

## The Predoctoral Internship Crisis

### Examining Views of the Psychology Community & Identifying Possible Solutions

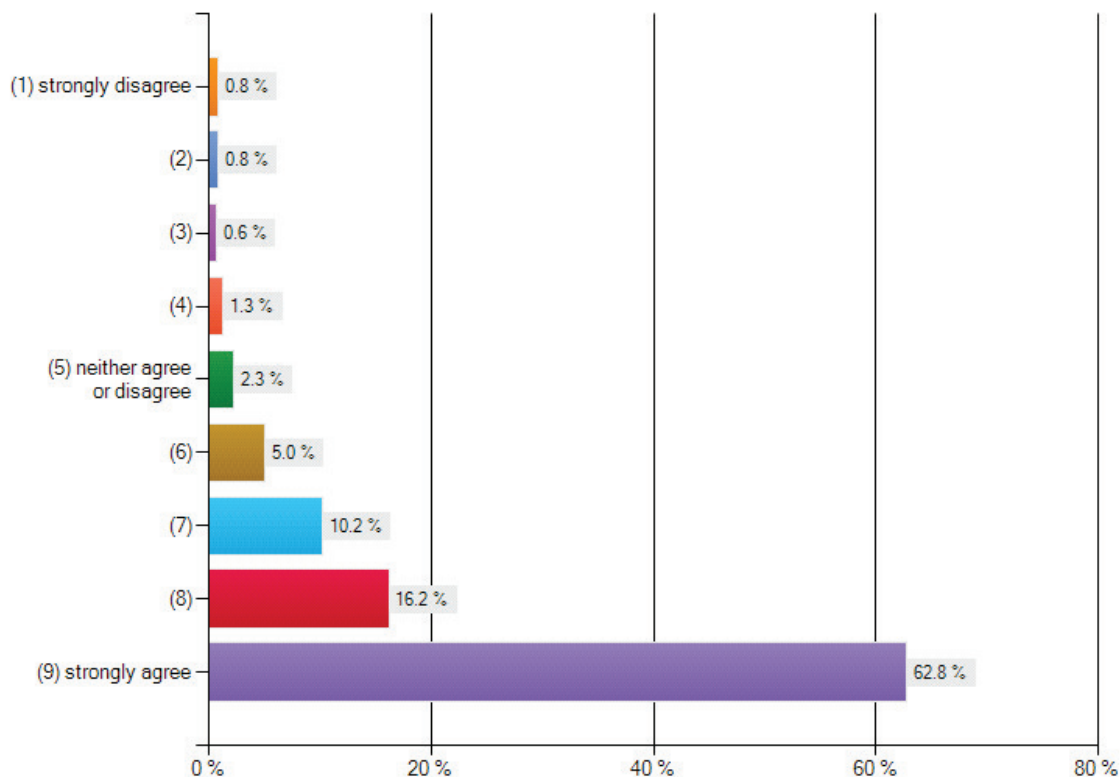
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In response to the worsening match rate of the psychology predoctoral internship (77% of students matched in 2010), an Ad Hoc Internship Committee was developed by SSCP to take a closer look at the current state of the internship process. The committee developed a survey that was launched in November to assess the extent to which the current internship process is perceived as problematic and to begin to identify possible solutions for addressing the worsening match rate.

Below are some preliminary results from this survey. We plan to analyze the findings in much more depth and to share them with the SSCP membership and others in the near future. The majority of respondents thus far (N = 622) have been graduate students (44.1%); however, responses were also received from current interns (16.6%), internship directors (1.5%), internship supervisors (6.4%), postdoctoral fellows (13.7%), directors of clinical training in doctoral programs (3.9%), and faculty members in doctoral programs (13.7%). Twenty-three percent of respondents were members of SSCP.

#### Does the psychology community believe that we are facing a crisis?

The worsening match rate – only 77% in 2010 – suggests that the current predoctoral internship program is facing a crisis that should be addressed by the psychology community.



### A Closer Look at the Nature of this Problem

Approximately **1 in 4** post-doc fellows (25%) and interns (25.3%) completing the survey reported they did not match to an internship site the first time they applied.

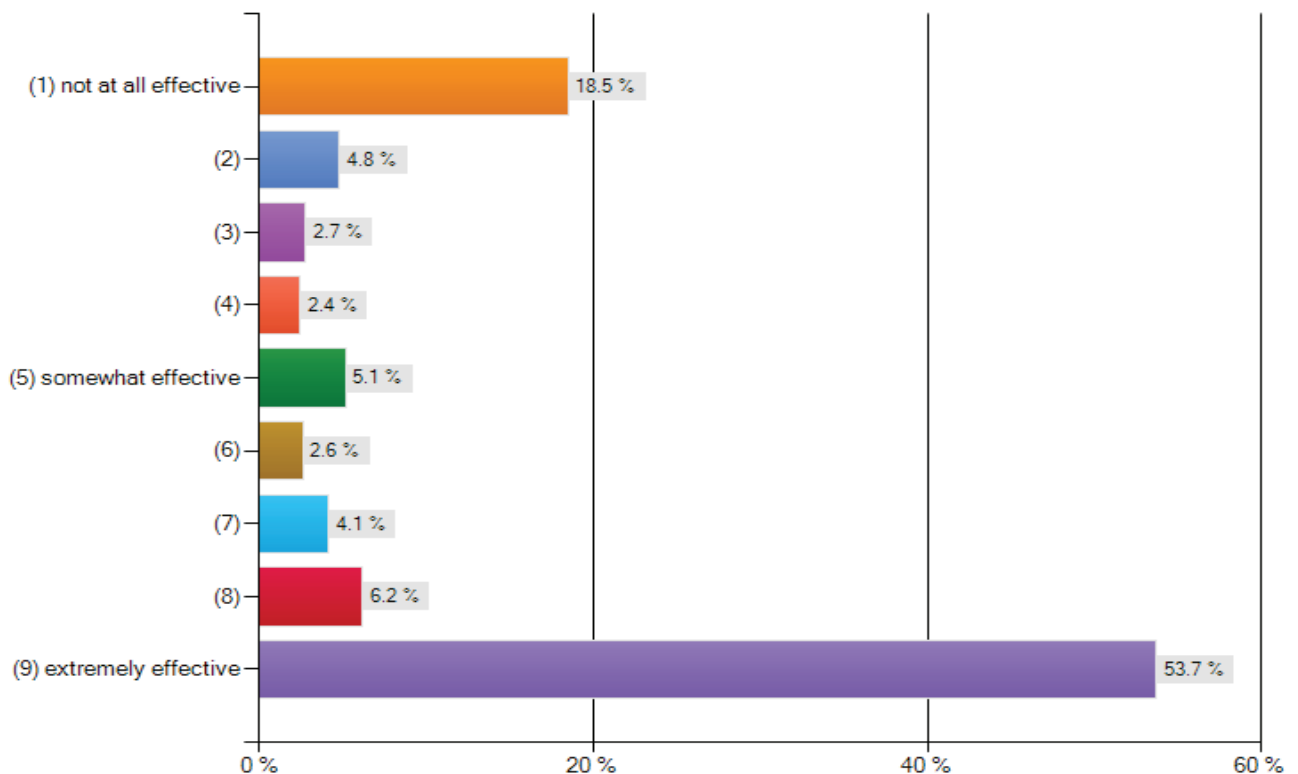
The majority of graduate students who completed the survey (64.3%) indicated that, when interviewing at their current graduate programs, no one explained to them that a predoctoral internship is not guaranteed and there is a possibility they may not match to an internship. The majority of current interns (51.6%) also reported they were not informed of this possibility. In contrast, the majority of directors of clinical training (68.2%) and current faculty members of doctoral programs (61.8%) reported that applicants are routinely informed of the possibility that they may not match to an internship program.

### Identifying Solutions for Addressing the Worsening Match Rate

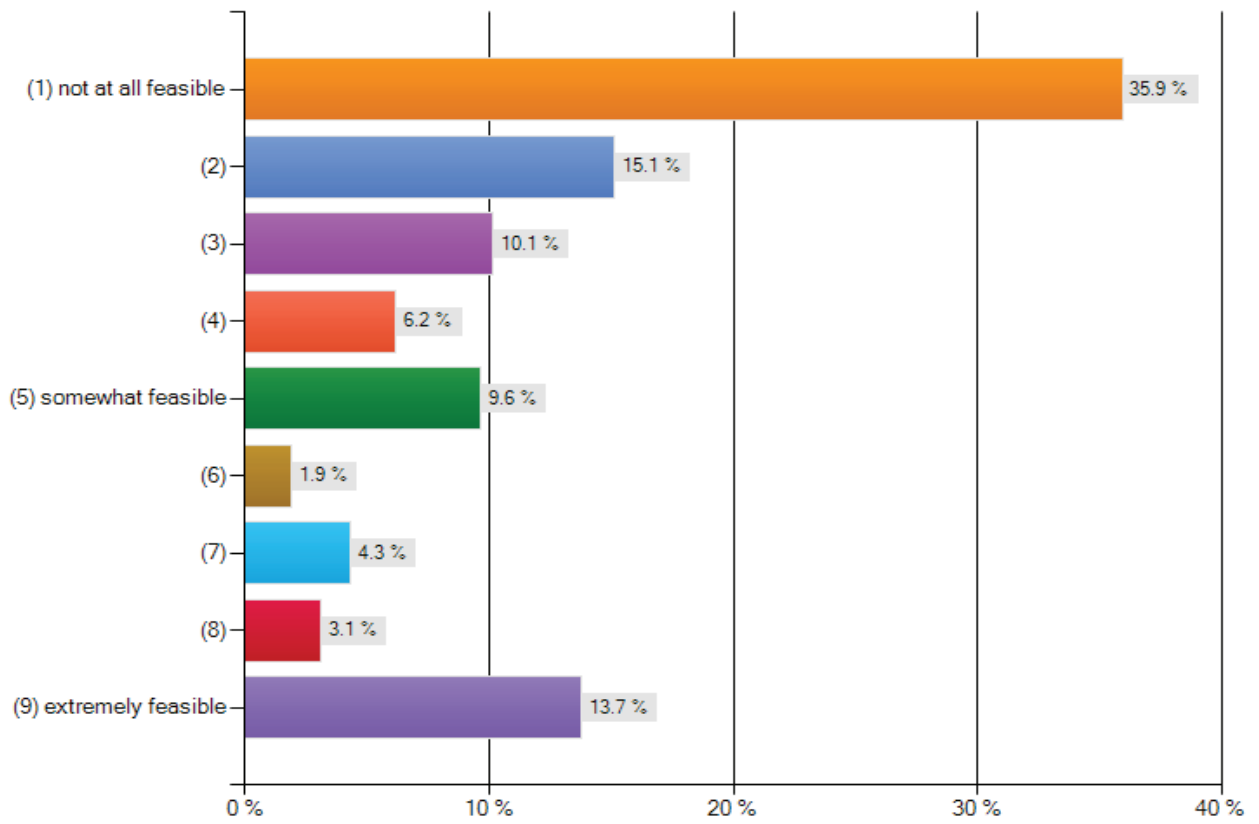
Several potential solutions for addressing the worsening match rate were presented and respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they believed each solution would be both effective and feasible.

Results of the survey suggest the majority of psychology professionals view the most effective solution to be **eliminating the predoctoral internship requirement altogether**; however, this was also viewed as the least feasible solution.

How effective do you believe that this would be for addressing the worsening match rate?

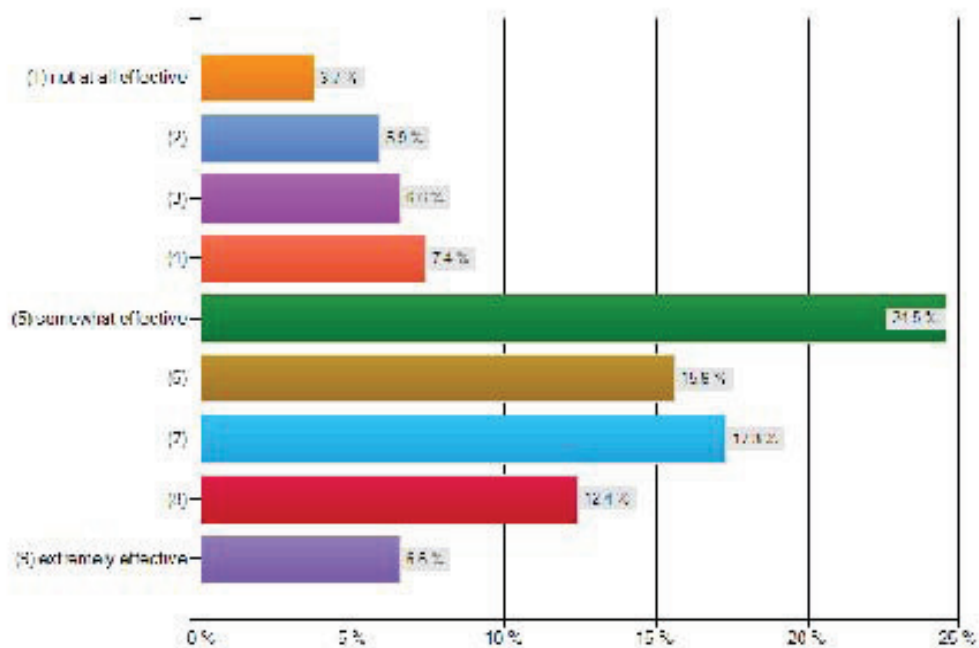


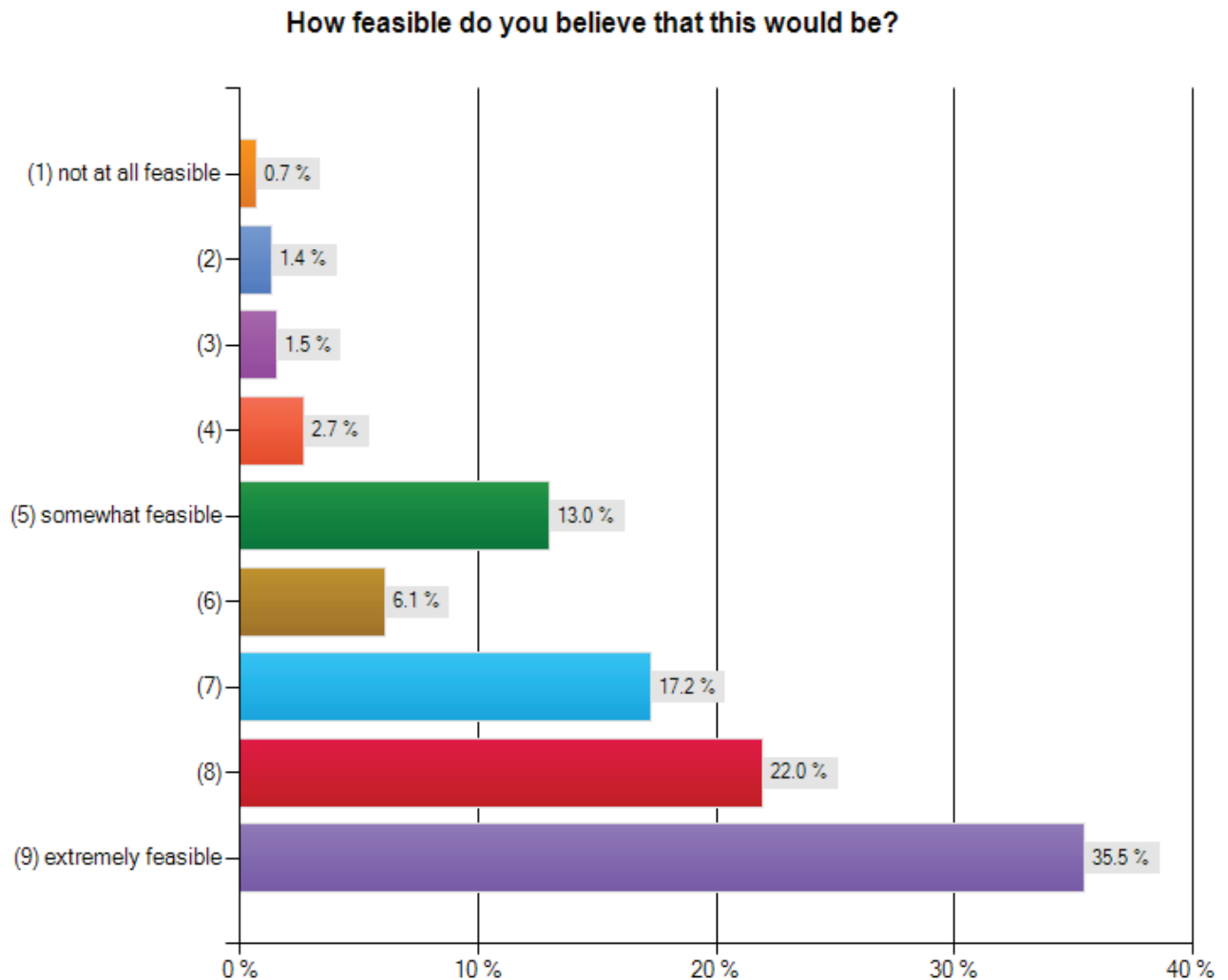
How feasible do you believe that this would be?



The most feasible solution that was identified included *requiring internship sites to provide clearer guidelines with regard to what constitutes a competitive candidate at their program so that students can make more educated decisions about whether to apply to certain sites*; however, this solution was viewed as being only moderately effective.

How effective do you believe that this would be for addressing the worsening match rate?





One-hundred ninety respondents also shared their own ideas for addressing the worsening match rate. Some of the most common responses included: (a) admitting fewer students into graduate programs, (b) applying more stringent requirements for accreditation of doctoral programs, (c) making the accreditation process less expensive and cumbersome for internship sites, and (d) replacing the internship requirement with a requisite number of clinical hours to be completed at some point during graduate training.

In summary, results of the SSCP internship survey suggest the following preliminary conclusions. First, the worsening match rate is indeed viewed as a crisis by the psychology community and there is agreement that something should be done to address this crisis. Second, elimination of the predoctoral internship requirement is viewed as a highly effective solution but relatively infeasible. Third, requiring internship sites to provide clearer guidelines to applicants about what constitutes a competitive candidate was viewed as the most feasible solution, but was also viewed as being only moderately effective for addressing the match crisis.

The survey is ongoing, and we invite all in the psychology community to participate: