

VISN 19 MIRECC Denver Post-Doctoral Fellowship – Application and Selection Procedures

Application Procedures:

Candidates for the VISN 19 MIRECC Fellowship Program in Psychology (Denver site) are required to submit the following:

1. A letter of interest that identifies career goals, expectations, and the goodness of fit with the mission of the VISN 19 MIRECC
2. A current curriculum vitae
3. Letter of completion from academic and internship/residency programs
4. Three letters of recommendation
5. Sample de-identified neuro/psychological evaluation report and a summary regarding number and types of neuro/psychological tests administered and reports written. (Some background in neuropsychological assessment is preferred.)

Selection of Fellows:

Once candidates have forwarded the aforementioned application requirements, their materials are placed into folders which are reviewed by current VISN 19 MIRECC Psychology Fellowship Training Committee members. Folders are evaluated via the following criteria:

1. Letter of Interest: Career goals, expectations, and the goodness of fit with the mission of the MIRECC.
2. Research Experience: Demonstration of good research skills – critical thinking, interesting topic, depth of knowledge, work ethic are positives.
3. Curriculum Vitae: Depth and breadth of experience – research and clinical.
4. Psychological Testing Report: Ability to integrate/synthesize data; Logical recommendations from data; Conceptual skills; Writing ability; Ability to integrate diversity issues.
5. Psychological Testing Experience: Experience with a variety of tests and use of batteries; Testing experience should fit with training goals.
6. Letters of Recommendation: Red flag when letters are superficial or lukewarm; Should show personal knowledge and respect for candidate; All letters consistent in description of candidate.
7. Directors of Training Letters from internship and graduate school: Letter of completion.

Candidates who fulfill the criteria during the folder rating process are offered interviews. So as not to impose financial burden, the option of a phone interview is given to each selected candidate. Each interview candidate is rated on a 1-4 scale (1 = Optimally prepared for fellowship; 2 = Will need expected level of supervision to successfully complete fellowship; 3 = Will need moderate to extensive level of supervision to

successfully complete the fellowship; 4 = Not ready for fellowship) according to the following criteria:

1. **INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE** – Rating should be based on the applicant’s demonstration that s/he has already begun to build a cohesive, logical theoretical understanding of health, mental illness, and suicide, and has reasonable ability to translate this understanding into clinical and research practice. This includes: 1) the ability to conceptualize issues regarding an individual’s mental health, 2) the ability to conceptualize issues regarding research design and methods; 3) awareness of ethical issues, 4) the ability to think critically, and 5) awareness/sophistication of thinking on diversity issues.
2. **PRESENTATION OF SELF** – Does the applicant present themselves professionally, flexibly, and confidently, but with appropriate questioning of self? How does the applicant engage with the staff member during the interview process? This also includes: 1) Having a sense of their developmental path, 2) the ability to think critically about their work, 3) an awareness of strengths and weaknesses, and 4) some idea regarding how they take care of themselves (i.e., How do you deal with stress?).
3. **FIT WITH OUR PROGRAM** – This rating should reflect overall goodness of fit. Does the applicant present as someone who is looking for training in what we have to offer? Issues to consider include: 1) Supervisory styles that have worked for them in the past, 2) career goals, 3) an applicant’s willingness/understanding regarding what it means to work with Veterans, men, in a medical setting, and 4) research interests (i.e., can they articulate how their primary research interests fit with a focus on Veteran suicide?)
4. **LEVEL OF RESEARCH SKILL** - Can the applicant formulate research questions? Would they be able to generate testable hypotheses? Would they be able to synthesize existing literature on a given topic? Can they develop and articulate methodology necessary to test project hypotheses? Can they develop and organize a primary project?
5. **LEVEL OF CLINICAL SKILL** - Can the applicant apply theoretical knowledge in a clinical setting? Would they be able to conduct assessments (psychological, neuropsychological, suicide-specific), consultation, and/or psychotherapy with this population? Would they be able to work with clients who are not self-referred? Can they be reflective about their own work?