by checks, accompanied by notes identifying the payments' purposes, sent to:

PCSAS (attn: Lana Fish)  
1101 East Tenth Street  
IU Psychology Building  
Bloomington, IN 47405-7007  
(Tel: 812-856-2570)

## APPENDIX G:

### APPLICANT AGREEMENT:

WHEREAS the Applicant acknowledges that (A) accreditation with the Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (“PCSAS”) is voluntary, does not bestow any special privileges, and is not a professional requirement and (B) in today’s highly-litigious society, a single lawsuit could severely impact PCSAS’s operating budget;

Applicant, by signing and returning this Applicant Agreement, agrees to the following in order to participate in the application process.

(1) **Actions In Connection With Application Process:** Applicant hereby agrees to (i) conduct a detailed self-study prior to preparing an application, and to provide an accurate summary of the self-study’s results in its application materials, (ii) fully disclose all information the Review Committee requires in order to carry out its responsibility of evaluating programs and reaching accreditation decisions, and (iii) arrange, host, and complete a site visit of its program after submitting the application and prior to the scheduled Review Committee review.

(2) **Release Of Claims:** Applicant, on behalf of itself and its representatives, agents, affiliates and associates, successors, and assigns (together with Applicant, the “Bound Parties”), hereby irrevocably waives, releases, and forever discharges PCSAS and each of its past, present and future members, directors, managers, officers, employees, agents (including, but not limited to, Review Committee members), predecessors, successors, assigns, members and partners (collectively, the “PCSAS Affiliates”) from the Released Claims. “Released Claims” shall mean any and all past, present and future claims, causes of action and suits at law or in equity of any kind or nature whatsoever (including any liabilities, damages, attorneys’ fees, costs, judgments related thereto) whether known or unknown, arising out of or relating to any action or inaction by PCSAS with respect to, or the processing by PCSAS of, the Applicant’s application for accreditation (including, but not limited to, relating to a denial, or deferral, of or failure to act upon Applicant’s application for accreditation and including without limitation such claims based upon alleged negligence, gross negligence, unfair trade practices or antitrust). Applicant acknowledges that it may hereafter discover facts related to the Released Claims, and that it, on behalf of itself and the other Bound Parties, is expressly and intentionally releasing unknown claims, such that the releases contained in this Agreement shall be and remain effective in all respects notwithstanding such additional facts. Applicant understands and acknowledges that all rights under Section 1542 of the California Civil Code and under comparable laws in other jurisdictions with respect to such Released Claims hereby are expressly waived. Applicant further agrees, on behalf of itself and the other Bound Parties,

that it shall not seek to recover any amounts in connection with the Released Claims from PCSAS or the PCSAS Affiliates. Applicant understands and agrees that this is a **FULL AND FINAL RELEASE OF THE RELEASED CLAIMS**.

**(3) Selection Of Forum For Resolution Of Disputes And Applicable Law:**

(a) Applicant agrees, on behalf of itself and the other Bound Parties, that, prior to bringing any action or proceeding against PCSAS or any of the PCSAS Affiliates (including, without limitation, actions or proceedings involving interpretation of this Applicant Agreement and, to the extent any provision of Section 2 hereof shall be held not to apply or not to be enforceable under applicable law, the Released Claims), the Bound Parties shall provide PCSAS with 60-days' notice of the intended action or proceeding and shall participate in good faith discussions or mediation with PCSAS to attempt to resolve the issues to be raised in such action or proceeding.

(b) This Subsection 3(b) does not apply to an Applicant that is a public institution with Sovereign Immunity such that Applicant's agreement to this Section would constitute a waiver of its Sovereign Immunity.

Applicant agrees, on behalf of itself and the other Bound Parties, that the Bound Parties shall bring any action or proceeding against PCSAS or any of the PCSAS Affiliates (including, without limitation, actions or proceedings involving interpretation of this Applicant Agreement and, to the extent any provision of Section 2 hereof shall be held not to apply or not to be enforceable under applicable law, the Released Claims) exclusively in the state or federal courts located in the State of Delaware (the "Chosen Courts"), and in connection with such claims (i) irrevocably submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Chosen Courts, (ii) waive any objection to laying venue in any such action or proceeding in the Chosen Courts, (iii) waive any objection that the Chosen Courts are an inconvenient forum or do not have jurisdiction over any party hereto, (iv) waive any claim that PCSAS or PCSAS Affiliates are subject to personal jurisdiction in any jurisdiction other than Delaware, and (v) agree that service of process upon any of the Bound Parties in any such action or proceeding shall be effective if notice is given to the address specified by Applicant in connection with the application process. This Agreement is governed by, and shall be construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of Delaware, excluding any conflict-of-laws rules or principles that might refer the governance or the construction of this Agreement to the law of another jurisdiction.

(c) For the avoidance of doubt, the agreements in this Section 3 shall in no way limit the release of the Released Claims by the Bound Parties set forth in Section 2 hereof.

(4) **Waiver of Jury Trial:** As a material inducement for PCSAS to consider Applicant's application, Applicant hereby waives, on behalf of itself and the other Bound Parties, any right to trial by jury in any action or legal proceeding related in any way to the Applicant's application for accreditation or to the Released Claims.

(5) **Severability:** If any provision of Applicant's Agreement or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid or unenforceable to any extent, the remainder of this Agreement and the application of that provision to other persons or circumstances will not be affected, and that provision shall be enforced to the greatest extent permitted by law.

(6) **Entire Agreement:** Applicant, on behalf of itself and the other Bound Parties, declares, warrants and represents that no promises, inducements, representations or agreements not expressly stated herein have been made to the Bound Parties in connection with this Agreement and that this Agreement contains the entire agreement between the Bound Parties and PCSAS with respect to its subject matter.

**APPLICANT:**

By:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name and Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**ACKNOWLEDGED:**

**PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINICAL SCIENCE ACCREDITATION SYSTEM**

By:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name and Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Rev. 09/6/2011  
3781419.3

*[APPLICANT AGREEMENT SIGNATURE PAGE]*

## APPENDIX H:

# Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System Application for Accreditation

Template (Updated: 8-1-11)

### A. Cover Page:

1. University Information: Name, Address, Phone, Web Address
2. Responsible University Official: Name, Title, Signature, Date
3. Department Information: Name, Address, Phone, Web Address
4. Responsible Departmental Official: Name, Title, E-mail, Signature, Date
5. Program Information: Name, Address, Phone, Web Address
6. Responsible Program Official: Name, Title, E-mail, Signature, Date

### B. Abstract: one-page summary of the program's aims and achievements

### C. Faculty Pages:

1. Table of all active program faculty members, their ranks and roles in program, with list of their current and former graduate student advisees.
2. For each listed faculty member, a CV/bio-sheet, with education, employment history, honors, grants, and most recent and significant publications. (To simplify collecting these data, grant bio-sheets may serve as a model.)

### D. Body of Application: 20 pages, single spaced, with double space between paragraphs, minimums of one inch margins and 11 pt. fonts; see [www.pcsas.org](http://www.pcsas.org) for more specific details regarding the content of this *narrative section*.

### E. Appendices:

1. **CVs (with added narratives):** For each individual who entered or graduated from the program over at least the past ten years, provide a CV or equivalent. These should include the individual's date of matriculation, date of degree, dissertation title and major advisor, and clinical science activities and achievements (i.e., past and current positions, list of publications, significant presentations, grants, honors and awards). Elaborate on the extent of each individual's involvement in clinical science by providing a narrative for each graduate that helps reviewers assess the training outcomes. These **outcome data** are central to evaluating accreditation applications.
2. **Program's Outcome Ratings:** Rate each graduate's career outcome as a "clinical scientist." Explain the faculty's rating scale and algorithm.
3. **Table of Selection Credentials:** For every student who entered and/or graduated from the program over the past ten years (*without providing names*), list the year of entry, undergrad institution, GPA, and GRE scores. (This Table essentially is the same as required by CoA.)
4. **Course Information:** Syllabi for all core courses.

**F. Supplemental Data (Voluntary):** PCSAS also asks each applicant program to submit voluntarily an augmented version of the **Table of Selection Credentials**, in which the program faculty evaluates, for each student admitted to the program, whether the training outcome represents a “clinical scientist” success. These *entry credentials x outcome* data will be secured, will be aggregated across applicant programs, will not be shared with the Review Committee, and will not affect applicant programs’ accreditation reviews, evaluations, and decisions. The purpose of collecting these supplemental data, on the side, is to assess the value of traditional selection criteria for predicting clinical science training outcomes.

**G. Application Fee:** The normal application fee of \$10,000 has been discounted 50% until PCSAS has achieved “recognition” by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Institutions that are members of the PCSAS Founders’ Circle pay no application fee; if accredited, they also will pay no dues for their first five years. For institutions that are not members of the Founders’ Circle, the initial \$1,000 eligibility fee, which accompanied the Letter of Intent, is counted toward the discounted \$5,000 application fee; therefore, upon submission of the application, a check for the balance of \$4,000 should be made out to PCSAS, its purpose labeled, and submitted to:

PCSAS (Attn: Lana Fish)  
1101 East Tenth Street  
IU Psychology Building  
Bloomington, IN 47405-7007

**H. Submission Process:** Virtually all of the application process is handled electronically. Programs must post their full applications and supporting materials, including all appendices, on the PCSAS Website as PDF files, thus making these materials accessible to all PCSAS Reviewers. Each applicant, after being deemed eligible to apply, will be assigned an ID and password; these will provide access to the applicant section of the PCSAS Website and permit the applicant to upload the application materials. New material may be added to the application, but once uploaded, only the Executive Director is able to modify or delete the uploaded material. The posted application material will remain accessible on the Website *at least* one month after being reviewed by the PCSAS Review Committee; then it will be archived and cannot be altered. Applicants will receive official notification of the Review Committee’s evaluation and accreditation decision within a month after the committee’s review.

## **APPENDIX I: Application Content Categories (from website, pcsas.org)**

**C. General Accreditation Standards:** Because the RC evaluates only applications from programs that explicitly claim to fit within the narrowly defined scope of PCSAS accreditation and to satisfy PCSAS's standards, the RC's review task essentially is one of evaluating each program's integrity and quality. Applying the principle of "truth in advertising" as its benchmark, the RC rigorously and objectively examines the evidence from each program's application materials and its site visit report to assess how well the program lives up to its claims and to PCSAS's standards. The RC makes qualitative evaluations of each program in five general areas:

(a) Conceptual foundations: To be eligible for review, each applicant program necessarily will have endorsed the epistemology, mission, goals, and domain that define PCSAS accreditation. However, a hallmark of PCSAS accreditation is its flexibility; programs are given leeway to develop their own distinctive and innovative approaches to translating these abstract principles into practical, effective, real-world doctoral programs. This may reflect not only local resources and opportunities but also efforts to move the field forward with well conceived training innovations. The RC is responsible for evaluating the quality, coherence, integrity, and success of each individual program's particular interpretation and embodiment of these core concepts.

(b) Design and resources: The RC examines the quality, logic, soundness, and coherence of each program's overall operation: its stability; educational plan and pedagogical approach; content and curriculum; administration; and availability and use of resources. The RC evaluates how effectively the program's design and resources are channeled toward realizing the program's goals.

(c) Quality of the science: The RC evaluates the overall quality of the scientific content, methods, and products of the program's doctoral training and education—i.e., how well the program embodies the very best, cutting-edge science of the discipline.

(d) Quality improvement: The RC examines the program's investment in continuous quality improvement—i.e., its on-going critical self-examination, openness to feedback, flexibility and innovation, and monitoring of program results.

(e) Outcomes: The RC's evaluations place the greatest weight on each program's record of success—i.e., to what extent do the activities and accomplishments of its faculty, students, and graduates exemplify the kinds of outcomes one expects of programs that successfully educate high-quality, productive psychological clinical scientists?

For each applicant program, the RC examines, integrates, and evaluates all the evidence across these five areas, makes a qualitative rating, and then decides whether the program deserves to be awarded the distinctive recognition of PCSAS accreditation.