

# Degree Description

The Doctor of Psychology degree is designed to be a professional degree similar to the doctoral degrees provided in medicine, law, pharmacy, physical therapy, and dentistry. The Psy.D. is considered the degree of choice for persons interested in becoming a practitioner-scholar when pursuing a career in clinical psychology. The program emphasis is on the development of essential diagnostic, therapeutic, and consultative skills for the practice of clinical psychology.

The program of study follows the recommendations of the American Psychological Association (APA) for broad and general education and training for Health Service Psychologists. Students are educated and trained in the current body of knowledge in the following discipline-specific domains: the history and systems of psychology; affective aspects of behavior; biological aspects of behavior; cognitive aspects of behavior; developmental aspects of behavior; social aspects of behavior; and an advanced integration of these areas. Knowledge of research and quantitative methods is also necessary, including research methods, quantitative methods of data analysis, and psychometric theory.

The program centers on the development of appropriate competencies reflected in the American Psychological Association (APA) Standards of Accreditation (SoA; APA, 2015). There are nine required profession-wide competencies. The program has key points in the curriculum targeted to assess progress in attaining these competencies. These include competencies in Research; Ethics and Legal Standards; Individual and Cultural Diversity; Professional Values, Attitudes and Behavior; Communication and Interpersonal Skills; Assessment; Intervention; Supervision; and Consultation and Interprofessional/Interdisciplinary Skills.

*Research Competency:* The research competency rests on the student's understanding of research, research methods, and techniques of data collection and analysis. Students will also understand the reciprocal relationship between science and clinical practice. Students are expected to be able to use this knowledge to critically evaluate and solve novel problems, to independently formulate research or other scholarly activity of sufficient quality and rigor to potentially contribute to the scientific or professional knowledge base, and to disseminate such research or scholarly activity via professional publications and presentations at the local, regional or national level.

*Ethics and Legal Standards Competency:* This competency includes having a working knowledge of ethical, legal and professional standards and guidelines at the organizational, local, state, and federal level. Students are expected to act in accordance with those standards and guidelines and conduct themselves in an ethical manner in all professional activities. This competency also includes the ability to recognize ethical dilemmas when they arise and to apply ethical decision making in order to resolve those dilemmas.

*Individual and Cultural Diversity Competency:* This competency stresses that students will develop the ability to conduct all of their professional activities with sensitivity to human diversity and will demonstrate an ability to work effectively with diverse individuals and groups. Students must demonstrate knowledge, awareness, sensitivity and skills when working with diverse individuals and communities who embody a variety of cultural and personal backgrounds and characteristics. As such, students must demonstrate an understanding of their own personal/cultural history, attitudes and biases that may affect their understanding and interaction with others, have knowledge of the current theoretical and empirical knowledge base related to addressing diversity in professional activities, and show the ability to integrate this awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural differences in the conduct of their professional roles.

*Professional Values, Attitudes and Behavior Competency:* This competency is evidenced by the ability to demonstrate an adherence to the professional values, attitudes and behaviors that define the profession of psychology. This includes honesty, integrity and personal responsibility, as well as concern for the welfare of

others. It includes one's professional identity as well as deportment in interactions with clients and with others, including peers, supervisors, faculty, and other professionals. Students are expected to demonstrate openness and responsiveness to feedback and supervision. Professionalism also includes the capacity for self-reflection, self-care and an appreciation of lifelong learning.

*Communication and Interpersonal Skills Competency:* Communication and Interpersonal Skills are foundational competencies for health service psychology. This competency requires a demonstration of the ability to relate effectively and meaningfully with a wide range of individuals, groups and communities. This includes the ability to form and maintain productive and respectful relationships with clients, peers, supervisors, and other professionals. This competency also entails the ability to produce and comprehend nonverbal, oral and written communication and to have a thorough grasp of professional language and concepts. Students are expected to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills and to be able to manage difficult communication or conflict.

*Assessment Competency:* The assessment competency involves the evidence-based assessment and diagnosis of problems, capabilities and issues associated with individuals, groups, or organizations. It includes knowledge of principles of measurement and psychometrics. This competency also requires the knowledge and skills necessary for effective selection, administration, scoring and interpretation of assessment measures appropriate to the specific purpose or goals of the assessment and the individual being assessed. The assessment competency also requires an ability to synthesize multiple sources of data to develop appropriate diagnoses, conceptualizations and treatment plans and to communicate that information in an effective oral and written manner to a range of audiences.

*Intervention Competency:* The intervention competency requires students to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to conduct evidence-based interventions with individuals, families, groups and other systems. This competency encompasses the ability to establish and maintain effective therapeutic relationships, develop case formulations and implement treatment plans using relevant theory and research for effective clinical decision making. It includes the ability to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of chosen intervention approaches and to appropriately revise treatment strategies as necessary and appropriate.

*Supervision Competency:* The supervision competency requires students to be able to demonstrate a knowledge of supervision models and practices as well as how to apply this knowledge. This includes having knowledge of how trainees and clinicians develop into skilled professionals, knowledge of the procedures and processes of effective supervision, and knowledge of how to effectively evaluate those skills in others.

*Consultation and Interprofessional/Interdisciplinary Competency:* The consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary competency requires students to demonstrate knowledge of consultation models and practices, and to demonstrate respect for the roles and perspectives of other professions. It involves the ability to function in interdisciplinary contexts, and interact collaboratively with professionals in other disciplines in order to seek or share knowledge, address problems, promote effective professional activities and enhance outcomes.

## Program Philosophy

The Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology Program follows the practitioner-scholar training model that was accepted by the American Psychological Association at the Vail Conference (1973). This model recognizes the ongoing need in society for expertly trained practitioners in the field of clinical psychology. The practitioner-scholar philosophy dictates that competent practitioners are required to have an extensive understanding of the theoretical principles and empirical bases of the clinical practice of psychology, and the ability to utilize the knowledge in specific clinical situations. The program's goal is to educate and train individuals to enter careers as Health Service Psychologists emphasizing the delivery of direct psychological services and consultation. Relevant

theory, research, and field experiences are integrated toward the development of competent and ethical Health Service Psychologists who are respectful of individual and cultural differences in the provision of evidence-based psychological services.

## Program Length

The Psy.D. Program is designed to be completed in five years. Full-time students will complete four years of coursework, clerkship, and practicum experiences. This is followed by a one-year full-time internship and the satisfactory completion of the dissertation. A total of at least 233.5 quarter hours is required for the 5-year Psy.D. degree. However, students may elect to complete the program with up to 274.5 credits. A four-year option is available to students entering the program with a prior master's degree or other qualified students. The four-year option requires a minimum of 213.5 credits. Those electing the Child and Adolescent Emphasis may require an additional 15 credits. Some evening classes or weekend courses may be scheduled. The maximum allotted time for completion of the program is seven years. Students who exceed the maximum time to completion will be referred to the Student Academic Review Committee and may be dismissed by the program.

## Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology Degree

Students are only admitted into the Psy.D. Program. There is no terminal Master of Arts degree program. Students electing to receive the M.A. degree must have successfully completed all of the required 1500 and 1600 level courses, clerkship, and practicum experiences for a minimum of 106.5 credit hours.

## Clerkship

The Psy.D. Program offers a number of supervised pre-practicum clinical and clinical research experiences in the first year of study. All students are required to complete two quarters of clerkship. Under supervision of program faculty, students work at training sites in a variety of clinical and/or clinical research roles appropriate for their level of training. Students can choose clerkship experiences from a variety of opportunities. Final selection for participation in a particular clerkship rests with the Program Director in consultation with the clerkship supervisors. For more information, refer to the current Clinical Psychology Program Clinical Training Manual.

## Clinical Practicum

Students enter practicum training if they are making satisfactory progress in the program and receive approval of the Program Director, Director of Clinical Training, and the Academic Review Committee. The Director of Clinical Training assists students in the application process for practicum placements to facilitate an appropriate match between training site characteristics and students' interests. Practicum is a field experience at an off-campus clinical training site for a minimum of 9 months and up to 12 months that are consecutive. Practicum training is completed at numerous hospitals, agencies, and organizations throughout the Chicagoland area. The specific clinical focus of the experience varies according to the student's needs, interests, services provided at the training site, and availability of practicum sites. Students typically work approximately 16 to 24 hours per week in a clinical setting. The practicum experiences in diagnostic, therapy, and advanced total approximately 1,800 hours over three years. Typically, the student completes a diagnostic practicum in the second year of study, a therapy practicum in the third year, and an advanced practicum in the fourth year. Practicum placements may require work in the summer months, over holiday periods, and during breaks in the academic calendar. All students in the five year program must

successfully complete practicum experiences in the second, third and fourth years of study. Students electing the four year option must successfully complete practicum experiences in the second and third years of study. Students must also complete a concurrent practicum seminar on campus for any year in which they are enrolled in a practicum. In order to receive credit for practicum, students must pass both the Practicum and Practicum Seminar Blocks in which they are enrolled. For more information, refer to the current Clinical Psychology Practicum Training Manual and the Practicum Search Manual.

## Internship

The pre-doctoral internship is a 2,000-hour requirement at an approved clinical training site full-time over a 12-month period or half-time over a 24-month period. Internship is typically a year-long sequentially organized full-time training experience. The student must successfully complete all four quarters of the internship at one site to receive credit for this full-time training experience. Students completing half-time internships will need to successfully complete all eight quarters of the internship to receive credit for this training experience. The internship is designed to provide intensive advanced clinical training that builds upon previous coursework and practicum experiences. The internship is a critical component of the Psy.D. Program and cannot be waived. Students typically apply for the internship during the fourth year of the program. Students must satisfactorily complete all required coursework, clerkship, and practicum experiences prior to going on internship. Students must also satisfactorily propose the Dissertation prior to applying for internship. Students choosing the four-year option with a previous Master's degree from another program may petition to apply for internship prior to their fourth year of the program. Final decisions about eligibility to apply for internship rest with the Program Director, Director of Clinical Training, and the Clinical Psychology Academic Review Committee. Students applying for an internship enter a national match process with training sites across the country. Students may expect to travel some distance during the internship interview process. The internship is a stipend position. For more information, refer to the current Clinical Psychology Internship Search Manual.

## Dissertation

The successful completion of a Dissertation is required for graduation. This is intended as a scholarly work that permits students an opportunity to enhance their knowledge about a particular clinical area. A committee of faculty members, including a designated Dissertation Chair, will assist with this process. By the start of the second year, students will develop a dissertation topic and a committee will be assigned. Students will develop the proposal for their dissertation throughout the second and third years of the program. Students must present the written and oral proposal to their committee for approval by the end of the third year and prior to applying for internship, before the dissertation is implemented. Following the successful defense of the dissertation proposal, students will be enrolled in a series of courses over the remainder of the program to facilitate the completion of the project. The student then completes the project and submits a written document detailing the Dissertation. Each student must present an oral defense of the Dissertation upon its completion. Following a successful defense, the student must provide the program with a copy of the final Dissertation for binding. The Dissertation takes a minimum of 12 months to complete. With the Program Director's approval, students needing additional time beyond the internship year to complete the Dissertation must register for PSYCD 1990-1999 Dissertation Post-Internship I - X, as needed, a 0.5 credit hour course. For more information regarding Dissertation policies and requirements refer to the current Clinical Psychology Program Dissertation Manual.