Professional Geropsychology Postdoctoral Fellowship
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System
Director of Clinical Training
Behavioral Health Service Line (116A-U)
University Drive C
Pittsburgh PA 15240-1001
(412) 360-1290

Application Due Date: Friday, January 5, 2018

Accreditation Status
The postdoctoral fellowship in Professional Geropsychology is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association. Our next site visit will be scheduled for 2021.

We are extremely proud of our training program and its accreditation by the American Psychological Association. Should you have any questions about fellowship accreditation standards or policies that cannot be answered to your satisfaction by this website or by the psychology staff, please contact:

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation
American Psychological Association
750 1st Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 336-5979 / E-mail: apaaccred@apa.org
Web: www.apa.org/ed/accreditation

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System and Psychology Staff
The VAPHS is a 549-operating bed, joint commission accredited facility comprised of two divisions. The VAPHS has recently completed large construction projects at both divisions, resulting in new state-of-the-art, “green” buildings. The University Drive division, near the University of Pittsburgh, is the medical-surgical facility and includes numerous outpatient primary care and specialty medical clinics, including our GEM and Geriatric Driving Safety (GDSCS) clinics. The University Drive division is home to the new Consolidation Building, where the majority of the outpatient behavioral health clinics, three inpatient psychiatry units, and the Center for the Treatment of Addictive Disorders are located. The H. J. Heinz division, located near Aspinwall and Fox Chapel, includes the Community Living Center, Veteran Recovery Center (domiciliary), and Neurobehavioral Program. The new Ambulatory Care Building houses a primary care clinic, post-deployment clinic, and other clinical services to include dental and rehabilitation medicine. These two divisions are within 10 miles of each other and a shuttle operates between the divisions. In addition to these two sites, the VAPHS also includes five community-based

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(Updated October 2017)
outpatient clinics (CBOC’s) in our catchment area. The VAPHS also includes a telemental health hub, in which behavioral health staff provide telemental health services to veterans enrolled in VA medical centers within our VISN and other VISN’s.

In FY2016, VAPHS provided care to 70,119 Veterans and conducted 718,953 outpatient visits. The VAPHS is increasing services via telehealth technology and conducted 7,955 telemental health visits in FY2016. Veterans span the cohorts from Persian Gulf (22.9% of Veterans served in FY2016) to WWII (5.5% of Veterans served in FY2016) with the vast majority of Veterans (46%) in the Vietnam era. The VAPHS provided care to 4,501 female Veterans in FY2016. Given the large catchment area of the VAPHS to include western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, and parts of West Virginia, our Veteran population includes a mix of urban and rural Veterans. Although the VAPHS served a primarily Caucasian Veteran population in FY2016 (85%), the diversity of our patient population also included Black or African American (10%), American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Veterans. As part of the VAPHS commitment to diversity, we have been and continue to be identified as a LGBT healthcare leader for the past several years in the Human Rights Campaign's Healthcare Equality Index. In FY2016, the VAPHS employed 3,755 employees, of whom 32% are Veterans.

All staff and services at the VAPHS are organized into “service lines.” The fellowship program is located within the Behavioral Health Service Line. Within the Behavioral Health Service Line, veterans are assigned to a Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP) (identified by Greek letters). Staff members are assigned to specific teams/BHIP’s for continuity of care for veterans.

The VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System currently employs 47 full-time staff psychologists, many of whom are involved in the training program. Our psychology staff has been increasing over the past few years to meet the growing demand for behavioral health services in our increasing VA population. Our staff psychologists' backgrounds, interests, and current activities are diverse. We have supervisors from a variety of graduate programs with varying lengths of tenure at the VAPHS. In addition to their clinical work, our staff psychologists hold many important leadership positions, such as team leaders and medical center committee chairpersons. Our staff members are committed to providing evidence-based treatment approaches to our veterans. Most supervisors have completed VA certification and have provider status in at least one evidence-based psychotherapy and some are VA trainers for evidence-based psychotherapies (refer to list of training staff for specific information). Our psychology training programs (practicum, doctoral internship, and postdoctoral fellowship) are part of our VA’s educational mission which includes many other training programs, such as medicine, social work, physical therapy, occupational therapy, chaplaincy, speech language pathology, and nursing. Our educational affiliation with the University of Pittsburgh allows trainees from many disciplines to participate in interdisciplinary training at our medical center. In addition to our VA psychology staff, the program also includes community psychologists who serve as seminar presenters and case conference participants to increase fellows' exposure to psychology in the Pittsburgh area.
Program Philosophy, Training Model, Program Goals, & Objectives
The mission of the Professional Geropsychology fellowship program is to provide advanced training in the science and practice of geropsychology. Consistent with the Pikes Peak Model and the Training Guidelines for Postdoctoral Training in Professional Geropsychology Education, the aim of our fellowship is to prepare geropsychologists for independent clinical practice with older adults in a range of professional roles and health service settings using evidence-based practices. Thus, the focus of training is on developing advanced competence in geropsychology and it is expected that incoming fellows will possess at least intermediate level knowledge and foundational skills in professional geropsychology. During the postdoctoral year, fellows will gain increased knowledge and skill through their supervised clinical and scholarly activities. Individual supervision sessions at minimum of two hours per week with staff geropsychologists will promote an integration of case conceptualization, clinical findings, testing results, and psychological interventions. The fellowship program will be truly interdisciplinary in that a portion of clinical activities will occur when working not only with psychologists, but also a variety of other healthcare professionals. Our training philosophy reflects the scholar-practitioner model in that fellows are expected to develop proficiency in both clinical work and scholarly thinking. Consistent with this model, fellows will become familiar with state-of-the-art, evidence-based practice in geropsychology and will integrate scholarly research into clinical practice. It is expected that, by the conclusion of the fellowship year, fellows will develop skills within the following core competency areas: Integration of science and practice; Individual and cultural diversity; Assessment; Intervention; Consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills; Professional values, attitudes and behaviors; Supervision skills.

Training Experiences and Program Structure

Training Rotations
Fellows are required to complete two six-month rotations during the training year in a variety of settings, which yields both breadth and depth of training in geropsychology. A description of each rotation follows:

GRECC Rotation
This rotation is comprised of two clinical teams that emphasize interdisciplinary treatment for older veterans. The fellow on this rotation will have the opportunity to work with various interdisciplinary teams in providing psychological treatment to older veterans in both settings:

1. **GEM/GDSC Clinic and Outpatient Behavioral Health Clinic:** The Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM) outpatient clinic at the University Drive division provides an integrated evaluation and coordination of care for older veterans with a variety of medical conditions to promote functional independence and successful aging. The GEM team consists of professionals from many disciplines under the direction of a staff geriatrician. Fellow responsibilities include psychological and cognitive evaluations to assess for the presence of psychological syndromes and/or neurocognitive disorders that may impact functional independence. The fellow also participates in family feedback conferences to share assessment results and recommendations with the veteran and his/her family. As part of the GEM clinic, the fellow also conducts driving
safety evaluations for the Geriatric Driving Safety Clinic. Furthermore, the fellow will provide
evidence-based outpatient psychotherapy to older veterans enrolled in an outpatient behavioral
health team. The fellow also provides one hour of supervision per week to the doctoral
psychology intern assigned to the GRECC rotation.
Supervisor: Dr. Bernadette Pasquale

2. **Home Based Primary Care Program:** The HBPC program is an interdisciplinary team which
provides home care to frail older adults, many of whom would not otherwise be able to receive
care because of their inability to travel. This program is unique in that fellows will provide
psychological services in the veteran’s home. Fellow responsibilities include psychological
evaluation, cognitive evaluation, capacity evaluation, individual/family psychotherapy including
caregiver stress interventions on a consult basis as an integral member of the HBPC treatment
team.
Supervisor: Dr. Mollie Sprung

**Neurobehavioral Program (NBP) – Community Living Center (CLC) Rotation**
This rotation is comprised of two programs located at the H. J. Heinz Division. The fellow on this rotation
will work in both programs.

1. **Neurobehavioral Program (NBP):** The NBP half of the rotation is designed to focus on issues
related to aging with a strong emphasis on neuropsychology. Fellows will work with the staff of
the Neurobehavioral Program at the Heinz Division where they will conduct comprehensive
neuropsychological assessments with older adult veterans including clinical interview; test
selection, administration, and scoring; interpretation of assessment data from multiple sources;
and report writing. Fellows will also provide feedback of results with recommendations to
veterans and their families. Follow-up and brief psychotherapy to address depression,
neuropsychiatric disorders, adjustment to cognitive change, caregiver issues, or family/couples
issues will also be provided when appropriate. Fellows will also co-facilitate an outpatient
Memory Skills group and provide supervision to a doctoral intern for this group. Consultation
with other NBP staff, such as the NBP neurologist, will also be initiated when appropriate.
Supervisor: Dr. Edward Kendjelic

2. **Community Living Center (CLC):** On the CLC half of the rotation, Fellows work closely with a
wide range of disciplines and with medically compromised veterans in the Community Living
Center at the Heinz Division. Fellows are actively involved in one CLC unit by attending weekly
interdisciplinary team meetings and serving as the main psychology contact for that team,
although they are also welcome to take consultations throughout the entire CLC based on
training goals. Consultation in the CLC may include psychological assessment, brief
psychotherapy, brief cognitive assessment, evaluation of decision-making capacity,
development of behavior management plans, and/or staff education. Fellows also provide
clinical supervision to a psychology intern on psychological assessment, individual
psychotherapy, and/or cognitive assessment cases.

Supervisor: Dr. Kimberly Christensen

Supervision Responsibilities/Training
As part of their professional development as psychologists, all fellows will have the opportunity to provide supervision to psychology doctoral interns, under the supervision of a staff psychologist. Development of supervisory skills is often overlooked in clinical training, resulting in psychologists providing supervision without any formal training in or supervision of supervisory skills. Fellows will be required to provide one hour of supervision per week to an intern. In addition, fellows will be expected to attend the Supervisor Development Series, a program designed for the staff psychologists to discuss supervisory issues and refine supervisory skills, and receive supervision training during the Professional Development Seminar series. Furthermore, fellows will attend the monthly supervisor meetings and will serve on the Clinical Training Committee by attending quarterly meetings and assisting with the selection of interns and fellows.

Didactics
The fellows will attend at least one hour of geropsychology-related seminars per week, as follows:

1. **GRECC Didactic Series:** Three weekly GRECC didactics are held on Fridays for trainees in all disciplines funded by the GRECC. These didactics include a case conference, core lecture on geriatric issues/syndromes, and a geriatric-related professional lecture open to all staff in the medical center. The fellow assigned to the GRECC rotation is required to attend all three didactics each week.

2. **Neuropsychology Case Conference:** During this biweekly case conference (1st and 3rd Wednesday), a case is presented by staff psychologists, psychology consultants, psychology fellows, and neuropsychology interns. The fellow assigned to the NBP/CLC rotation is required to attend this didactic.

3. **Neuroanatomy Seminar Series:** The focus of this biweekly series (2nd and 4th Wednesday) is initially on brain structure and pathways, brain function, understanding cerebral vascular supply, the basics of a neurological exam, reading neuroradiology, the cognitive effects of psychotropic medications, and understanding lab values and the effects of metabolic disorders on brain function. Additional related topics are discussed later in the year, such as assessment of malingering and discussion of new assessment instruments. The primary resource for this series is the text Neuroanatomy through Clinical Cases by Hal Blumenfeld, MD, Ph.D. (2002), Sinauer Associates, Inc., Sunderland, MA. The fellow assigned to the NBP/CLC rotation is required to attend this didactic.

4. **Geropsychology Journal Club:** During this monthly journal club, fellows, interns, and staff psychologists rotate selecting current articles in the field of geropsychology for review and discussion. Both geropsychology fellows attend this didactic for the entire year.

5. **Fellow Diversity Seminar:** The Fellow Diversity Seminar is a series of five seminars designed for geropsychology fellows that are held during the year. These seminars focus on diversity issues in the assessment and treatment of older adults, such as assessment considerations with African-American older adults, diversity in long-term care, and considerations in psychotherapy.
with GLB older adults. The fellowship staff supervisors serve as the presenters for these seminars. Both geropsychology fellows are required to attend this didactic.

In addition, the Professional Geropsychology fellows will participate in the 1-hour weekly Fellowship Seminar Series with the 3 clinical psychology fellows. This seminar series provides the opportunity for fellows to socialize during the week and share experiences and knowledge of clinical psychology. The seminar series includes:

1. **Monthly Journal Club:** During this journal club also attended by the doctoral interns, two recent articles in psychology are reviewed each month with discussion emphasizing a critique of the science of the articles and integration of research into clinical practice (1st Wednesday of the month).
2. **Professional Development Seminar:** Dr. Pasquale facilitates this seminar which incorporates lecture, discussion, and reading on supervisory development, ethical issues, and professional growth (2nd Friday of the month).
3. **Fellowship Case Conference:** During this case conference, fellows rotate presenting a case with staff psychologists rotating as facilitators (3rd Friday of the month).
4. **Fellowship Seminar:** Psychology staff present lectures/discussions on a professional topic in clinical psychology (4th Friday of the month).

In addition to the above fellowship seminar series, all fellows also attend the following:

1. **Supervisor Development Series:** This bimonthly seminar is attended by fellows and staff psychologists. A scholarly article regarding supervision of psychology trainees is chosen for discussion during each meeting.
2. **Evidence-Based Psychology Seminar Series:** The VA Healthcare System is committed to providing training to providers in evidence-based psychotherapies for various disorders. The content from several of these national training seminars has been released and modified for use by VA training programs. Our program offers a series of 6 monthly seminars at the beginning of the training year to provide an overview of theory and specific interventions for the following evidence-based psychotherapies: Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Depression, Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD, Prolonged Exposure for PTSD, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Social Skills Training, and Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy. Fellows are required to attend at least one of these seminars of their choice.
3. **Diversity Seminars:** Fellows will attend various fellow-directed diversity seminars. Each fellow will select a diversity topic and present either a case example and/or scholarly literature to facilitate discussion.

**Supervision and Evaluation**

The psychology postdoctoral fellowship supervisors are dedicated to providing quality supervision to fellows. All supervisory sessions are intended to offer meaningful feedback to the fellow in order to increase understanding of his/her clinical strengths and weaknesses and to facilitate professional growth. As aids in the supervisory process, digital recording, direct observation, and co-therapy may be
used. While the primary focus of supervisory sessions is on the development of clinical skills, other issues such as administrative dynamics, professional ethics, and cultural issues are often addressed. Fellows receive a minimum of two hours of formal individual supervision weekly. Supervisors are also available on an as needed basis beyond the regularly scheduled times of supervision.

Progress towards the attainment of the training goals is determined by means of regularly scheduled evaluations. Feedback between fellows and supervisors is ongoing. Monthly evaluations are discussed informally with the fellow and at a monthly supervisors’ meeting chaired by the Director of Clinical Training. A mid-rotation evaluation occurs at the 3-month and 9-month time points with the supervisor reviewing the fellow’s progress thus far in terms of the specific skills defined within each core competency area. At the conclusion of each six-month rotation, a formal evaluation of the fellow’s progress is made. This evaluation is discussed with the fellow prior to submission to the Director of Clinical Training for inclusion in the fellow’s training record. In conjunction with the supervisor’s evaluation of the fellow, each fellow is asked to evaluate the supervisor. Fellows are encouraged to evaluate their own performance and that of the fellowship critically so that the evaluation process is not merely unidirectional.

Requirements for Completion
For fellows to remain in good standing in the program, fellows must achieve at least a majority of ratings of "3" in each competency area on the rotation evaluation form at mid-year, indicating that competency for each skill item is at the level beyond the start of the postdoctoral training year, but below that expected at the conclusion of the postdoctoral training year. In addition, fellows must not engage in any ethical violations to maintain good standing in the program.

To successfully complete the fellowship program, fellows must achieve the following requirements:

1. A fellow must complete the entire year of training (i.e., 2080 hours).
2. A fellow must be in “good standing” and removed from any probationary status.
3. By the conclusion of the training year, a fellow must achieve a rating of “4” for every competency skill in each competency domain on the final Evaluation of Fellow Performance, indicating that a fellow has demonstrated competency for this skill at the level expected at the conclusion of the postdoctoral training year.

Facility and Training Resources
All fellows are assigned an individual office with most offices located in the clinic where the fellow works. Offices are generally in close proximity to supervisors to promote informal supervision and consultation. Fellows are assigned a hospital pager. All fellows have a personal computer in their office with access to the computerized patient record system, e-mail, Internet, and Microsoft software. Fellows also have access to our computer lab for additional computer availability and full-time computer support technician. The fellows are also given access to the VA voice mail system. Psychological and neuropsychological testing equipment is available to fellows through our psychology technicians as well as part of the psychology package on the hospital computer system. To assist with development of psychotherapy and supervision skills, fellows have access to digital recorders. Medical libraries are
located at both divisions and fellows have access to journals, interlibrary loans, and computer-based literature searches. Our medical librarians are extremely helpful in assisting staff and fellows to retrieve selected journal articles and books from other sources.

Fellows may park at both divisions without cost, and there is a parking garage located at the University Drive division where a valet service for high density parking is utilized. The VA medical center also operates a shuttle system that interns may utilize to travel between divisions for meetings and didactics.

The stipend for the training year is $43,172. Fellows can elect to participate in federal health insurance plans. Fellows earn annual leave (personal time off) and sick leave at the rate of 4 hours every two weeks. In addition to the annual leave and sick leave, we grant authorized absence to fellows for approved training activities and conferences, including sitting for the psychology licensure examination. Although there is no limit to the amount of authorized absence that a fellow may use, permission to take authorized absence will only be granted when a fellow is making satisfactory progress in meeting the requirements of his/her rotation.

Given research demonstrating the value of mentorship in professional development, fellows are required to identify a mentor from the psychology staff and meet with this mentor at least twice during the training year. The selected mentor will not be in an evaluative role with the fellow and discussions within the mentorship relationship are considered confidential.

**Administrative Policies and Procedures**

During orientation to the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, fellows are provided a training manual that contains important policies and information for the fellowship program as well as for the medical center. Included in the training manual is our grievance and due process policy concerning identification and resolution of problems arising during the internship year. Copies of all evaluation forms are also included in the training manual. Copies of our evaluation forms and grievance policy are available to interested applicants upon request.

**Trainees**

Since the inception of our postdoctoral program in 2000, we have accepted fellows from clinical Ph.D. and Psy.D. programs and counseling Ph.D. programs. Fellows have completed internships in various VA medical centers, including our own, as well as other programs, such as state hospitals and psychiatry departments within university medical centers. The majority of our fellows have accepted staff psychologist positions at VA Medical Centers (including our own). Many of our fellows have enjoyed the transition to Pittsburgh and have remained in the Pittsburgh area, suggesting that Pittsburgh is a desirable city in which to reside!

During exit interviews with fellows over the past several years, fellows have consistently identified three strengths of our fellowship program. First, fellows have commented that both the breadth and depth of training experiences are a significant strength of our program. Although fellows focus their training in a specific focus area, fellows have commented that the breadth of training experiences in each focus area over the course of the year is significant. Fellows have also commented that the training has broadened
their skills in clinical psychology beyond the focus area. Second, fellows have consistently described both the quality and quantity of supervision as strengths. Fellows have remarked that supervisors are always available for scheduled supervision in addition to informal consultation and emergency supervision. Our supervisors have been described as enthusiastic, dedicated, and invested in training and the professional growth of fellows. Finally, fellows have noted that the training they received in supervision significantly increased their supervision competency and is a noteworthy strength of this training program.

Local Information

Pittsburgh is located in southwestern Pennsylvania, where the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers meet to form the Ohio River. Contrary to popular belief, Pittsburgh is no longer the industrial steel town of the 50's and 60's. In fact, Pittsburgh was rated the “Most Livable City” in the 2007 edition of the Places Rated Almanac and again in 2010 by Forbes.com! More recently, in 2017 WalletHub compared 62 of the largest U.S. cities and Pittsburgh comes in at #3 of the best cities in which to live and CNBC named Pittsburgh the 2nd best city for millennials in 2017. The downtown area and riverfront have undergone massive renovation, and several vibrant sub-communities have emerged over the past decade. An exciting blend of old and new, Pittsburgh is a city of history, business, culture, research, medicine, sports, and recreation that pleasantly surprises newcomers!

The largest metropolitan area in the Ohio Valley and Appalachia, Pittsburgh is a growing city. “The Steel City” has 446 bridges, creating a unique urban terrain within a beautiful natural valley. The city is home to numerous diverse cultural groups, and offers a variety of authentic world cuisines within our various districts. For lovers of the culinary arts, you will find a variety of coffee shops, bakeries, and restaurants. Rich in American history, Pittsburgh also has a growing art and cultural scene. It is the home of the Andy Warhol Museum, the Carnegie library system, and has numerous universities and colleges such as University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon, Duquesne, and Chatham, creating a constant influx of energy, creative thought, and activity. There are also a wide variety of entertainment opportunities, including events at PPG Paints Arena, local music venues, as well as Broadway shows in the downtown theatre district. The city is ideal for families, with a local zoo, aquarium, the Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, and the National Aviary. Sports enthusiasts will be welcomed into the loyal hometown community, supporting the Pirates, Steelers, and Penguins. With its unique location, Pittsburgh also offers easy accessibility to a variety of city and state parks, water sports, caving systems, and wildlife preserves, creating a multitude of activities for naturalists.
For more information about our exciting city and the diversity of “the ’Burgh”, view these websites:

- www.visitpittsburgh.com
- www.pump.org
- www.coolpgh.pitt.edu
- www.vibrantpittsburgh.org

Application & Selection Procedures

Prior to the start of the fellowship, a candidate must have completed the following requirements:

1. Have received a doctorate from an APA or CPA accredited graduate program in Clinical, Counseling, or Combined Psychology or PCSAS accredited Clinical Science program. Persons with a doctorate in another area of psychology who meet the APA or CPA criteria for respecialization training in Clinical, Counseling, or Combined Psychology are also eligible.
2. Have completed an internship program accredited by APA or CPA or have completed a VA-sponsored internship.

In addition, VA Eligibility Criteria also require:

1. U.S. citizenship. VA is unable to consider applications from anyone who is not currently a U.S. citizen. Verification of citizenship is required following selection. All fellows must complete a Certification of Citizenship in the United States prior to beginning VA training.
2. A male applicant born after 12/31/1959 must have registered for the draft by age 26 to be eligible for any US government employment, including selection as a paid VA trainee. Male applicants must sign a pre-appointment Certification Statement for Selective Service Registration before they can be processed into a training program. Exceptions can be granted only by the US Office of Personnel Management; exceptions are very rarely granted.
3. Fellows are subject to fingerprinting and background checks prior to start of fellowship. A selected fellow must pass these checks in order to begin employment with the VA.
4. VA conducts drug screening exams on randomly selected personnel as well as new employees. Fellows are not required to be tested prior to beginning work, but once on staff they are subject to random selection for testing as are other employees.
Applicants who have completed VA internships and who have an interest in a VA career are strongly encouraged to apply. We desire candidates with prior experience in geropsychology, either at the practicum and/or internship levels. Applicants with both clinical and research experience in geropsychology are highly desirable. We value applicants with the ability to engage in scholarly inquiry and critical analysis of the scholarly literature. Given our focus on providing evidence based treatment to our veterans, we value applicants who have training in evidence based treatment approaches. Further, given the diversity of the veterans receiving treatment through the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, we encourage applicants from graduate and internship programs with a multicultural focus and experience with ethnic, cultural, and social minority groups. Our fellowship program values cultural and individual diversity and strongly encourages qualified applicants from all backgrounds to apply. We adhere to all EEO guidelines. The United States government is a non-discriminatory, affirmative action employer. Federal law prohibits discrimination based on age, sex, race, creed, color, religion, handicap or national origin.

Applicants may apply to more than one program or focus area. The application process formally begins when an applicant submits the following materials:

1. Cover letter indicating reasons for your interest in our program, status on internship with expected completion date, and status of dissertation/doctoral project with anticipated completion date.
2. Official transcripts of all graduate work in psychology.
4. Three letters of recommendation with at least one from a primary clinical supervisor who can describe clinical work and skills in geropsychology.
5. Letter from the applicant’s dissertation chairperson verifying the applicant’s current status on his/her dissertation research. If an applicant’s dissertation is not completed at the time of application, this letter should also include the chairperson’s estimate of when the applicant’s dissertation will be completed.
6. Letter from the applicant’s internship director of clinical training verifying the applicant’s internship status and expected completion date.
7. A personal statement describing: history of applicant’s interest in geropsychology, self-assessment of training needs with goals for fellowship, and statement of career goals (one-page limit).

All applications must be submitted via the APPA CAS [APPIC Psychology Postdoctoral Application] online centralized application system. No paper applications will be accepted or reviewed. The APPA CAS can be accessed via the following link: https://appicpostdoc.liaisoncas.com

The deadline for all completed application materials is January 5, 2018. Only applications completed by this deadline will be considered.

Applications will be reviewed by three independent reviewers of the Clinical Training Committee and rated on a 10-point scale. Applicants are then ranked by total score (0-30 total) and selected applicants
will be invited for interviews with two psychology staff members involved in the training of fellows and one of the current fellows. Although on-site interviews are preferrable, VTEL (from other VA medical centers) or telephone interviews are acceptable with no adverse rating or rating bias. Points obtained during the interview process are added to the application score and offers are rendered per a rank order list created by total point score. Our program will abide by the APPIC postdoctoral selection guidelines. As such, we will extend offers on February 26, 2018 and candidates will be granted 24 hours to respond to the offer before the offer is extended to the next candidate. If a candidate receives an offer from another program earlier than 2/26/2018, we may extend an earlier offer if appropriate.

Questions regarding the application process can be directed to Dr. Bernadette Pasquale at Bernadette.Pasquale@va.gov.

Postdoctoral Residency Admissions, Support, and Initial Placement Data
Date Program Tables are updated: 10/16/2017

Postdoctoral Program Admissions
Briefly describe in narrative form important information to assist potential applicants in assessing their likely fit with your program. This description must be consistent with the program’s policies on resident selection and practicum and academic preparation requirements:

Applicants who have completed VA internships and who have an interest in a VA career are strongly encouraged to apply. We desire candidates with prior experience in geropsychology, either at the practicum and/or internship levels. Applicants with both clinical and research experience in geropsychology are highly desirable. We value applicants with the ability to engage in scholarly inquiry and critical analysis of the scholarly literature. Given our focus on providing evidence based treatment to our veterans, we value applicants who have training in evidence based treatment approaches. Further, given the diversity of the veterans receiving treatment through the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, we encourage applicants from graduate and internship programs with a multicultural focus and experience with ethnic, cultural, and social minority groups. Our fellowship program values cultural and individual diversity and strongly encourages qualified applicants from all backgrounds to apply. We adhere to all EEO guidelines. The United States government is a non-discriminatory, affirmative action employer. Federal law prohibits discrimination based on age, sex, race, creed, color, religion, handicap or national origin.

Describe any other required minimum criteria used to screen applicants:

In addition, VA Eligibility Criteria also require:

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3. Fellows are subject to fingerprinting and background checks prior to start of fellowship. A selected fellow must pass these checks in order to begin employment with the VA.

4. VA conducts drug screening exams on randomly selected personnel as well as new employees. Fellows are not required to be tested prior to beginning work, but once on staff they are subject to random selection for testing as are other employees.

Financial and Other Benefit Support for Upcoming Training Year

- Annual Stipend/Salary for Full-Time Residents ........................................... $43,172
- Annual Stipend/Salary for Half-Time Residents ............................................. N/A
- Program Provides access to medical insurance for resident? ......................... YES
- If access to medical insurance is provided:
  - Trainee contribution to cost required? ...................................................... YES
  - Coverage of family member(s) available? ............................................... YES
  - Coverage of legally married partner available? ....................................... YES
  - Coverage of domestic partner available? ............................................... NO
- Hours of Annual Paid Personal Time Off (PTO and/or Vacation) ................. 13 days
- Hours of Annual Paid Sick Leave ............................................................... 13 days
- In the event of medical conditions and/or family needs that require extended leave, does the program allow reasonable unpaid leave to interns/residents in excess of personal time off and sick leave? ............................................. Yes
- Other Benefits (please describe):
  - Maternity/Paternity leave is also available through use of sick leave, annual leave, and then Leave Without Pay (LWOP), with any LWOP hours to be made up at the end of the training year.
  - In addition to the annual leave and sick leave, residents may be granted authorized absence for conferences and approved training activities, such as sitting for the licensure exam.
Initial Post-Residency Positions
(Provide an Aggregated Tally for the Preceding 3 Cohorts)

2013-2016
- Total # of residents who were in the 3 cohorts .............................................. 6
- Total # of residents who remain in the residency program ......................... 0

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic university/department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community college or other teaching setting</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent research institution</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correctional facility</td>
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<td>School district/system</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</table>

Note: “PD” = Post-doctoral residency position; “EP” = Employed Position. Each individual represented in this table should be counted only one time. For former trainees working in more than one setting, select the setting that represents their primary position.

Psychologist Training Supervisors

Kimberly A. Christensen, Ph.D., is a Supervisory Psychologist at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, HJ Heinz Division. She earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from Kent State University in 2000. Dr. Christensen completed an internship at the Buffalo VA Medical Center in 2000 focusing on Geropsychology as well as a post-doctoral fellowship in clinical psychology with an emphasis in Geropsychology at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System in 2001. She is the primary supervisor for the fellow on the CLC portion of the NBP/CLC rotation. She maintains clinical responsibilities in the Community Living Center at the Heinz Division and is team leader for the CLC Behavioral Health Team. Dr. Christensen’s primary clinical interests include provision of psychological services in long-term care (including consultation, psychological and cognitive assessment, individual and group psychotherapy,
and staff training/education, interdisciplinary team work), family caregiving, and clinical supervision. Dr. Christensen has also completed VA training and consultation in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Depression and has provider status.

**Edward M. Kendjelic, Ph.D.** is a staff neuropsychologist at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System and the team leader the Neurobehavioral Program. He completed his doctorate in clinical psychology at the University of Louisville in 1998. He completed his internship in clinical psychology at the Houston VA Medical Center in 1998 and postdoctoral fellowship training in geropsychology at the Houston VA Medical Center in 1999. Dr. Kendjelic is one of the primary supervisors for the fellow on the Neurobehavioral Program rotation and one of the supervisors for the neuropsychology internship rotation. He also serves as Vice-Chairperson for the VAPHS Research and Development Committee. Clinical and research interests include: cognitive assessment of dementia, stroke, traumatic brain injury, and neurodegenerative disorders.

**Bernadette M. Pasquale, Ph.D.** is a staff geropsychologist at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System and is the Director of Clinical Training for the internship and fellowship programs. Dr. Pasquale earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from Ohio University in 1995. She completed her internship at the Miami VA Medical Center in 1994 and completed a geropsychology fellowship at the Cleveland VA Medical Center in 1996. Dr. Pasquale has clinical responsibilities in the Ex-Prisoner of War Program and GEM/GDSC clinics. She is one of the primary supervisors for the fellow on the GRECC rotation. Her primary clinical interests include: neuropsychological assessment of older adults and supervision/training. Dr. Pasquale has also completed VA training and consultation in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Depression and has provider status.

**Mollie Sprung, Ph.D.** is a staff geropsychologist at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. Dr. Sprung earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from University of Maryland Baltimore County in 2015. She completed her internship at the Memphis VA Medical Center and completed a Professional Geropsychology fellowship at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System in 2016. Dr. Sprung is the psychologist for the Home Based Primary Care team and supervises the fellow for the HBPC component of the GRECC rotation. Her primary clinical interests include: Geropsychology, Health Psychology, Rehabilitation Psychology, Cognitive Assessment, Family Caregiving, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

### Other Contributors to Programs

**Sara E. Anderson, Psy.D.** is a staff neuropsychologist at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. Dr. Anderson earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from the Virginia Consortium Program in Clinical Psychology in 2010. She completed her internship at the Coatesville VA Medical Center in 2010 and completed a two-year neuropsychology fellowship at the VA Connecticut Healthcare System in 2012. Dr. Anderson is a contributor to the Professional Geropsychology fellowship program facilitating didactics including providing seminars for the Neuroanatomy Series (e.g., Neuroimaging and Neuropsychology, Neuropsychology of Epilepsy) and participating in the Neuropsychology Case Conference. She has outpatient and inpatient clinical responsibilities within the Neurobehavioral
Program and provides training/supervision for interns and practicum students. Her primary clinical interests include: neuropsychology, symptom validity testing, traumatic brain injury, dementias, and cognitive rehabilitation.

**Lauren Jost, Psy.D.** is a geropsychologist at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS). Dr. Jost earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from Xavier University in 2014. She completed her internship in clinical psychology at VAPHS in 2014, and completed her postdoctoral fellowship in professional geropsychology at VAPHS in 2015. Dr. Jost has clinical responsibilities in the Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM) Clinic on the GRECC rotation. She also has outpatient clinical responsibilities in Primary Care and Omega team. Dr. Jost presents a diversity seminar to the fellows in the Professional Geropsychology fellowship. Her clinical and research interests include: dementia, cognitive assessment of older adults, caregiving, end-of-life decisions, and diversity.

**Jennifer M. Keller, Psy.D., ABPP** is a staff neuropsychologist at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System and is a primary supervisor for practicum students and the internship program. Dr. Keller earned her doctorate in clinical psychology with a concentration in neuropsychology from Argosy University/Washington, DC in 2007. She completed her internship in the Neuropsychology Track at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System in 2007 and completed an APPCN fellowship in clinical neuropsychology at the Henry Ford Health System in 2009. She is board certified in neuropsychology. Dr. Keller has outpatient and inpatient clinical and supervisory responsibilities in the Neurobehavioral Program, which includes the Polytrauma Team. Dr. Keller is a contributor to the Professional Geropsychology fellowship program facilitating didactics including providing seminars for the Neuroanatomy Series and participating in the Neuropsychology Case Conference. Her primary clinical and research interests include symptom and performance validity testing, movement disorders, dementias, and caregiving.

**Laura Smith-Seemiller, Ph.D., ABPP** is a staff neuropsychologist in the Neurobehavioral Program at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System and board certified in neuropsychology. Dr. Smith-Seemiller earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from Ohio State University in 1989. She completed her internship at Pittsburgh VA Medical Center in 1989 and finished her post-doctoral supervision in neuropsychology while working in the Traumatic Brain Injury rehabilitation program at Greater Pittsburgh Rehabilitation Hospital in 1992. From 1992 to 1998 she was on staff at Allegheny General Hospital, during which clinical duties included neuropsychological assessment and psychotherapy (primarily with survivors of brain injury or stroke), supervision of psychology interns for an APA approved clinical psychology internship, and research. From 1998 to 2007 she was on staff at HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital, where her clinical duties primarily involved evaluation and treatment of inpatients who suffered stroke or TBI. Since 2007 she has been a staff neuropsychologist at VAPHS and is a contributor to the Professional Geropsychology fellowship program facilitating didactics including providing seminars for the Neuroanatomy Series (e.g., Neuroimaging and Neuropsychology, Neuropsychology of Epilepsy) and participating in the Neuropsychology Case Conference. Her primary clinical and research interests are neuropsychological assessment of adults and traumatic brain injury.
Trent T. Thatcher, Psy.D., is a staff geropsychologist at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS). He earned his doctorate in clinical psychology from Wright State University in 2003. Dr. Thatcher completed his predoctoral internship at the VAPHS in 2003, as well as a post-doctoral fellowship in clinical psychology with an emphasis in geropsychology at the VAPHS in 2004. He maintains clinical responsibilities at the H. J. Heinz Community Living Center, and his primary clinical interests include provision of capacity evaluation and cognitive assessment of older adults, individual therapy in long-term care, ethics, and consultation and direct intervention with older adults receiving palliative and hospice care. Dr. Thatcher is a didactic seminar presenter for the Professional Geropsychology Fellowship. Dr. Thatcher has completed didactic VA training and consultation in Motivational Interviewing (MI) and has provider status.