

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Clinical Psychology Program

2017-2018

Overview and Purpose

Introduction to the Clinical Program

The Clinical Psychology Training Program at The Pennsylvania State University is one of the oldest in the country. It was first accredited in the 1940s, and consistently ranks within the top 10-20 programs in the country (e.g. Gourman Reports, the National Research Council, University Rankings and U.S. News and World Report).

Penn State's doctoral program is a founding member of the **Academy of Psychological Clinical Science**, a highly selective organization of clinical science doctoral programs whose broad mission is the advancement of clinical science. Psychological clinical science is concerned with generating new knowledge regarding the nature of psychological problems, and with translating that knowledge into applications that improve the human condition.

Our **PCSAS¹** and **APA²** accredited **Clinical Science** program is designed to train graduate students to produce and disseminate cutting edge knowledge that moves the field of clinical science forward. The program simultaneously provides outstanding applied training in assessment and intervention and prepares students for professional licensure.

The overall goal of the training program is to provide a **seamless integration of clinical science and practice**. We provide students with the highest quality science-centered education and training in both research and application. Our graduates demonstrate competence: (a) to conduct research relevant to the promotion of mental health, and the assessment, prevention, treatment, and understanding of psychopathology; and (b) to apply clinical science to design, develop, select, evaluate, deliver, supervise, and disseminate empirically based assessments, interventions, and prevention strategies. We train graduate students for research-oriented careers at universities, medical schools, and settings which integrate research and evaluation along with professional services. It is the strong belief of the faculty that excellence in this domain is best provided by superior training in both scientific methods and empirically-supported clinical assessment and intervention.

The structure of tomorrow's health care system should be determined based on the best scientific evidence available. **Penn State's graduates are playing leading roles** in this future -- designing, building, overseeing, delivering, and evaluating the science-driven health-care system of tomorrow.

In addition to other regular course work, students are expected to engage in both research and practice throughout their graduate training. Students generally complete course work during their first three to four years, and complete their dissertation in the fifth year. Most students complete their predoctoral internship in the sixth or seventh year. The program includes courses in clinical psychology, neuroscience, personality, research design, psychopathology, psychotherapy, clinical assessment, and statistics. Students must also meet APA Discipline Specific Knowledge requirements covering biological bases of behavior, cognitive bases of behavior, affective bases of behavior, social bases of behavior, and developmental lifespan psychology. The main clinical training practica occur in the departmental Psychological Clinic and its community based services, as well as occasional externship placements. Several specialized clinical courses and seminars, focused on the interest areas of the faculty, are offered regularly.

The training program has two tracks:

Adult Clinical. The adult clinical track has a clinical science focus with areas of research specialization in psychotherapy process and outcome, personality assessment, personality disorders, multicultural factors in psychopathology, clinical neuropsychology, anxiety disorders and PTSD, intimate partner violence, and addiction. Faculty labs employ a range of advanced research methods including brain imaging, longitudinal studies, ecological momentary assessment and experience sampling, psychophysiological assessment, and 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 gain intensive research experience usually in close collaboration with one faculty mentor, and

typically have several publications upon program completion. Students also gain extensive clinical experiences in cognitive behavioral and psychodynamic therapies, clinical neuropsychology, diagnostic assessment, and crisis management.

Child Clinical. The child clinical track also has a clinical science focus. It lies at the interface of developmental and clinical psychology, and emphasizes intervention and research with individuals ranging in age from infancy to young adulthood. Students in this track obtain specialized training in: (1) research in developmental psychopathology, including understanding the effects of biological, cognitive, social, emotional, family and community contexts on typical and atypical development, and research on translating knowledge to interventions to foster early school age mental health and coping with the stresses families and children face; and (2) 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 emotional development, neuropsychology of disruptive behavior disorders, child maltreatment, anxiety and mood disorders, and prevention programs. In addition to the general clinical requirements, the child track specialization includes core courses in child psychopathology, clinical child intervention, and clinical child assessment. Students can also choose to complete either a minor in Developmental Psychology or the Specialization in Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (SCAN).

Our graduate students are actively involved in all clinical research programs and labs, typically playing critical roles in running experiments with research participants, analyzing research data, presenting scientific findings at national and international conferences, and writing up papers for publication. Combined with their clinical training, students are competitive for top clinical internships, jobs in academia, academic medical centers, and other research-oriented settings. Undergraduate students are also frequently involved in research, working closely with both faculty and graduate students. Many undergraduates work in research labs for several years, often working on honors theses as part of their research work.

The clinical training at Penn State takes place in the Psychological Clinic, one of the largest training clinics in the United States, which is operated by the Department of Psychology. Thus, clinical students are fully integrated into the department and receive their Ph.D. in psychology. The Psychological Clinic (1) serves as the principal practicum training center for clinical students, (2) supports an infrastructure to facilitate the conduct of clinical research, and (3) is a community mental health center for the surrounding tri-county area, which exposes our students to training in a wide range of psychological problems. To foster the integration of clinical science and practice, much of the clinical supervision in our program is provided by licensed core clinical faculty.

The Clinical Program requires that: 1) Its graduate students complete a minimum of three full-time academic years of graduate study; 2) at least two of those three years be at Penn State University; 3) at least one year be in full-time residence; and 4) students complete an APA accredited predoctoral internship before receiving the Ph.D. degree. However, it is expected that most students will spend 5-6 years in residence, completing all program requirements and acquiring requisite scientific and clinical skills in a timely fashion. Most students complete their internship in the sixth or seventh year.

¹Questions 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
Web: <http://www.pcsas.org>

²Questions 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
Web: www.apa.org/ed/accreditation

Undergraduate Preparation

The graduate program in the Department of Psychology presumes a background in psychology equivalent to our undergraduate major. This includes courses in psychopathology, personality theory, research methods, and statistics. Courses in physiological psychology, biopsychology, neuropsychology, and neuroscience are also highly recommended for students who wish to pursue a neuropsychological or neuroscience emphasis in their training. Entering students lacking relevant background courses may be required to gain these competencies through additional course work.

Clinical Psychology Program: Sequence and Requirements

The Clinical Psychology program emphasizes flexibility in attaining student academic and professional goals. Students' courses are individually established in consultation with their advisers. This flexible orientation, however, does not preclude a number of requirements. Students must complete a master's research project and a doctoral dissertation (with Psychology 600 scheduled for credit), and they must pass a comprehensive examination. The examination, which usually occurs at the end of a student's third year, is based upon, and follows the completion of the clinical major, breadth courses, and minor requirement. For Child Clinical students, the minor requirement involves taking a series of courses that amount to a minor specialization in developmental psychology, or a minor in the Specialization in Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (SCAN). Adult clinical students fulfill the minor requirement by conducting a separate research project (in addition to the Masters and Dissertation) with a faculty member other than their primary advisor. The Adult student minor project should result in a high quality written product of publishable quality that is then turned in as part of the student's comprehensive examination, at the same time that written comps are provided to the committee. Adult clinical students wishing to develop a formal minor area of specialization (e.g., joint degrees in Women's Studies, minor in Health Psychology) may do so as long as the written minor project requirement is also met. The general procedure of the comprehensive examination is based on questions that have been provided to the students in advance. The adult clinical track also requires that one of the projects (master's, dissertation, minor project) conducted is one that you have designed (with the help of your mentor) and carried through to the end.

Other requirements include 6 credits in statistics, a 1-credit introductory departmental seminar in general psychology, required courses in assessment, psychopathology, multicultural psychology, and psychotherapy, several semesters of clinical practicum, and evaluated educational experiences in each of the following Basic Content Areas in Scientific Psychology: biological, cognitive, affective, social, and developmental, and an advanced experience integrating at least two of these areas.

There is no foreign language requirement in the Department of Psychology, but adequate use of English must be demonstrated.

Clinical Major

The courses of the clinical program are listed below. Certain core courses are required, and they are noted in this list. Overall, a minimum of 20 academic course credits (23 in child clinical) must be completed for the clinical major, although most students choose to take more than the minimum number of courses. The 20-23 credits must be chosen from this list.

II. THE CLINICAL MAJOR CURRICULUM

Required Courses:	
Clinical Assessment ¹	Psy 554
Adult Psychopathology ^{1,2}	Psy 542
*Child Psychopathology ^{1,2}	Psy 575
Research Design in Clinical Psychology ^{1,2}	Psy 543
Practicum in Clinical Methods (Adult Practicum) ¹	Psy 560
Clinical Practicum with Children (Child Practicum) ²	Psy 561
Multicultural Perspectives in Clinical Psychology ^{1,2}	Psy 566
Advanced Psychotherapy ¹	Psy 569
Child-Clinical Intervention ²	Psy 576
At Least One of the Following Assessment Courses:	

Child-Clinical Assessment ²	Psy 577
Theory and Practicum in Clinical Assessment (Personality Assessment)	Psy 555
Neuropsychological Assessment	Psy 556
Examples Of Regularly Offered Electives:	
Behavior Modification	Psy 563
Seminars in Clinical Problems	Psy 540

Note. ¹These courses are required for Adult-Clinical students. ²These courses are required for Child-Clinical students.

* This course is required only for Adult-Clinical students entering the program in fall, 2014 or later. From this point forward this course and Adult Psychopathology (Psy 542) effectively cover the Developmental Breadth requirement for both Child- and Adult-Clinical students, as lifespan human development is integrated into both courses. Students entering the program prior to this must still meet the human development requirement by taking one of the lifespan human development courses offered and specified in prior clinical manuals.

In addition to meeting the 20-23 credit major requirements, each clinical student enrolls for practicum experience each semester for most of the semesters during which they are in the program.

Emphasis in Adult and Child Clinical Psychology

Although all students in the clinical program are expected to develop competence in both adult and child orientations, it is required that one specialize in either adult or child clinical psychology. It is important to note that applications to these two tracks are considered separately. Prospective students must indicate on their application an interest in one of these two tracks, although students within both areas interact regularly together within the larger clinical training program. Additionally, training within either specialty is not limited to that age group alone and both research and clinical experiences with additional populations are available and encouraged.

Adult Clinical as an Emphasis

The adult track provides integrative training in clinical research, assessment, and intervention with adults. The adult clinic is a major research center for clinically relevant empirical work in psychopathology, personality, clinical neuropsychology, psychotherapy process and outcome, and addictions, providing an ideal environment for further integration of science and practice for both our students and our faculty. Moreover, specific areas of expertise within the adult track faculty include psychotherapy process and outcome research, anxiety and affective disorders, emotion regulation, sports-related concussion, neuroscience, intimate partner violence, personality assessment, personality disorders, addiction, and clinical neuropsychology. Adult track students acquire knowledge in the breadth of areas related to the study of scientific psychology, and develop core competencies in research methods and statistics, ethical and legal issues, as well as competence in and knowledge of sensitivity to individual and cultural diversity. As part of their training, adult track students are required to complete at least three independent research projects during their graduate career: master's project, minor project, and a dissertation. Some students also choose to complete the Specialization in Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (SCAN).

Child Clinical as an Emphasis

The child clinical track lies at the interface of developmental and clinical psychology, and emphasizes intervention and research with individuals ranging in age from infancy to young adulthood. Students in this track obtain specialized training in: (1) therapeutic services to children and families, including school-based consultation and comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation, and (2) research in developmental psychopathology that includes an understanding of the effects of biological, cognitive, social, emotional, family, and community contexts on childhood mental health. Specific areas of expertise in the child track faculty include infant and toddler emotional development, neuropsychology of disruptive behavior disorders, child abuse, anxiety and mood disorders, and prevention programs. In addition to the general clinical requirements, a specific three-course sequence in clinical child psychology is required (these replace other electives): Child Psychopathology, Clinical Child Intervention, and Clinical Child Assessment. As part of their training, students also choose to complete either a minor in Developmental Psychology or the Specialization in Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (SCAN).

The Psychological Clinic

All the practicum training takes place in our Psychological Clinic, and much of the supervision in that Clinic is provided by our core faculty, creating an ideal circumstance for the modeling of, and education in, the integration of theory, empiricism, and practice. To train students in the integration of science and practice, a research infrastructure exists within the clinic (The Practice Research Network) to allow for considerable student- and faculty-initiated scientific research on clinically meaningful questions in a naturalistic setting. Our faculty members embody the clinical science model in their daily professional lives and are actively engaged in clinically relevant scientific research. Faculty supervisors thus serve as both excellent role models and as sources of knowledge and training that reflect that integration.

Moreover, as one of the two major service providers for the county, the Clinic exposes our students to patients with a wide range of psychological problems and a diversity of clientele. The varied psychological services provided by the clinic include adult and child assessment; consultation with parents, schools, and public officials; individual and group therapy; marital and family counseling; neuropsychological assessment; psychodiagnostic testing; and community mental health consultation.

The course work designated Psychology 560 (Adult) and Psychology 561 (Child) represents graduate student clinical training in the Psychological Clinic. These courses are known as practicum teams. All clinical students

take an active part in clinic functions and sign up for a clinic team nearly every semester. Each practicum team, under a faculty supervisor, consists of students from various year levels. Most training services offered by the clinic are provided through these teams in a series of graded experiences ranging in degree of difficulty of the cases and progressing from observation through interviewing, assessment, and treatment. The clinic maintains a contract for services with the Centre County Office of Mental Health/Mental Retardation. This provides clinical assistantships for several advanced students. Ample and comfortable space is available in the clinic for all scheduled activities, and the learning experiences and close faculty supervision are aided by digital video recording facilities. The clinic's staff is made up of one full-time clinical faculty member who serves as Psychological Clinic Director and two full-time clinical faculty members who serve as Assistant Directors. A psychiatrist and a prescribing psychologist are also on staff, along with several staff psychologists and post-docs, and two nurse practitioners.

Internship

All clinical students must complete, typically in their 6th or 7th year, a 12-month APA accredited internship before receiving the Ph.D. degree. Students are expected to select an internship that best fits their developing professional interests. Generally, students are placed in medical school centers, child guidance centers, psychiatric hospitals, or community clinics--some with very general comprehensive programs and others with specialized programs.

Research Activities

Two fundamental beliefs on which the clinical program rests are that clinical students must be well trained as researchers and that they should begin to develop their research interests in graduate school as soon as they can. Students are expected to become involved in research each semester. Although most clinical students work with a member of the clinical faculty, they may do their research in any substantive area over the interest range of the entire faculty. In fact, students are required to conduct research with at least two faculty members over the course of their time at Penn State. With that said, most students work primarily with one faculty mentor with whom they develop a research collaboration with the goal of helping students pursue research that is publishable and contributes important new knowledge to the field of clinical psychology. Most students are authors on several research publications by the time they receive their Ph.D.'s from Penn State, making them competitive for work in academia, academic medical centers, and other research-oriented settings.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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