Preparing for Internship: Tips for the Prospective Applicant

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This article's major objective is to effectively prepare the graduate student in psychology for the internship application process by providing critical and relevant information. Preparation begins early on in one's graduate career and usually involves the following steps: (a) establishing mentoring relationships, (b) preparing an application portfolio, (c) collecting information, (d) applying, (e) interviewing, (f) ranking the selected agencies, and (g) responding on selection day. Information is also provided on how to use the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral Internship Centers (APPIC) Clearinghouse. Finally, a brief section is devoted to the process of choosing a non-APPIC site. Advance preparation can make this entire process easier and increase a student’s chance of finding a suitable predoctoral internship in psychology.

Internship is a critical time in the life of an emerging professional. The significance of this year of training for a student’s long-term professional development cannot be emphasized enough. It is one of the most important and exciting processes a graduate student in clinical, counseling, or school psychology participates in to become a full-fledged member of the profession (Grace, 1985). However, the process of finding an internship can be anxiety-producing (Gloria & Robinson, 1994), especially because the number of unplaced applicants has increased and the number of internship positions, specifically those located in certain urban geographic locations, has decreased (Williams, 1992).

According to the July 1995 edition of the APA Monitor, 3,005 students completed the first year of doctoral programs in 1994; however, only 2,302 internship slots were available in 1995. This means that about 700 students may not have found placements (Murray, 1995). In this same report, Kathleen McNamara, Director of Psychology Training at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Honolulu, indicated that students are experiencing increasing difficulty in finding internship placements, especially because a greater number of students are being admitted into programs. Another critical variable, according to McNamara, is “the economics of health-care change,” which also affects internship availability (Murray, 1995, p. 58). When Robert K. Klepac, former chair of the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) was asked what he thought was the biggest barrier for an intern applicant in securing a predoctoral internship, he replied, “When students arbitrarily decide that they will not consider a wide range of geographic locations” (personal communication, October 30, 1995).

Because of the limited availability of internship positions, intern applicants must work hard at finding a site that will best meet their needs. Similarly, internship agencies put significant effort into obtaining highly qualified graduate students to train in their facilities for approximately 1 year. Finding the best possible match for both the agency and the applicant puts pressure on all parties involved in the selection process (Carifio, Buckner, & Grace, 1987). The APPIC (1995) has formulated guidelines to clarify the selection process and to lessen the pressure for agencies and intern applicants, especially on the uniform day of notification. Despite these guidelines, however, difficulties can still arise.

In the last 10 years, there have been a number of articles that have focused on criteria used by both applicants and internship sites in the selection process; however, little comprehensive information has been made available to students to guide them through the arduous process of applying, interviewing, selecting, and finally securing an internship site. Before 1986 a few key articles were published that did provide useful information on some of the steps involved in this process: Belar and Orgel (1980); Craddick, Cole, Dane, Brill, and Wilson (1980); Brill, Wolkin, and McKeel (1985); and Hersh and Poe (1984). In addition, another helpful article was written by Mitchell (1996) last year. Belar and Orgel (1980) provided a step-by-step outline of instructions for applicants, whereas Craddick et al. (1980)
described the development of an effective system for internship preparation. Brill et al. (1985) outlined strategies for selecting and securing choice predoctoral internships, and Hersh and Poey (1984) provided the reader with a list of useful questions to use during the interview process. Finally, Mitchell (1996) offered important guidelines on the written portion of the application process and specific pointers on how to captivate the attention of prospective internship sites.

This article is an attempt to integrate, update, and add to the existing material on the internship preparation process. By using updated and comprehensive information, the applicant’s chances of succeeding in the internship selection process increases. Among the unique contributions that this article makes is the inclusion of information on how to prepare the application portfolio and the role of mentoring relationships in securing a suitable internship. Preparation of the application portfolio is a long-term effort that is extremely valuable not only for doctoral students but also for master’s-level students and professionals desiring to obtain a doctoral degree in the near future. Information on accessing the APPIC Clearinghouse is also included. Finally, this article briefly addresses the necessary steps for choosing a site that is not listed in the APPIC directory. The information presented in this article should be useful not only for internship candidates but also for program training directors and student advisors who help applicants navigate through the internship process. We have personally used many of the strategies outlined in this article and were successful in securing internship positions that were consistent with our long-term career goals and that allowed us to enhance our professional development.

Finding and Selecting an Internship

The general process of preparing to find a suitable internship usually involves the following steps: (a) developing mentoring relationships, (b) preparing an application portfolio, (c) collecting information, (d) applying, (e) interviewing, (f) ranking the selected agencies, and (g) responding on selection day to any offers received. Students who do not obtain an internship through the regular process may participate in an additional step by locating sites through what is referred to as the “Clearinghouse.”

Developing Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring is an accepted way of providing meaningful learning experiences to graduate students in psychology to enhance their development of ethical and professional behavior and to improve their research and clinical skills (Moses-Zirkes, 1993; University of Arizona Graduate Council, 1991). Mentoring relationships often develop the same way as do interpersonal relationships (Swartz, 1995). Individuals often select other individuals (i.e., mentor or mentee) that are similar to them in personal characteristics (e.g., gender, ethnicity; Moses-Zirkes, 1993), research interests, or theoretical orientations. Ellis (1992) has recommended that graduate programs have some sort of faculty mentor system in place whereby students can obtain “advice, counseling, and helpful direction in their training” (p. 575). Mentoring relationships can develop through formal and informal means. Formal mentorship programs often assign faculty to incoming students. Often these mentors also serve as the students’ advisors (Green & Bauer, 1995). In the absence of a formal mentorship program or suitable faculty mentors, incoming students can be matched with current students further along in their graduate program (Bowman, Bowman, & DeLucia, 1990). The advanced student can serve as a “buddy” who will be a “source of information and social support for the incoming student” (Bowman et al., 1990, p. 59).

Besides serving as a support system (Swartz, 1995), mentors can assist graduate students in finding internship sites that closely match their career objectives. Furthermore, a mentor can advise the student on application and interviewing strategies. Finally, as a result of the close working relationship between the graduate student and the faculty mentor, the mentor may have an increased awareness of the applicant’s strengths and be in a better position to address the unique qualities of the student in the form of a strong letter of recommendation (Mitchell, 1996).

Preparing Your Application Portfolio

Preparing an application portfolio should begin in the first year of the student’s graduate program whether one is enrolled in a doctoral program or a terminal master’s program. Detailed records should be kept of all clinical experiences gained in practicum, work, internship, and externship settings. This record should indicate the number of clinical (direct and indirect) hours accumulated, the types of mental health problems (e.g., eating disorders, sexual abuse) that were encountered, and the type of counseling offered (i.e., individual, group, family, etc.). A record of all assessments completed should also be maintained. This record, which includes psychological, vocational, and other types of assessments, should have the names of actual tests given and interpreted. It is a good practice to save whatever is relevant (e.g., test reports, case staffing reports, etc.) because some internship sites may require copies of testing reports as part of their application packet. Identifying information should be deleted in order to protect the confidentiality of the client. If students begin this recording process early in their careers, they are likely to find that filling out internship application forms is a much less arduous task and that internship agencies are able to get a more complete picture of their experience and qualifications. This information is also helpful when applying for licensure because much of the same information is required during that process.

Collecting Information

One key to effective decision making is to gather as much information as possible from a variety of sources and to evaluate this information thoroughly and objectively (Grace, 1985). The first step in collecting information for selecting an internship would be to review the APPIC directory and check the APA Monitor for possible sites. Other sources of information about internship agencies are faculty advisors, mentors, former interns, former graduates from one’s own program, and friends (Grace, 1985). Types of agency settings include Veterans Administration Medical Centers, medical schools, private general hospitals, pri-
vate psychiatric hospitals, children’s facilities, military facilities, university counseling centers, consortia, and a general “other” category (APPIC, 1995). Consortia in psychology internships refer to the “combining of a number of training resources and agencies into one cohesive and more comprehensive program” (May, 1986, p. 78).

A study was conducted by Stedman, Neff, Donahoe, Kopel, and Hays (1995) on 148 predoctoral applicants’ characterization of the most desirable internship training programs. According to Stedman et al. (1995), the top eight variables selected for the first-choice site were, “An affective (gut feeling) sense of ‘fit’ with the program” (p. 399), site’s reputation, congruence between the student’s goals and training experience offered, supervision, breadth of training, additional and specialized training offered, and the possibility of continuing to reside in the area following internship. Gloria and Robinson (1994) surveyed students and training directors regarding choice of sites and found that reasons frequently given by intern candidates were geographic location and professional practice training. Solway et al. (1987) examined interns regarding the criteria they actually used in selecting possible internship sites and found that the most important factors (of 14), presented in order of importance, were location, diversity of programs, amount of supervision and type of facility (tied), reputation, theoretical orientation, and money. However, when interns were asked to list the five most important factors that applicants should use in selecting an internship site, the following factors emerged in this order: amount of supervision, diversity of programs, theoretical orientation, type of facility, and APA (American Psychological Association) accreditation. Location ranked very low in this part of the survey.

Several of the foregoing factors can be included under the terminology “breadth of training.” APA-approved programs are supposed to provide greater breadth than do their non-APA-approved counterparts. For example, APA-approved internship sites have internship education as an integral part of their mission, and this fact is often reflected in the institution’s operating budget and plans (APA, 1995). Furthermore, approved programs provide experiences that increase awareness of individual and cultural diversity through “their recruitment, retention, and development of staff and interns in their didactic and experiential training” (APA, 1995, p. 13). In terms of experiences, on the average, consortia offer experiences with the highest number of distinct patient populations, whereas university counseling centers usually provide experiences with the lowest number of distinct patient populations (Eggert et al., 1987).

A site that is listed in the APPIC directory may or may not have APA accreditation. Although APPIC is not an accrediting agency, the programs listed in the directory are considered to be APPIC members. This means that a program meets all membership criteria and conforms to APPIC policies (APPIC, 1995). Applicants from non-APA-approved graduate programs should check the acceptance policies of APA-accredited internship sites before applying to these sites as intern from non-APA doctoral programs may be considered unqualified.

The APPIC directory provides basic information about each site but does not go into detail regarding kinds of client populations, disorders treated, and so forth. Therefore, after identifying several possibly desirable sites, the prospective applicant should write to the agency requesting information. This information should be requested approximately 3 to 5 months before applications are to be mailed. It is also a good idea to solicit information from at least twice as many sites as you plan to send applications.

After receiving more detailed information from the sites on the preliminary list, materials must be reviewed carefully, and those sites that do not meet the applicant’s training needs should be eliminated. It is important to be realistic and practical in the selection of sites for the application list. Other factors that may need to be considered in addition to training needs are whether the agency requires an interview; financial resources available for traveling to interviews; and factors associated with the location of the internship site, such as cost of living and stipend, competition, and so forth.

The Application Process

The intern applicant first has to decide on the number of applications that need to be submitted. Gloria and Robinson (1994) indicated that respondents in their study submitted an average of eight applications. Megargee (1992) has recommended 10-14, although many students may end up applying to 15 to 20 possible sites to enhance their probability of placement. The final number of sites chosen will depend on each student’s individual needs and his or her own idiosyncratic circumstances. Another factor to consider is the cost incurred during the application process. Most sites do require official transcripts, which cost money, and traveling to interviews can be a time-consuming and expensive process.

The application process may seem overwhelming because each site could have some unique requirements. However, a diligently maintained application portfolio can make the process much easier. First, make a list of all the materials requested by each site. Required materials usually include an application form, vita, official transcripts, supporting documents for your clinical experience, and letters of recommendation. In addition, many sites may require written statements and answers to various questions regarding the applicant’s theoretical orientation, professional and training goals, preferences for internship, and personal strengths and weaknesses. These written statements should be prepared by the end of September. Finally, all sites will require a letter or statement from the applicant’s graduate program or training director indicating that he or she is ready to apply for internship and has or will meet all the requirements of the program prior to the internship year.

Studies conducted by various authors indicate that most training directors value letters of recommendation and experience in a clinical practicum as two of the more important selection criteria (Pretzel & Berndt, 1980; Spitziform & Hamilton, 1976; Sturgis, Versteegen, Randolph, & Garvin, 1980). Ideally, letters should be sought from faculty who have served as mentors or advisors or from psychologists who have served as clinical supervisors, with whom one has had recent close working relationships lasting for a reasonable length of time (3–4 months; Mitchell, 1996). Letters sought from such individuals may make the difference between an impersonal short recommendation and a more personalized and detailed letter. Letters should include information on the applicant’s professional work experience and
areas of clinical expertise. Letters of recommendation can play a critical role in the selection process, and having several strong letters can make a difference in the application outcome.

Completed application materials should be mailed well in advance. The responsibility for ensuring that all materials, including letters of recommendation and records of clinical experience, arrive before the deadline lies with the applicant. Because due dates vary across internship sites, most applicants will find it necessary to keep a careful record of these dates, especially when applying to several sites. After submitting application materials to a particular site, it is a good idea to call the internship director to make sure that the application packet has arrived and to see whether he or she needs any further documents or information. The application process can be extremely time consuming, and it requires good organization and effective planning in order to successfully meet the required deadlines.

The Interview Phase

Because interviews provide the opportunity for personal and experiential learning, they are generally recommended with any agency seriously being considered (Grace, 1985). The type of interview and whether or not an interview is required as part of the application process varies greatly between internship sites. Although many agencies require an on-site interview of all applicants, others may request a telephone interview. Furthermore, many sites interview candidates only after an initial screening process. The time and cost of these interviews can place a significant burden on the applicant (Plante, 1988). However, it is also important to consider that telephone interviews may not have the same impact as a face-to-face interview.

On-site and telephone interviews may be scheduled at anytime between November and January (Plante, 1988). If a site does not require an interview for the selection process, the applicant should consider scheduling an on-site visit with the internship director, especially at those facilities that are ranked high on the applicant's list. This visit should serve as an informational appointment to gain more knowledge about the agency, and it also provides a great opportunity for the applicant to initiate a relationship with a potential internship site. Some intern applicants plan their site visit around the December holiday break. Others may prefer to visit the site in mid-January, which is closer to the selection date. Before this visit, the applicant should plan the questions they wish to ask the internship director about the site. While visiting the internship site, talking to some of the current interns about their experiences can be a valuable source of information (Gloria & Robinson, 1994). It is important to maintain professionalism in conversations with the current interns because they sometimes serve on the selection committee and can offer critical information to the training director.

The applicant may experience a wide variety of interview styles among sites. Some agencies offer individual interviews, whereas other sites interview a pool of candidates at the same time. Applicants may be interviewed either by the training director alone or by members of the internship selection committee. Candidates will be at an advantage if they request details of the interview procedure in advance so that they may be able to effectively prepare for a particular interview format. Whether the interview is conducted in person or over the phone, preparation will help the applicant feel more confident and self-assured.

The process of interviewing for an internship site is very similar to the dynamics involved in interviewing for a job. The internship site is looking for a good match between the prospective intern and the internship facility. One important criterion that training directors look for is a similarity between the applicant's articulated training goals and the services provided at the internship site. Other important criteria include obtaining potential interns who are personable, open, and eager to learn. The applicant should demonstrate these qualities during the interview phase. A final quality that directors of internship sites seek in their applicants is a genuine interest in their facility.

Most internship centers will select only their top candidates for an interview (Hersh & Poey, 1984). One particular university counseling center developed a three-page form to screen potential applicants for an interview. This Likert-format document provided a numerical rating system to determine how well each applicant fared when compared with other candidates applying for an internship position. The committee read through the letter of application, vita, and goal statement for objective information to determine whether the applicant's training goals and preparation were compatible with the training program. Letters of recommendation received a numerical score indicating whether they were poor, average, above average, good, or superior. Applicants selected for an interview appeared to be those individuals who had carefully reviewed the internship packet and had articulated a genuine interest in the center's training goals (I. A. Arden, personal communication, January 10, 1995).

The interview process can generate fear and anxiety within the applicant. The applicant must remember that the interview is a two-way street. By visiting the site, the candidate is also able to make a better choice about a potential internship site. Tension and anxiety about the process can be reduced by taking time to prepare for each interview. Mock interviews with faculty or fellow students can improve the candidate's performance and increase confidence. It is impossible to predict all questions asked during the interview, but the following questions should be anticipated: (a) What is your theoretical orientation? (b) Why are you applying to this internship site? (c) What do you look for in a clinical supervisor? (d) What are your primary training goals during the internship year? (e) What relevant experiences do you bring to this internship site? (f) What strengths do you bring as a potential intern? (g) What areas would you like to improve on? and (h) What are your short and long-term career objectives? For more information, Hersh and Poey's (1984) article provides additional questions that are frequently asked of candidates and a list of questions that applicants can ask training directors.

After the interview, a note expressing your appreciation for the opportunity to talk with the staff about their site should be sent to the training director. Although APPIC policy precludes sites from informing the applicant of their ranking before selection day (APPIC, 1995), the candidate might be asked by the site to disclose how high the agency ranks on the intern's list of sites. This is a question that the applicant should be prepared for because the site may lose interest in a highly qualified candidate who does not indicate a strong preference for the agency. If the applicant is extremely interested in a particular site and
it is ranked as one of his or her top choices, it is almost always
an advantage to reiterate this interest through a letter or phone
call (Brill et al., 1985). Keeping in periodic contact with the
internship director to express continued interest in the site, espe-
cially if the interview took place 4 to 8 weeks before selection
day, is an option to consider for some internship sites. As in
many job search endeavors, multiple, positive contacts with a
potential employer may enhance the applicants' chances of ob-
taining a position.

Ranking the Internship Sites

Intern applicants should rank well in advance the sites they
wish to consider and that are still considering them. It is im-
portant to gain familiarity with the policies outlined in the most
current APPIC directory. APPIC member programs must include
a copy of these policies in internship materials sent to applicants
(APPIC, 1995). Moreover, directors of APPIC internship pro-
grams must ensure that all people involved in the selection
process are familiar with the procedures. Academic training
directors should also ensure that their students are familiar with
the policies and adhere to them closely (APPIC, 1995). If the
applicant is removed from consideration, he or she should be
informed by the internship program directors in a timely manner;
no later than 1 week before selection day (APPIC, 1995).

Selection Day

"Selection Day" currently begins at 9:00 a.m. Central Stan-
tard Time on the second Monday in February and ends at 1:00
p.m. that same day. This definition is subject to change" (AP-
PIC, 1995, p. 11). This deadline applies to all offers, including
those made to applicants who are initially considered as alter-
nates. Agencies can inquire as to the applicant's progress toward
making a decision at any time after an offer is formally extended
(APPIC, 1995). It is beneficial if applicants make and communi-
cate decisions to accept or reject each offer as quickly as possi-
ble. Offers that have not been accepted are considered to be
void by the 1:00 p.m. deadline on uniform notification day
(APPIC, 1995).

Applicants must respond immediately to offers in one of three
ways: accepting, rejecting, or holding (APPIC, 1995). Ac-
cording to the APPIC directory, "Holding the offer means that
the offer remains valid until the applicant notifies the program
of rejection or acceptance, or until the end of selection day" (AP-
PIC, 1995, p. 12). Applicants usually hold an offer if they
have not received an offer or have been placed on an alternate
list by a higher-ranked site. No more than one offer can be held
at the same time, and once an applicant has accepted an offer,
she or he must call and release the site placed on hold (APPIC,
1995). APPIC considers a verbal acceptance of an offer to be
a binding agreement between the internship program and the
applicant. If the applicant receives an offer after accepting an-
other offer, he or she is obligated to refuse the offer and inform
the internship site of a commitment elsewhere (APPIC, 1995).
Violations in policy can be reported to the APPIC Standards
and Review Committee (ASARC). The address and telephone
number is available in the APPIC directory.

The APPIC Clearinghouse

The present system of finding suitable internships is far from
perfect, and many highly qualified intern applicants do not re-
ceive an offer. However, there are a few avenues that students
left without a placement may use. One such avenue is an infor-
mation network that often exists with the applicant's graduate fac-
ulty and various internship directors. Through these networks,
communication about vacancies may be facilitated quickly and
efficiently to connect students with such sites directly. Another
widely used vehicle is the APPIC Doctoral Clearinghouse. The
Clearinghouse is a doctoral internship placement program that
has been offered through APPIC since 1976 (APPIC, 1995).
The Clearinghouse was "instituted to assist internship candi-
dates and internship training programs failing to locate one
another during the course of the annual uniform notification
period" (p. 22, APPIC, 1995). A report in the APA Monitor
(Murray, 1995) indicated that the number of applicants who
have used the APPIC Clearinghouse has doubled from 1991 to
1995. In this same report, the Council of Chairs of Training
Councils data indicated that only 4% of the applicants to the
APPIC Clearinghouse did not get placed by June 1. Gordon
Williams (1996), current coordinator of the APPIC Clearing-
house and APPIC Board member, has accumulated data on the
number of applicants using the APPIC Clearinghouse for the
last 9 of the 11 years beginning in 1986. The number of appli-
cants have ranged from 65 in 1986 to a record high of 489 in
1996 (M = 226 applicants). The majority of these applicants
(84.8%) have been from APA-approved programs (mean for
last 4 years = 282.25), with the remaining 15.2% coming from
non-APA approved programs (mean for last 4 years = 50.75).
For this same time period, the number of vacancies at internship
sites have ranged from 79 in 1986 to 53 in 1996 (M = 77.44).
Internship sites with APA approval have averaged about 17.25
vacancies each year, whereas non-APA sites have reported ap-
proximately a mean of 47.5 vacancies each year (data for only
the last 4 years).

Because of increased competition, using the APPIC Clearing-
house may also necessitate effective planning and training. To
use the APPIC Clearinghouse, applicants must first check with
their director of psychology graduate program training to see
whether their program is a member or subscriber. This service
is available with a fee to non-subscriber academic programs
(APPIC, 1995). Beginning in March 1996, program directors
can also contact the APPIC Clearinghouse via the Internet and
receive information on vacancies (G. Williams, personal com-
munication, April 5, 1996). Because procedures may change
from year to year, it is important to check the current APPIC
directory for specific steps to be followed. The address and
telephone and fax numbers are also available in the APPIC
directory.

Once the program director has received a list of APPIC intern-
ship sites that still have openings, applicants can review the
specifics of each site and choose the ones to which they wish
to apply. Recommendations on the number of sites to choose
vary, but 10 appears to be a safe number. Time is essential in
this process. The student should contact the internship's training
director immediately by telephone. Because initial contact is
important, students need to plan their self-presentations and
review their background, experience, and interests ahead of time. This will also be the time when application materials are requested. Some of the same procedures that are outlined in the interview phase section of this article can be followed at this time. When application materials are received, they must be completed and returned as soon as possible. Completed materials can be returned to the agency by overnight mail or by fax. The sites should be contacted to ensure that they have received the materials. An essential point to remember is that the internship site is hoping to fill its vacant spots quickly.

Making an initial good impression with the director is important because he or she can schedule an interview even before a completed application packet has been received. Interviews can be conducted by telephone or on site. If the site is a considerable distance away, a telephone interview can be more expedient. Offers are generally made within a few days after the interview. Once an offer is made, the applicant has a limited amount of time (usually a few days) to make a decision and should be prepared to think and act quickly.

Choosing a Non-APPIC Site

For those students choosing a site that is not listed in the APPIC directory, certain steps should be followed to make this predoctoral experience valuable and applicable when applying for licensure. The first step in this process is to obtain the materials for licensure from the state psychology licensing board or boards in the state or states that the student intends to practice. It is important to read the materials carefully and note the kinds of internship experiences the licensing board requires. For example, in the state of Arizona, two important requirements are the completion of a 1,500-hr predoctoral internship and supervision by at least two licensed psychologists on staff, at least one of whom should be on site. After the applicant has determined the requirements of the licensing board, inquiries of suitable places should be made. At this stage, the candidate may wish to use many of the same procedures described earlier for interviewing and ranking the sites. Students should also make sure that sites meet all requirements specified by the licensing board. The amount and type of supervision available and the kinds of experiences that the applicant wishes to receive during this year of training should be negotiated with the agency in advance. Once the details are finalized, they should be spelled out in a contract that is signed by the applicant, their university training director, and the on-site training supervisor. Following these steps will help ensure that the site abides by the contract and provides the intern with the experience he or she needs. To locate possible sites across the United States, it may be helpful to consult a directory compiled by Daniel L. Randolph (1994–1995) entitled Directory of Graduate and Undergraduate Internships: Training of a Mental Health, Rehabilitative, or Educative Nature in Human Services Agencies and Institutions.

Selecting a non-APA-approved internship site may affect the eligibility of the individual applying for future employment with some agencies. For example, the Department of Veteran Affairs will not hire psychologists who have not completed internships at programs approved by the APA (Department of Veterans Affairs, 1995). It is important that prospective intern applicants keep this in mind when making the decision to choose a non-APA-approved site.

Concluding Remarks

Because of the amount of time required and the number of details to be considered, internship applicants should learn about the application process well ahead of time and be prepared to follow the required steps. Table 1 provides a suggested timeline that applicants may consult as they prepare to find a suitable internship. Belar and Orgel (1980) have published a useful article titled "Survival Guide for Intern Applicants," which candidates may wish to use in conjunction with the information presented in this article. Similarly, other references cited earlier in the article may provide additional beneficial information to the reader. Finally, the works entitled A Guide to Obtaining a Psychology Internship (Megargee, 1992) and Internship Training in Professional Psychology (Dana & May, 1987) may serve as supplementary resources that applicants may consider using in their internship preparation process.

In their survey of a large group of interns, French and Bushek (1988) reported that most interns considered their internship experience a successful one, with ample opportunity for work with a variety of clients in a variety of situations under effective supervision. Furthermore, interns reported that they developed an increased ability to function independently, improved their critical judgment and technical skills, and increased their feelings of competence. Most of the interns felt that they were well prepared to assume the responsibilities of a full-time professional psychologist.

Overall, the internship application process can be an exciting time if one is adequately prepared. Knowing what to expect and having some idea of the timelines is half of the battle. The payoff for effective preparation can be finding an internship that helps to boost the student intern into a long-term, vital, and productive professional career.

Table 1

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<th>A Timeline for Preparing for a Predoctoral Internship</th>
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<td>Steps to prepare for internship</td>
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<td>Interview</td>
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Note. APPIC = Association of Psychology Postdoctoral Internship Centers.
References


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