

Process Work Institute Graduate School

2049 NW Hoyt Street, Portland, Oregon 97209 • 503-223-8188 • Fax: 503-227-7003

Choosing and Working with Your Study Committee

I. What is a Study Committee?

Trainees are guided throughout their studies by a study committee, consisting of three faculty members selected by the trainee. The study committee provides guidance, support, and feedback, and serves as the trainees' main training resource and evaluative body. The study committee also offers a mentoring relationship to the trainee, helping to connect developing skills with personal and professional goals.

The trainee has the option of assigning specially designated roles to each faculty member. The *Advisor* is the main resource person for the trainee's studies, and can help the trainee work through goals, process and make use of feedback, and give support for the program requirements, such as finding or designing an internship or working on the final project. The *supervisor* can help the trainee developing and mastering their clinical skills with clients. The *coach* serves as a liaison between the program and the world, helping the trainee think about, design and select internships, develop a research project and line of inquiry, and think about creating projects and activities that support the trainee making a bridge between their studies and their work in the world.

These roles are optional; this support can come from faculty members outside the study committee as well.

II. Choosing the Study Committee

The committee plays a vital part of the trainee's studies throughout the Diploma program. It accompanies, challenges and supports the trainee in developing his or her unique talents, personal strengths, and provides the opportunity for ongoing evaluation as he or she progresses through the program. If, during the course of the program, personal or general problems related to the trainee's studies arise, the trainee and her study committee together are responsible for working through them. For these reasons, selection of the study committee and personal interrelationships within it are of the highest importance.

After admission to the program, one of the trainee's first tasks is to assemble the study committee. Trainees have 15 Faculty Contact Hours (FCHs) per year during Years 1 and 2 to work with faculty members. These can be used to interview faculty and determine their suitability for the trainee's committee. The committee should be in place by the beginning of the 3rd residency, approximately 9 months into Year 1.

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Each entering cohort is assigned an advisor, optionally available as a resource for the trainee before their committee is in place. The training therapist is not permitted to serve on the trainee's study committee, nor give feedback to the committee for evaluation.

Trainees may select study committee members from the faculty handbook, or any Process Work Diplomate, even if not listed in the faculty handbook. If the Diplomate not listed in the handbook, the trainee should submit the Diplomate's name to the Registrar, with his or her contact information, and current CV, once the Diplomate has agreed to the appointment. Study committee members must be used actively during the course of the trainee's studies. Some of the roles that a study committee member can play during the course of the trainee's studies include supervisor, advisor, final project advisor, teacher, internship advisor, etc.

III. Required Meetings and Faculty Contact Hours

Study committee meetings are an opportunity to review the trainee's progress and help address the trainee's own learning goals. Prior to each study committee meeting, the trainee will gather evaluation reports, including a self evaluation, and evaluation by peer group members, and prepare to discuss all of these evaluations with the study committee, to support his or her continuing progress and to serve as basis for the subsequent year's learning contract. Trainees are requested to sign an Informed Consent form that permits the exchange of information about the trainee's performance between the evaluating peer and faculty and the school.

Two meetings per year with the study committee are required (In Year 1 – one meeting is required since the trainee might not have chosen their committee till the beginning of the 3rd residency). It is ideal if the meetings can take place sometime during the residency, if the study committee members reside in Portland. In addition to the two required meeting, trainees can use some of their 15 FCHs for sessions with more study committee meetings if needed, or for sessions with individual study committee members. FCHs can also be used for general supervision, coaching, help with the final project, internship, or any session with other faculty. They cannot be used for therapy sessions.

IV. Study Committee Meetings and Evaluation

The study committee plays a central role in assessing the trainee's progress, and in recommending the trainee for the exams, as well as following up on conditional exam results:

1. 3rd Residency, end of Year 1. The first study committee meeting should be a time to discover how the committee will work together, and how the trainee would like to use the committee. The trainee's learning goals, and styles and goals for the feedback and evaluation should also be discussed. At this first

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meeting, the committee and trainee should conduct a general assessment. Check whether all requirements are completed satisfactorily. If there is anything incomplete or issues which need greater focus, the committee makes a contract with the trainee to complete it by the end of the next residency. The committee and trainee should discuss together how the trainee's learning is developing in the following areas:

- displaying curiosity about his or her own process, and picking up and relating to unknown experiences in themselves and others
 - being able to be in conflict and find something useful in it
 - meta-communicating about feelings, experiences, and the process
2. 4th Residency, beginning of Year 2: The committee follows up on the contract and assessment of the previous residency. Is everything proceeding according to plan? If there are incomplete or unfulfilled requirements, or the previous contract is not fulfilled by now, and it appears a pattern of incompleteness is happening, the committee should discuss whether or not this is the right path of study for the trainee. The committee and trainee should discuss together how the trainee's learning is developing in the following areas:
- bringing his or her inner experiences into the group or process
 - using eldership to hold and deepen experiences, and help make something useful, even out of difficult experiences
 - welcoming new experiences, disturbances, and appreciating diversity, both internal and external
 - picking up the other as part of oneself
3. 6th Residency, end of Year 2. The committee discusses the trainee's Phase I exam results. What was the trainee's learning and experience? Were there any conditional passes? If so, discuss the criteria for completion, and the committee gives any support for completing it.
4. 7th Residency, beginning of Year 3: This meeting follows up on the provisional passes from last year's Phase I exams. If the provisional passes are not completed satisfactorily, the trainee can be asked to step down. This meeting focuses on the trainee's plans for clinical work, for the worldwork internship, general skill development and personal goals for the year. At this point, the student will also be deciding on their area of interest for their final project. The final project proposal will be worked on in between Residency 7 and 8, to be approved by the committee no later than Residency 9. The committee and trainee should discuss together how the trainee's learning is developing in the following areas:
- being open to learning and to the unknown
 - being able to self-evaluate, and being aware of his or her growing edges
 - showing compassion, respect and openness towards all parts of a client's process

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- focusing on and holding experience at the edge, as well as letting go in the face of negative feedback
 - having humility and awareness of personal limits
 - viewing people in a social context
 - being an elder even when not the designated facilitator or authority
 - being fluid working with inner and outer authority
5. 9th Residency, end of Year 3: the committee reviews the Phase II exam results. How did the trainee do? What was the trainee's learning and experience? Are there any exams that need retaking? Any areas that need focus? The student should have an approved final project proposal and have already started working on it. Discuss plans and ideas for next year's clinical internship. Continue discussion of plans for research project and moving into bridge year.
 6. 10th Residency, beginning of Year 4: discuss plans for Year 4. How are other exams going, the supervised series on inner work, relationship conflict, and long term case analysis? The final project in process will be presented at this residency, along with a two-page paper describing the work so far. Study committee should discuss how it is going, and if any further support is needed. This is also the time to choose and approve an internship. What support or resources does the trainee need for this final year?
 7. 12th Residency, end of Year 4: Closure and Celebration. Time to review, debrief the committee's experience together, and help the trainee move on with the next steps.

V. Removal of Committee Members

Careful selection of study committee members will ordinarily allow retention of the same committee throughout the program. Replacement of a member may become necessary due to illness, resignation, or some other substantive reason. A committee member's critical evaluation of the trainee's work ordinarily represents a challenging contribution to learning and therefore, by itself, does not constitute grounds for replacement.

In the case that it becomes necessary to replace a committee member, and an amicable agreement between the trainee and the member to be replaced cannot be reached, the matter shall be arbitrated by all members of the study committee. All changes in the study committee must be communicated directly to the registrar.

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VI. Tips on Convening and Facilitating a Study Committee Meeting

Once you have chosen your study committee members, it is your responsibility to convene and chair two study committee meetings per year. Here are some tips and guidelines for you on convening and facilitating your study committee meetings.

1. Coordinating four people's schedules can be a difficult task, and possibly more difficult if the members of your committee live around the globe. Thus, in scheduling a meeting, you not only need to take into account personal schedules, but also worldwide time differences and distance technologies. To realistically schedule two meetings per year, it may be necessary to contact study committee members at least 3-6 months in advance to set up a meeting. Please check with each member to find out his or her specific needs concerning advanced notice, and preferred methods for staying in touch.
2. Once all the members of your committee have found a date, it is important to confirm the date and time in a separate email (phone call or letter) to all the members twice – right after the date has been found, and again, a week or so before the meeting. If the meeting is to be held as a conference call, include the conference call number and participant access codes. Be sure to specify the time zone of the meeting: for instance, Sunday, August 27, 2006, 4:30 pm PST.
3. Since the meetings are meant to review your progress in the program, you should prepare all the relevant information for the meeting beforehand -- feedback and evaluation forms, self-evaluation, reports, and any other support documents necessary. You should send these out to the members at least a week in advance of the meeting.
4. Meetings last one hour, and in order to get through all the material in that short time span, it is important for the trainee to set an agenda for the meeting, and to send the agenda to all the members beforehand.
5. The trainee is responsible for writing up a report of the meeting, and sending the report to the members for their approval. Once approved by the study committee members, the report gets sent to the registrar.