

M.S. in Clinical Psychological Science

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Part I. Program History and Purpose

A. Purpose

The State of Delaware, and the nation more broadly, is struggling to meet the demand for effective mental health services. This partly stems from both a lack of providers in general, but more specifically a lack of providers trained in evidence-based mental/behavioral health practice in accessible integrated healthcare settings. To address this dual problem, we propose creating a Master's degree (M.S.) program in clinical psychological science at the University of Delaware. The program will be housed within the Institute for Community Mental Health (ICMH), a newly developed collaboration between the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the College of Health Sciences. The program will be physically located at STAR Tower and Wolf Hall.

This program would be the first of its kind for an R1 University with a nationally well-regarded Ph.D. program in clinical psychological science. The Ph.D. program is accredited by the American Psychological Association and the Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System and focuses on the science of psychopathology and intervention development. Embedding the master's program within the clinical psychological science area at UD would allow master's students to obtain state-of-the-science training in intervention research within our existing laboratories, as well as clinical applications of this research in our newly opened integrated care clinic at STAR Tower. Student's would contribute to increasing accessibility of evidence-based clinical services in Delaware and the Mid-Atlantic area, and also impactful intervention research as part of ongoing scientific research at the Institute for Community Mental Health and the clinical psychology laboratories in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences. Currently, the only programs that train clinical psychologists in this way exist at the doctoral level; however, treatment research suggests that, when properly trained in evidence-based techniques, master's-level clinicians achieve outcomes equivalent to doctoral-level providers.

There are a number of master's programs that target mental health and psychology; however, none with the focus we have described. For example, master's programs in social work, counseling, school psychology, and marriage and family therapy, all can lead to licensed professional work; however, they each have different foci. Each is valuable in its own sphere, but not in the area we envision. For example, many social work programs have very broad curricula that match the diverse careers of the graduates including public policy, international relief, poverty, as well as mental health in its various forms. Likewise, marriage and family therapy programs may train students in some evidence-based practices, but those are limited to the treatment of couples and families. None of these has a foundational focus on simultaneously training clinical psychological research, intervention development, and evidence-based clinical practice.

Part of the reason that no master's programs like this exist is due to decades-old decisions by the American Psychological Association (APA) and licensure boards that only doctoral-level psychologists could be licensed. Historically, APA has only accredited doctoral programs. However, recently, APA created standards to accredit master's programs in health services psychology, opening the door for state licensing boards to license master's level clinical psychologists. This will lead to licensure for graduates of master's programs in clinical psychology in many states.

In line with the University's mission to innovate and develop students who meet the critical needs of our society, with service in mind, our master's program will include general training in widely applicable evidence-based treatment models as well as a number of specialized tracks for integrated care, substance abuse treatment, and other community-identified needs. Further, we will seek to recruit and train a diverse, bi-lingual faculty and student body who will be able to

provide services in the community to underserved populations.

There is a large demand for this program, even among only the undergraduate psychology majors at UD. There are typically around 1,200 psychology undergraduates at any given time at the University of Delaware. Psychology is often one of the largest majors at most universities. In our experience, many if not most of those undergraduate students want to go on to some sort of career providing psychological services; however, very few will successfully be admitted to and complete a doctoral degree, nor is this necessary to be trained as clinical therapists. Each year, the Ph.D. program in clinical psychology at UD receives approximately 200-300 applications for admission, while only admitting approximately 3-6 students per year. Many of the students that apply for our Ph.D. program desire to be trained as scientifically-informed clinicians, and those that are not admitted will be automatically considered for admission to the master's degree program. Additionally, a market research study performed by the Graduate College at UD regarding this proposed degree program showed: there is sustained job growth in the Mid-Atlantic for candidates with clinical psychology skills over the past 10 years and the growth slope is encouraging, the largest number of jobs in this area require a master's degree, that jobs requiring a master's or doctorate in the mental health field provide the most pay, and that across the Mid-Atlantic jobs in this area are commonly available.

B. Current Status

The Master of Science in clinical psychological science program is proposed as a new graduate program within the PBS department which seeks to train master-level clinicians to deliver evidence-based assessments and interventions. The PBS department is seeking UD Faculty Senate approval of this program with an anticipated start date of Fall 2025. Given the continuous success of our department in securing American Psychological Association (APA) and Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS) accreditation for our clinical psychological science doctoral program since 1975 and 2011 respectively, we feel confident in our ability to secure APA accreditation for the clinical psychological science master's program.

C. Degrees offered

The degree awarded to those who successfully complete this program is a Master of Science (MS) in clinical psychological science.

D. Term of First Enrollment

Following UD Faculty Senate approval, students may first enroll in the MS program in clinical psychological science in the Fall of 2025.

E. Student Demand for the Program

See "Purpose" section above.

F. College and Department of the Program

The MS in clinical psychological science program will reside at the Institute for Community Mental Health within the College of Arts and Sciences with support from the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences.

Part II. Admission

A. Admission Requirements

1. Admission requirements: Admission to the graduate program is competitive. Those who meet stated requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if the applicant offers other appropriate strengths.

2. Applicants must apply using the Graduate College online admission application.
3. Applicants must have a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree in Psychology or other closely related fields from an accredited institution of higher education.
4. Applicants must have a minimum GPA of 3.00 in the Bachelor's degree.
5. The GRE is optional. If the GRE is not submitted, other evidence of quantitative ability such as good grades in statistics or advanced math courses and evidence of academic writing potential through submission of a writing sample should be provided. Any GRE scores submitted voluntarily by an applicant will be evaluated holistically but will not be used to determine admission.
6. International applicants just submit official proof of English proficiency with a score of at least 100 on Toefl or 6.5 on the IELTS.
7. Two letters of recommendation from individuals who have direct knowledge of the applicant's academic and/or professional capabilities.
8. A response to the [standard graduate application essay question](#) regarding educational plans, career goals, attributes of the program at UD that interests the student.
9. The admission committee will determine if an interview is required or not.
10. Special Competencies that will be evaluated:
 - a. A grade of B- or higher in:
 - i. General (Introduction to) Psychology
 - ii. Research methods
 - iii. Measurement and Statistics
 - b. Completion of study with a grade of B- or higher in the following: Affective Aspects of Behavior, Biological Aspects of Behavior, Cognitive Aspects of Behavior, Social Aspects of Behavior, and Developmental Psychology. A score in the 70th percentile in the Psychology Subject GRE Test is one way to verify competency in these areas of study. Note: *For accreditation purposes, an admitted student may be required to enroll in an additional specific prerequisite course to verify the specific area of study.*

B. Admission Categories

Students admitted into the MS program in clinical psychological science may be admitted into one of two categories:

- 1) Regular status - offered to students who meet all the entrance requirements.
- 2) Conditional status - individuals who apply during their final year of graduate or undergraduate work and are unable to provide official transcripts showing the conferral of their degree may be admitted. Conditional status is also awarded until students provide official results from background checks and other relevant health requirements. These documents must be provided prior to course registration in the fall.

Part III. Academic Requirements

A. Degree Requirements

A1. Coursework and Credit Hours

The MS in clinical psychological science degree requires completion of 60 semester credits that are designed to be completed during full-time study. The completion of 60 credits ensures that graduates are well-trained in the required profession-wide competencies as set by the American Psychological Association's (APA) Commission on Accreditation. A suggested outline and timeline for the 60 required credit hours for the MS in clinical psychological science are provided

below:

| Course | Credits | Semester |
|--|----------------|-----------------|
| PSYC821: Intelligence & Achievement Testing | 3 | Fall I |
| PSYC681: Intro to Ethics and Clinical Practice | 3 | Fall I |
| PSYC871: Intro to clinical science | 1 | Fall I |
| PSYC683: Clinical Research Design | 3 | Fall I |
| PSYC819: Child Psychotherapy - Empirically-Supported Treatments | 3 | Fall I |
| PSYC829: Advanced Psychopathology | 3 | Fall I |
| Total Credits Fall 1st year = 16 | | |
| PSYC827: Adult Psychotherapy - Empirically-Supported Treatments | 3 | Spring I |
| PSYC820: Psychodiagnostic Assessment | 3 | Spring I |
| PSYC868: Research | 3 | Spring I |
| PSYC800: PBS Colloquia | 1 | Spring I |
| PSYC685: Integrated Behavioral Healthcare & Consultation | 3 | Spring I |
| PSYC835: Supervised Practice in Clinical Psychology | 3 | Spring I |
| Total Credits Spring 1st year = 16 | | |
| PSYC687: Diversity in Clinical Practice | 3 | Fall II |
| PSYC869: Master's Thesis | 3 | Fall II |
| PSYC800: PBS Colloquia | 1 | Fall II |
| 600/800 Level Advanced Elective in Students' Area of Interest (Biological, Social, Cognitive, Developmental, Affective Aspects of Behavior) | 3 | Fall II |
| PSYC834: Supervised Practice in Clinical Psychology | 6 | Fall II |
| Total Credits Fall 2nd year = 16 | | |
| PSYC689- : Intro to Supervision | 2 | Spring II |
| PSYC869: Master's Thesis | 3 | Spring II |

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| PSYC800: PBS Colloquia | 1 | Spring II |
| PSYC835: Supervised Practice in Clinical Psychology | 6 | Spring II |

Total Credits Spring 2nd year = 12

Total Credits Required for Degree 60

A2. Non-Registered Requirements

Students in the MS in clinical psychological science program are required to complete 15 credits in the program of semester-long clinical training. The clinical-training requirement is required in the second, third and fourth semesters of the degree program. The courses are PSYC 834 and PSYC 835. All students receive introductory practicum training at the Institute for Community Mental Health-Clinic (ICMH-C) during their first year of the program. While most students complete their remaining practicum training at the ICMH-C, some students may wish to pursue external practicum experiences at a select group of high-quality externship sites or within the laboratories of clinical psychological science faculty, at ICMH or the Center for Training, Evaluation and Community Collaboration (C-TECC). The time commitment for these practicum experiences ranges from 10-20 hours per week, including at least two hours of supervision per week from a licensed psychologist on site.

In addition to clinical training experiences, all students in the MS in clinical psychological science program will be required to complete and defend a master’s thesis project prior to their graduation from the program. This master’s thesis project is taken as PSYC868 (3 credits) and PSYCH869 (6 credits) over three semesters for three credit hours per term at the University of Delaware. Students will work closely with program faculty to determine the type of project based on students’ interest and training goals (e.g., original research study, literature review, case study, paper presentation). Students start working on their research thesis project in the Spring of their first year, continue in the Fall of their second year, and orally defend their thesis in the Spring of their second year.

A3. Variance in Degree Requirements

Students will follow the program of study as a cohort and courses will be taken in the designated semesters listed above - unless otherwise stated by the Program Director. Students who wish to make minor changes to the program of study must be approved by the Program Director.

A5. Courses not Counted towards the Degree

Not applicable.

A6. Expectations of Facility of Expression in English

Given the nature of the various profession-wide competencies by APA’s accreditation requirements, students in the MS in clinical psychological science program are expected to possess a high degree of competence in written and spoken English, such that they are able to conduct a wide range of clinical tasks in English (e.g., psychotherapy, psychodiagnostic assessment, interdisciplinary care coordination, supervision, dissemination and implementation).

B. Committees for Exams, Thesis, or Dissertations

B1. Procedure for Identification of Advisor and Advisement Procedures

Students in the MS program in clinical psychological science are not matched to a faculty advisor; however, they work closely with faculty in the program both in research contexts (i.e., in preparation for their thesis project) and in clinical contexts across various courses of supervised practice. Students who are motivated to pursue research projects *outside the scope of the MS program* are encouraged to connect with PBS faculty to join their research labs.

All M.S. clinical psychological science program faculty will serve as thesis committee members and vote on the master's thesis oral defense.

B3. *Deadlines and Preparation Requirements for Comprehensive Examinations*

No comprehensive examinations will be conducted in the MS in clinical psychological science program.

B4. *Policies for Examinations*

Not applicable, as no comprehensive examinations will be conducted in the MS in clinical psychological science program.

B5. *Guidelines for Approving Research Proposals Involving Human or Animal Subjects*

The Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences' procedures for approving research proposals involving human subjects conform to the principles set forth in the H.E.W. Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 (Nov. 1978) as well as those of the American Psychological Association. Students should consult the policies described below for up-to-date information: <http://www.udel.edu/research/preparing/humansub.html>

Similarly, procedures for approving research proposals involving animal subjects in research conform to the principles set forth by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), which is constituted according to the Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. Students should consult the policies described below for up-to-date information: <http://www1.udel.edu/research/preparing/animalcare.html>

B6. *Procedures for Thesis Approval*

In the Spring of their first year in the program, students enroll in PSYC868 which will provide them with foundational knowledge and skills to develop an original thesis project (e.g., original research study, literature review, clinical case conference). Students will meet with the PSYC868 research mentor and will develop a proposal for their thesis project. Students are expected to continue making progress towards their thesis project during the summer between their first and second year in the program. Students will enroll in PSYC869 in the fall and spring of their second year. Students defend their master's thesis in the Spring of their second year and all M.S. program faculty vote on whether the student passes the oral defense of their master's thesis.

B7. *Departmental and Student Obligations for Finding Committee Members*

All program faculty will attend and vote on the master's thesis oral defense, therefore there are no expected changes in thesis committee members..

C. Timetable and Definition of Satisfactory Progress towards the Degree

C1. *Academic Load and Expectations*

Full-time students are expected to complete the MS program in 2 years (or 3 years if extraordinary circumstances prevent a student from completing program milestones within a 2-year period). Students will be enrolled in 14 - 16 credit hours during their fall and spring semesters.

C2. *Grade Requirements*

To be considered in good academic standing, a student must maintain a minimum cumulative

graduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale each semester. To be eligible for an advanced degree, a student's cumulative grade point average shall be at least a 3.00 and the student's grades in courses counted toward the degree requirements of the program shall equal at least a 3.00. If a student receives two course grades of less than B-, the student may be recommended for termination from the program. The student has the option to appeal to the Director of the Master's program to repeat such a course. The Director will in consultation with the Graduate Committee determine whether such an option will be granted or not.

In addition to the grade requirements stated above, after each semester throughout the course of their training, Program Area faculty will provide students with a letter of evaluation of progress in the MS program. The letter will refer to coursework, research performance, clinical performance, and general performance and professionalism. The faculty will identify strengths as well as any shortcomings in performance and set goals for improvement and progress.

C3. *Thesis Progress Timetable and Defense Guidelines*

- Spring I
 - Students attend PSYC868 where they will work with the faculty member to develop original research projects, literature reviews, or a clinical case conference which will fulfill the requirements of their master's thesis. Students are expected to make progress on their master's thesis project throughout the Spring semester and during the summer between their first year and second year in the program.
- Fall II
 - Students enroll in PSYC869 and they will continue to work independently, with support from program faculty as needed, to make progress on their master's thesis project. Students are expected to have a final draft of their thesis project at the end of the Fall semester.
- Spring II
 - Students enroll in PSYC869 and prepare to present their projects to the MS program faculty and students. Presentation dates will be randomly assigned. At the end of each student's thesis project presentation, program faculty vote on whether the student passes their thesis.

C4. *Forms Required*

The following is a list of forms students will complete throughout their enrollment in the MS in clinical psychological science program:

- *Curriculum and Program Milestones Tracking Form*, completed at the end of each semester in the program
- *Clinical Competency Evaluation Form*, completed by the student's clinical supervisor at the end of each semester of supervised clinical practice
- *Master's Thesis Approval Form*, completed by Program Director upon successful completion and defense of the master's thesis project
- *Application for Advanced Degree Form*, completed by the student in the semester that the student expects to receive their degree in.

C5. *Consequences for Failure to make Satisfactory Progress*

Students are considered to be in good standing if: (a) the most recent annual evaluation letter states that performance is satisfactory, (b) no unsatisfactory grades are on record without having been successfully retaken, (c) the student is up-to-date on program requirements (i.e., completed required courses, clinical practica and thesis requirements according to timelines defined in the handbook), (d) no finding of unethical conduct has been made. A student is also

considered in good standing if they have not completed a milestone by the handbook deadline, but a deadline extension has been granted with approval by the program director and a majority faculty vote.

If students do not meet all of the satisfactory progress criteria above, the end-of-year evaluation letter from the program director may include a warning or unsatisfactory rating. In the case of a warning, a remediation plan will be developed by the program director and relevant faculty members. If the remediation plan is not successfully completed, an unsatisfactory rating may be given. Two unsatisfactory ratings will result in termination from the program.

C6. Grievance Procedures

It is the policy of the graduate programs in psychology that no student's standing in the program shall be jeopardized for bringing up problems. Students are encouraged to work with the faculty to prevent and resolve problems and to openly voice their opinions. Of course, responsible behavior on both the students' and faculty's part in such matters is expected.

The University has a detailed procedure for grieving grade disputes and claims about harassment and discrimination or other difficulties. The program will follow all University policies and procedures related to grievances found in the University's guide. Students may also wish to contest the student's evaluation, and students may wish to get help in resolving interpersonal difficulties with faculty members. The grievance procedure for these cases has four steps. Confidentiality will be maintained at each step, if the student requests. That is, within legal and ethical limits, no information will be released to anyone else concerning the problem without the student's expressed permission.

1. Students should first attempt to resolve any complaints directly with the faculty member who is the primary source of the evaluation or interpersonal difficulty. If students cannot approach the faculty member for some reason or cannot resolve the difficulty, they should consult their advisor.
2. If the problem is with the advisor or if the advisor is unsuccessful in resolving the problem, students should consult the Director of the Master's Program.
3. If the above steps do not resolve the problem, students should take the issue to the Graduate Director.
4. The final step will be to appear before a Grievance Committee, composed of the members of the Graduate Committee and the Psychology Department Chairperson. The disputing parties will appear separately before this committee. The parties should bring relevant evidence to the Committee meeting.
5. If not resolved within the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, the student has a right to appeal to the Graduate College.

Part IV. Assessment Plan

The success of the MS program in clinical psychological science will be assessed both at the student-level via individualized metrics on student success and at the program-level via aggregate metrics of applicant outcomes, and student outcomes post-graduation.

Program level outcomes will be used to evaluate the curriculum and overall effectiveness of the

MS program in clinical psychological science including:

- 1) Recruitment of qualified students per admission criteria
- 2) Recruitment of diverse students
- 3) Graduation rates and program attrition
- 4) Time to complete the MS program
- 5) Post-graduation outcomes
- 6) Alumni perceptions of curricular effectiveness on each of the program's educational goals as measured at 2- and 5-year post-graduation surveys
- 7) Accreditation status by the American Psychological Association's (APA) Committee on Accreditation (CoA).

Program level outcomes will also be assessed via students' perceptions of the program via teaching evaluations (completed at the end of each course), anonymous clinical supervisor evaluations (completed at the end of each term in which the student was enrolled in supervised clinical practice), and anonymous student surveys assessing different aspects of the program (e.g., climate, research experiences, clinical experiences; completed once/year)

Student-level outcomes will be measured by tracking students' attainment of program educational outcomes as follows:

| Student Outcomes | Measure 1 | Measure 2 |
|---|---|--|
| Theoretical and empirical understanding of psychopathology, diagnostic assessment, and evidence-based clinical practice | Final course paper, project or exam in the core courses | Graduate follow-up survey |
| Strong clinical skills and practical knowledge in evidence-based psychotherapeutic interventions | Final course paper, project or exam in the core courses Clinical supervisor evaluations | Graduate follow-up survey Passing rate of relevant licensing exam |
| Adherence to ethical and legal standards | Final course paper, project or exam in relevant courses Clinical supervisor evaluations | Graduate follow-up survey |
| Independent critical thinking skills to be informed consumers of clinical research | Final course paper, project or exam in relevant courses Successful completion of master's thesis | Graduate follow-up survey |

Part V. Program Educational Goals

Students who successfully complete the MS program in clinical psychological science will be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate a **robust theoretical and empirical understanding** of psychopathology, diagnostic assessment, and evidence-based clinical practice, in accordance with the current state of research in those areas.
- 2) Demonstrate **strong clinical skills and practical knowledge** of evidence-based psychotherapeutic interventions, and appropriate cultural and linguistic modifications, for the most commonly occurring mental health concerns among children, adolescents, and adults, including those from diverse backgrounds.
- 3) Demonstrate **adherence to ethical and legal standards** in accordance with professional

standards and relevant state laws.

- 4) Demonstrate **independent critical thinking skills** which will enable them to be **informed consumers of clinical research** who employ data-driven clinical approaches to care.

Part VI. Financial Aid

A. Financial Awards

Students in the MS program in clinical psychological science are expected to pay graduate tuition. Currently, there are no departmental financial awards or scholarships. Although not guaranteed, the PBS department may have a limited number of assistantships available each semester and students in program are eligible to apply for those positions as described below:

- Teaching Assistantships (TA) are awarded to students who assist with courses. TA duties include, but are not limited to, grading assignments and exams, leading discussion groups, hold office hours for students enrolled in the course, and assist the course instructor with any other relevant instructional activities. The workload may vary from week to week, but the average is usually expected to be 20 hours per week. Students on contract will be evaluated by their course instructor.
- Research Assistantships (RA), generally funded by research grants, are awarded to students who assist with relevant research activities including, but not limited to, participant recruitment, data collection, cleaning, and analysis, manuscript development, grant writing, and supervision of undergraduate research assistants. It is expected that RAs will work approximately 20 hours per week and may be required to work during winter and summer sessions. Students on contract will be evaluated by their faculty mentor, the principal investigator(s) of the funding grant, or any other relevant faculty.

Part VII. Departmental Operations

A. General Student Responsibilities

1. Email and Up-to-date address: students are required to check their UD email at least once per day during the work week as most day-to-day departmental and degree operations are conducted over email. Any academic student correspondence may be forwarded to the address below:
Psychological and Brain Sciences Department
108 Wolf Hall
Newark, DE 19716
(302) 831-2271; pbs-general@udel.edu
2. Laboratories and research equipment:
Students in the program who use specific research equipment or software owned by a faculty member for research purposes, are responsible for coordinating with that faculty to ensure that the student is in compliance with required training and proper usage of laboratory equipment and software.
3. Hazardous Chemical Information Act:
In compliance with the State of Delaware Hazardous Chemical Information Act, the University of Delaware provides information regarding hazardous chemicals to employees and students who may be exposed to such substances. Students in the program who are exposed to hazardous substances for research purposes are responsible for coordinating with their faculty mentors/supervisors to ensure they are in compliance with required training and usage and disposal of such

substances.

4. **Vehicles:**
No department vehicles are provided to students in the program. Students are responsible for purchasing parking permits as needed.
5. **Keys, offices, mail, telephones, copiers, computers, etc.**
Prior to the start of their first semester in the program, incoming students will receive a detailed onboarding checklist which will include information about building access, where and when to pick up office keys and fobs, locker assignment (to store personal belongings), common working spaces, etc. Keys and other departmental devices must be returned when a student completes relevant practica, graduates, or otherwise leaves the program. Questions about building operations may be directed to PBS office.

B. Student Government and Organizations

Graduate students in the MS program in clinical psychological science are encouraged to participate in governance of the PBS department, primarily through their service as a graduate representative on one of various committees (e.g., Clinical Area Student Representative, PBS Equity and Inclusion Committee). Moreover, students are encouraged to become members of relevant State and professional organizations - some of which provide free or reduced membership fees to graduate students.

C. Travel for Professional Meetings or Presentations

Travel to professional conferences to present research or clinical projects may be supported by faculty mentor grants or support funds but is not guaranteed.