

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**  
**Clinical Psychology Program Brochure**

**2018-2019**

**Overview and Purpose**

The Clinical Psychology Training Program at The Pennsylvania State University is one of the oldest in the country. It was first accredited by the APA in the 1940s, and consistently ranks within the top 10-20 programs in the country (e.g., Gourman Reports, National Research Council, University Rankings, and U.S News and World Report). The doctoral program is a founding member of the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science, a highly selective organization of clinical science doctoral programs, and is a member of the Child Clinical and Pediatric Psychology Training Council.

Our PCSAS<sup>1</sup> and APA<sup>2</sup> accredited **Clinical Science** program is designed to provide a **seamless integration of training in clinical science and practice**. We train graduate students to produce and disseminate cutting edge knowledge that moves the field of clinical science forward and we provide outstanding applied training in assessment and intervention that prepares students for professional licensure.

Our clinical science program prepares graduate students for research-oriented careers at universities, medical schools, and settings that integrate research and evaluation along with professional services. The structure of tomorrow's health care systems should be based on the best scientific evidence available. **Penn State's graduates play leading roles** in this future—designing, building, overseeing, delivering, and evaluating the science-driven health-care systems of tomorrow.

The faculty believes that excellence in clinical science is best provided by superior training in both scientific methods and evidence-based clinical assessment and intervention. Primary requirements for graduate students in our program include coursework, clinical practica, masters research project, comprehensives exam, doctoral dissertation, and an APA accredited predoctoral internship. Students generally complete the masters by their second year, coursework by their third or fourth year, the comprehensives examination by their third or fourth year, the dissertation by the fifth year, and the predoctoral internship in the sixth year.

The Clinical Program requires that students: 1) complete a minimum of three full-time academic years of graduate study; 2) at least two of those three years at Penn State University; 3) at least one year in full-time residence; and 4) complete an APA accredited predoctoral internship before receiving the Ph.D. degree. However, it is expected that most students will spend 5 years in residence and 1 year in the predoctoral internship, completing all program requirements and acquiring requisite scientific and clinical skills in a timely fashion.

**<sup>1</sup>Questions related to the program's PCSAS accredited status should be directed to the PCSAS:**

*Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System*  
Alan G. Kraut, Executive Director  
1800 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 402  
Washington, DC 20036-1218 USA  
Phone: (301) 455-8046  
Email: [akraut@pcsas.org](mailto:akraut@pcsas.org)  
Web: <http://www.pcsas.org>

**<sup>2</sup>Questions related to the Program's accredited status should be directed to the Commission on Accreditation:**

*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](mailto:apaaccred@apa.org)  
Web: [www.apa.org/ed/accreditation](http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation)

## **Emphasis in Adult and Child Clinical Psychology**

Students in the clinical program are required to specialize in either adult or child clinical psychology, although students in the two tracks interact regularly within the larger clinical training program. Additionally, training within either specialty is not limited to that age group and both research and clinical experiences with additional populations are available. **It is important to note that applications to the two tracks are considered separately.** Prospective students must indicate on their applications an interest in one of the two tracks.

### **Adult Clinical Track**

The adult track provides integrative training in clinical research, assessment, and intervention with adults. Faculty areas of research specialization are in psychotherapy process and outcome, personality assessment and personality disorders, multicultural factors in psychopathology, clinical neuropsychology, anxiety disorders and PTSD, intimate partner violence, emotion regulation, sports-related concussion, neuroscience, and addiction. Faculty labs employ a range of advanced research methods including brain imaging, ecological momentary assessment and experience sampling, and psychophysiological assessment, often integrated with direct clinical interviews.

The Psychological Clinic includes a Practice Research Network, allowing students streamlined access to clinical populations for research and promoting the seamless integration of science and practice. Students also gain extensive clinical experiences in cognitive behavioral and psychodynamic therapies, clinical neuropsychology, diagnostic assessment, and crisis management.

Adult clinical students wishing to develop a minor area of specialization (e.g., Women's Studies, Health Psychology, Methodology) or complete the Specialization in Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (SCAN), may do so by taking additional coursework.

### **Child Clinical Track**

The child clinical track lies at the interface of developmental and clinical child psychology and emphasizes research and intervention with individuals ranging in age from infancy to young adulthood. Students in this track obtain specialized training in: (1) developmental psychopathology, understanding the effects of biological, cognitive, social, emotional, and family and community factors on typical and atypical development; (2) research translating knowledge to interventions for early childhood mental health, school readiness, stress related to poverty and acculturation, and parenting problems associated with risk for maltreatment; and (3) mental health services to children and families, including evidence-based intervention, school-based consultation, and comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation.

Specific areas of expertise in the child track faculty include infant and toddler emotion development, stress and coping in children and adolescents, neuropsychology of disruptive behavior disorders, parenting and child maltreatment, and prevention science. Faculty labs employ a range of advanced research methods including psychophysiological assessments, intensive observational methods, state-of-the-art data analytic techniques for longitudinal and within-person analysis, and community and field research. Students also gain extensive clinical experience in cognitive-behavioral and family-based therapies, clinical neuropsychology, diagnostic assessment, and crisis management.

Child track students are required to complete a minor in Developmental Psychology or Human Development. Some students may also choose a developmental focus as part of the Specialization in Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (SCAN).

## Clinical Psychology Program: Sequence and Requirements

### Undergraduate Preparation

The graduate program in the Department of Psychology assumes that students begin their graduate coursework with prior foundational knowledge in biological, cognitive, affective, and social bases of behavior, and developmental lifespan psychology, demonstrated by a passing score on the GRE Psychology Subject Test (greater than the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile) or successful completion (grade of B- or better) on prior coursework in each domain of knowledge. Entering students lacking relevant background preparation may be required to gain these competencies through supplemental readings or course work. Therefore, we recommend that students take the GRE Psychology Subject Test, especially if they are not psychology majors.

### The Clinical Psychology Major

The Clinical Psychology program encourages flexibility in attaining student academic and professional goals but all students, nonetheless, must take required courses, including clinical practica, and to meet specific research milestones. In general, students are expected to engage in both research and practice throughout their graduate training, in addition to required and elective course work.

The curriculum includes required core courses (below) and various other courses that meet the Developmental minor or SCAN specializations. Students must also meet graduate level Discipline Specific Knowledge requirements covering biological bases of behavior, cognitive bases of behavior, affective bases of behavior, social bases of behavior, and lifespan development. In some cases, these are met through core required courses. Students develop core competencies in research methods and statistics, history and systems, ethical and legal issues, as well as competence in and knowledge of sensitivity to individual and cultural diversity.

Adequate written and oral fluency in English must be demonstrated.

### The Core Clinical Major Courses

<b>Required Courses for all students:</b>	
Seminar in General Psychology	PSY 501
Analysis of Psychological Data I	PSY 507
Analysis of Psychological Data II	PSY 508
Lifespan Development and Adult Psychopathology	PSY 542
Lifespan Development and Developmental Psychopathology	PSY 575
Research Design in Clinical Psychology	PSY 543
Multicultural Perspectives in Clinical Psychology	PSY 566
<b>Additional Required Courses for Adult Track students</b>	
Advanced Psychotherapy	PSY 569
Practicum in Clinical Methods (4 years required)	PSY 560
Adult Clinical Assessment	PSY 554
At least one additional assessment course from the following:	
Child-Clinical Assessment	PSY 577
Theory and Practicum in Clinical Assessment (Personality Assessment)	PSY 555
Neuropsychological Assessment	PSY 556
<b>Additional Required Courses for Child Track students:</b>	
Clinical Child Interventions	PSY 576
Clinical Practicum with Children (4 years required)	PSY 561
Child Clinical Assessment	PSY 577

## **Research Training**

Students are expected to be involved in research each semester. Students come into the program to work primarily with one faculty mentor with whom they develop a research collaboration with the goal of producing publishable research that contributes important knowledge to the field. However, all students are required to do research with at least one other faculty member during their time at Penn State. Most students are authors on several research publications by the time they complete the program, which, combined with excellent clinical training, makes them competitive for top clinical internships, positions in academia, academic medical centers, and other research-oriented settings.

*Adult Track.* Adult track students are required to complete at least three independent research projects during their graduate career: a masters project, a minor project, and a dissertation, one of which must be designed by the student (with the help of the mentor) and carried through to the end. Adult track students fulfill the minor project with a faculty member other than their primary advisor. The minor project should result in a high quality written product of publishable quality that is part of the student's comprehensive examination, which also includes written responses to questions that have been provided to the students in advance.

*Child Track.* Child track students are required to complete at least three independent research projects during their graduate career: a masters project, a depth paper, and a dissertation. The depth paper is a high quality written product of publishable quality that is part of the student's comprehensive examination, which also includes written responses to questions that have been provided to the students in advance. The depth paper may be an empirical or theoretical paper or a research grant proposal.

## **Clinical Training**

The majority of practicum training takes place in our Psychological Clinic. Much of the supervision is provided by our core faculty, who embody the clinical science model in their daily professional lives and are actively engaged in clinically relevant scientific research and clinical supervision. A research infrastructure exists within the clinic (The Practice Research Network) to support student- and faculty-initiated scientific research on clinically meaningful questions in a naturalistic setting.

As one of the major service providers for Centre County, the Clinic provides services to clients with a wide range of psychological problems and diverse needs. Services provided include adult and child assessment; consultation with parents, schools, and public officials; individual and group therapy; marital and family counseling; psychodiagnostic and neuropsychological assessment; and community mental health consultation.

Most training takes place through practicum teams in a series of graded experiences ranging in degree of difficulty of the cases and progressing from interviewing, assessment, and treatment. Students can acquire specialized training in cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, family systems, dialectical-behavioral, and trauma-focused cognitive-behavioral therapies. Advanced clinical students may be funded by Clinic Assistantships to acquire additional experience. Learning experiences and close faculty supervision are aided by digital video recording facilities. Some students also complete off-site externships.

*Internship.* All clinical students must complete a 12-month APA accredited internship, typically in their sixth year, before receiving the Ph.D. degree. Students select internships that best fit their developing professional interests. Generally, students are placed in medical school centers, child guidance centers, psychiatric hospitals, or community clinics--some with general comprehensive programs and others with specialized programs.

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