Clinical Psychology Psy.D.

Degree Requirements: 114-124 Credit Hours

114 Credits beyond Bachelor's degree including dissertation; 98 credits of coursework

Program Mission

The Psy.D. program in clinical psychology at Georgia Southern University offers a course of study leading to the Doctor of Psychology degree. The Program's curriculum prepares graduates to practice psychology in rural areas.

Model and Goals

Critical to the program is high quality graduate education and training in clinical psychology with an emphasis on psychotherapy, assessment, and consultation in clinical practice. To this end, the Psy.D. program has a clear and coherent curriculum. The training for practice is lock-step, sequential, cumulative, and graduated in complexity. The program follows the practitioner-scholar model. In the first year, students take didactic courses concurrently with experiential skill-building courses. The psychological assessment sequence is also offered in the first year. In the second year, students begin the Practicum experience. The third and fourth years include practica focused on rural practice (3rd year) and professional development (4th year). Other clinical courses are interspersed among years one through four.

The program trains students to become generalists who practice psychotherapy, conduct psychological assessment, and provide consultation services. The program has an integrative orientation, emphasizing behavioral, cognitive, existential, family systems, humanistic, and psychodynamic orientations.

The following goals and objectives are consistent with APA standards and have been adapted from the recommendations of the NCSPP model for clinical training:

The following competencies and aims are consistent with APA standards and definitions are taken directly from the Commission on Accreditation, Implementing Regulations, Section C:

Program Competencies, Aims, and Discipline Specific Knowledge

A. Profession-Wide Competencies

1. **Competency 1: Research:** Students will demonstrate the independent ability to formulate research that is of sufficient quality and rigor needed to contribute to the scientific, psychological, or professional knowledge base.
   a. **Aim 1.1:** Students will demonstrate the ability to integrate and critically evaluate published literature.
   b. **Aim 1.2:** Students will demonstrate skills in interpreting and applying basic statistical techniques.
   c. **Aim 1.3:** Students will demonstrate competence in basic research methodologies.
   d. **Aim 1.4:** Students will demonstrate the capacity to develop and complete an empirical study.
   e. **Aim 1.5:** Students will publish or present their research at the institutional, regional, or national level.

2. **Competency 2: Ethical and Legal Standards:** Students will be knowledgeable of and act in accordance with professional ethics.
   a. **Aim 2.1:** Students will demonstrate a commitment to and working knowledge of the ethical code outlined by the American Psychological Association, relevant federal and state statutes and laws, and relevant professional standards and guidelines to guide practice in all professional activities.
   b. **Aim 2.2:** Students will demonstrate the ability to recognize ethical and legal dilemmas as they arise and apply ethical decision-making processes in order to resolve the dilemmas in all professional activities.
   c. **Aim 2.3:** Students will conduct themselves in an ethical manner in all professional activities.

3. **Competency 3: Individual and Cultural Diversity:** Students are expected to conduct all professional activities with sensitivity to human diversity, including the ability to deliver high quality services to a diverse population.
   a. **Aim 3.1:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of how their own personal/cultural history, attitudes and biases may affect how they understand and interact with people different from themselves.
   b. **Aim 3.2:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of the current theoretical and empirical knowledge base as it relates to addressing diversity in all professional activities, including research, training, supervision/consultation, and service.
   c. **Aim 3.3:** Students will demonstrate the ability to integrate awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural differences in the conduct of professional roles (e.g., research, services, and other professional activities).
   d. **Aim 3.4:** Students will demonstrate the requisite knowledge and ability to articulate an approach to working effectively with diverse individuals and groups, and apply this approach effectively in their professional work.

4. **Competency 4: Professional Values and Attitudes:** Students are expected to respond professionally in ways consistent with the profession of psychology.
   a. **Aim 4.1:** Students will behave in ways reflecting the values and attitudes of psychology, including integrity, deportment, professional identity, accountability, lifelong learning, and concern for the welfare of others.
   b. **Aim 4.2:** Students will engage in self-reflection regarding their personal and professional functioning and engage in activities to maintain and improve performance, well-being, and professional effectiveness.
   c. **Aim 4.3:** Students will actively seek and demonstrate openness and responsiveness to feedback and supervision.
   d. **Aim 4.4:** Students will respond professionally in increasingly complex situations with a greater degree of independence as they progress across levels of training.

5. **Competency 5: Communication and Interpersonal Skills:** Students will demonstrate appropriate communication and interpersonal skills and respond professionally in increasingly complex situations.
   a. **Aim 5.1:** Students will develop and maintain effective relationships with a wide range of individuals, including colleagues, communities, organizations, supervisors, supervisees, and those receiving professional services.
   b. **Aim 5.2:** Students will produce and comprehend oral, nonverbal, and written communications that are informative and well-integrated.
   c. **Aim 5.3:** Students will demonstrate a thorough grasp of professional language and concepts.
   d. **Aim 5.4:** Students will demonstrate effective interpersonal skills and the ability to manage difficult communication well.
6. **Competency 6: Assessment**: Students will demonstrate competence in conducting evidence-based assessment consistent with the scope of Health Service Psychology.
   a. Aim 6.1: Students will demonstrate current knowledge of diagnostic classification systems, functional and dysfunctional behaviors, including consideration of client strengths and psychopathology.
   b. Aim 6.2: Students will demonstrate understanding of human behavior within its context (e.g., family, social, societal, and cultural).
   c. Aim 6.3: Students will demonstrate the ability to apply the knowledge of functional and dysfunctional behaviors including context to the assessment and/or diagnostic process.
   d. Aim 6.4: Students will select and apply assessment methods that draw from the best available empirical literature and that reflect the science of measurement and psychometrics; collect relevant data using multiple sources and methods appropriate to the identified goals and questions of the assessment as well as relevant diversity characteristics of the service recipient.
   e. Aim 6.5: Students will interpret assessment results, following current research and professional standards and guidelines, to inform case conceptualization, classification, and recommendations, while guarding against decision-making biases, distinguishing the aspects of assessment that are subjective from those that are objective.
   f. Aim 6.6: Students will communicate orally and in written documents the findings and implications of the assessment in an accurate and effective manner sensitive to a range of audiences.

7. **Competency 7: Intervention**: Students will demonstrate competence in the delivery of evidence-based interventions consistent with the scope of Health Service Psychology.
   a. Aim 7.1: Students will establish and maintain effective relationships with the recipients of psychological services.
   b. Aim 7.2: Students will develop evidence-based intervention plans specific to the service delivery goals.
   c. Aim 7.3: Students will implement interventions informed by the current scientific literature, assessment findings, diversity characteristics, and contextual variables.
   d. Aim 7.4: Students will demonstrate the ability to apply the relevant research literature to clinical decision making.
   e. Aim 7.5: Students will modify and adapt evidence-based approaches effectively when a clear evidence-base is lacking.
   f. Aim 7.6: Students will evaluate intervention effectiveness and adapt intervention goals and methods consistent with ongoing evaluation.

8. **Competency 8: Supervision**: Students will acquire foundational knowledge regarding supervisory aspects of Health Service Psychology.
   a. Aim 8.1: Students will demonstrate knowledge of supervision models and practices.

9. **Competency 9: Consultation and Interprofessional/Interdisciplinary Skills**: Students will learn and demonstrate intentional collaboration with other individuals or groups to address problems, seek or share knowledge, or promote effectiveness in professional activities.
   a. Aim 9.1: Students will demonstrate knowledge and respect for the roles and perspectives of other professions.
   b. Aim 9.2: Students will demonstrate knowledge of consultation models and practices.

10. **Competency 10: Rurality**: Students are expected to develop an appreciation for the dynamics of a rural culture and how these forces influence individual development and community functioning.
    a. Aim 10.1: Students will demonstrate an appreciation for the unique cultural needs, identities, values, and traditions of rural community members.
    b. Aim 10.2: Students will demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge of rural culture into their conceptualization of well-being.
    c. Aim 10.3: Students will demonstrate knowledge associated with the role of advocacy in promoting well-being in rural communities.

1. **B. Discipline Specific Knowledge**: Students will acquire knowledge in the core areas of the discipline of psychology.
   a. DSK.1: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the history of psychology, including the origins and development of major ideas in the discipline of psychology.
   b. DSK.2: Students will demonstrate knowledge in Affective Aspects of Behavior.
   c. DSK.3: Students will demonstrate knowledge in Biological Aspects of Behavior.
   d. DSK.4: Students will demonstrate knowledge in Cognitive Aspects of Behavior.
   e. DSK.5: Students will demonstrate knowledge in Developmental Aspects of Behavior.
   f. DSK.6: Students will demonstrate knowledge in Social Aspects of Behavior.
   g. DSK.7: Students will demonstrate advanced integrative knowledge in scientific psychology that entails integration of multiple basic discipline-specific content areas identified in DSK b-f.
   h. DSK.8: Students will demonstrate knowledge of research methods.
   i. DSK.9: Students will demonstrate knowledge of statistical analysis.
   j. DSK.10: Students will demonstrate knowledge of psychometrics.

**Accreditation**

Georgia Southern University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The Clinical Psychology Psy.D. is accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA).

**Applying to the Psy. D. program**

Although academic background, intellectual potential and professional experience and skills will be key selection criteria, we intend to recruit students who are committed to providing service to our region. Therefore, students should carefully consider their interest in rural and under-served populations before applying to the program. Applicants will only be considered for the Psy.D. program (i.e., students will not be admitted for a terminal masters degree in clinical psychology).

Credit hours for previously taken Courses: Students may be able to substitute credit hours received for taking graduate courses at a regionally-accredited institution during the last five years. A maximum of 18 credits of graduate level coursework is allowed. All decisions on substituted courses lie with the clinical training committee, and course equivalencies will be determined on a case-by-case basis and only after a student has been admitted to the program. In all cases, documentation (syllabi, tests, grades) from the previous course will be required and reviewed by the appropriate program faculty who will document action taken. Transfer credit will not be given for any clinical courses (i.e., courses where clinical theory and/or skills are taught), with the exceptions of Assessment I: Psychometric Theory (PSYC 7231) and Assessment II: Intellectual Assessment (PSYC 7234).

**Specific admissions procedures as are as follows:**

1. Applications will be evaluated once per year for Fall admissions. The deadline for applications is December 31.
2. Applicants will submit an application packet electronically which will consist of all material listed in the Application Checklist. This
application can be found at http://cogs.georgiasouthern.edu/gradadmin/applytogradschool.

3. A successful completion of a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution. Students’ academic record will be evaluated based on official transcripts from all previous enrollments in higher education.
   • The minimum GPA required for consideration is 3.3 (out of 4.0).
   • A minimum grade of “B” in the following undergraduate courses: Psychological Statistics, Research Design, Abnormal Psychology.
   • Record of having taken at least two of the following courses: Personality, Social Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Learning and/or Cognition, Health Psychology, Tests and Measurement, Theories of Psychotherapy, Psychology of Substance Abuse.

4. Record of taking the GRE test within the past 5 years. Average GRE scores for previous successful applicants are available at http://class.georgiasouthern.edu/psychology/psyd/. The GRE Psychology (subject) test is required only for those students who did not earn either a Bachelor’s or a Master’s degree in psychology.

5. Three letters of recommendation from former professors or appropriate employers/advisors.

6. A written statement of professional goals and a rationale for how the Psy.D. program will further the students’ career objectives. The written statement should discuss the fit of previous experiences and/or career goals with the mission of the Psy.D. program to train psychologists to work with rural and under-served populations. Please also include up to three clinical faculty with whom you would be most interested in speaking if invited for an interview.

7. A curriculum vitae.

8. An interview is required.

**Part-time Admission and Part-time Status**

The Psy.D. program is designed to be a full-time program that can be completed in five years. However, we realize some students may desire to do a portion of the program part-time. To this end, students may be admitted to the program with part-time status. If they wish to do this, the following criteria must be met:

- Students must apply via the same admission procedures as full-time students.
- Students can only begin the program in the Fall semester.
- Students must be admitted with a 18 credits in non-clinical courses (i.e., they must come into the program with the maximum amount of transfer credit).

Once admitted, part-time students must

- Enroll in a minimum of six (6) credits of coursework each semester.
- Be enrolled in the program every semester, unless a Leave of Absence is granted (see below).
- Enroll in necessary co-requisite courses when they are required.
- Enroll in Foundations of Psychotherapy I (PSYC 7232), Foundations & Skills II (PSYC 7433), and Group & Family Therapy (PSYC 7235) in consecutive semesters.
- Switch to full-time enrollment (minimum nine (9) credits per semester) for at least one full year to meet the residency requirement (see program manual for details).
- Complete the Psy.D. program within the 8-year time limit allowed for all students.

Part-time students may switch to full-time status at any point in their training. If a student desires to return to part-time status after being full-time, they must petition the program director.

**Program Requirements**

The program is designed to be a five-year, full-time program for those entering with a bachelor’s degree. The first four years will include coursework and graded practicum experiences. A minimum of one year (12 continuous months) of full-time coursework must be done in residency at Georgia Southern. The fifth year will consist of a full-time (2000 hour) approved internship.

- **Grades:** Students are expected to pass all courses with a grade of “A” or “B”. Should a student earn less than a B in any course, he or she is immediately put on probation and must retake the course (and earn an “A” or “B”) the next time the course is offered. Earning a second grade below “B” will result in dismissal from the program.

- **Annual Evaluations:** Once a year, students will have an individual meeting with their academic advisor for an evaluation of their progress. The evaluation will assess ongoing development of academic performance and professional skills, ethical judgment and sensitivity, as well as personal attributes or behaviors related to suitability for career in professional psychology. Documented poor performance in any of these areas will be the basis of efforts by the advisor and program faculty to assist the student in forming and completing a plan for improvement; continued poor performance within specified time frames will be the basis for terminating a student’s enrollment in the program.

- **Clinical Qualifying Examination; and Dissertation:** Students must successfully complete a Clinical Qualifying Examination at the time specified in their Handbook. This examination requires the student to demonstrate satisfactory skills in assessment, diagnosis, case conceptualization, tracking therapeutic progress, and treatment planning. In keeping with the practitioner-scholar model, the program aims to train practitioners who are grounded in the scholarly inquiry of scientific psychology. By the beginning of the fourth year, it is expected that students have drafted a doctoral dissertation proposal. The project should be conducted during the fourth year. At a minimum, the dissertation proposal is to be written, defended, and approved before applying for the pre-doctoral internship. At an aspirational level, it is highly desirable that students will successfully defend the dissertation project before leaving campus for internship.

- **Practicum:** An indispensable component of clinical training is to gain experience providing psychotherapy, assessment, and consultation. To this end, students are required to participate in a graduated series of practicum experiences beginning in the second year. All students are expected to conform to the APA Code of Ethics, Georgia state law, and to the rules of the practicum site. In the second year, students will be placed at internal practicum sites where their progress can be closely monitored. Internal practicum sites consist of the Psychology Clinic, Georgia Southern University Counseling and Career Development Center, and the Regents Center for Learning Disorders. In the third year, all students will be engaged in practicum experiences in rural agencies and/or at agencies that serve predominantly rural clientele. The fourth year of practicum can be at any site, but with a focus on professional development and developing knowledge about clinical supervision and consultation services. Failure to complete practicum successfully will result in remediation or dismissal, depending on the circumstances for the failure, as described in the Psy.D. Program Handbook.

- **Personal Therapy Requirement:** In our clinical training, we emphasize the development of the clinician as a person in parity with the acquisition of clinical skills and theoretical knowledge. To this end, we require all students to complete a minimum of 15 sessions of personal psychotherapy with a licensed therapist during their time in the program.

- **Internship:**

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State licensing boards for doctoral level psychologists require candidates for licensure to have completed a one-year, full-time (2,000 hour) pre-doctoral internship. The Georgia Southern University Psy.D. program is designed for the Internship to be completed in the fifth year. Students will follow the application process outlined by the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC; www.appic.org).

Leave of Absence

Leaves of Absence are discouraged. They can lead to scheduling difficulties because of the sequencing of courses and experiences. However, leaves of absences may be granted to students on petition to do so with the DCT and the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences or his/her designee. Students who have been granted a leave of absence are responsible for notifying the DCT and the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences when ready to resume full-time graduate study. Leaves of absence cannot extend beyond one calendar year. Students who do not return after one year of absence will be dismissed from the program.

Program of Study

Below are the courses required for the Psy.D. program. A curriculum by year can be found by visiting the Psychology Department’s website at http://class.georgiasouthern.edu/psychology/psyd/files/