

**Graduate Studies in
Clinical Psychology
at the
University of Victoria**

July 2023

Information for Applicants

We acknowledge and respect the lək'wəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Program Philosophy and Mission

Our CPA-accredited graduate program in clinical psychology is based on the scientist-practitioner model, providing a balanced emphasis on science and practice. We foster the development of informed and ethical clinical practice by providing opportunities to gain competency in a variety of assessment and therapeutic approaches, theoretical perspectives, and research methods. Students' understanding and skills in these areas are further deepened through specialized practicum opportunities.

Our program prepares graduate students for clinical practice, academic, and/or research careers. Our goal is to train scientist-practitioner psychologists who contribute to the scientific knowledge base in clinical psychology and who offer evidence-based services to individuals, families, and groups. All of our students receive core training in the social, developmental, biological, and cognitive bases of human behaviour, psychological assessment, diagnosis, intervention and prevention, psychopathology, ethics and professional issues, cultural diversity, research methods and evaluation, supervision, and consultation. In addition, all of our students become attuned to the unique strengths and conflicts that may arise from specific cultural contexts, including cultural beliefs and values, sexual orientation, gender, socioeconomic status, and level of ability. Students combine their training in core areas of Clinical Psychology with an emphasis in (1) lifespan psychology or (2) neuropsychology. Further, we support students' individual career objectives through careful guidance in the selection of specialty courses, additional learning opportunities, and placements in relevant practice sites.

Our comprehensive training ensures that graduates are well-prepared to excel in a variety of settings – both academic and clinical – as well as to work with a wide range of individuals, families, communities, and organizations.

Core Program Faculty

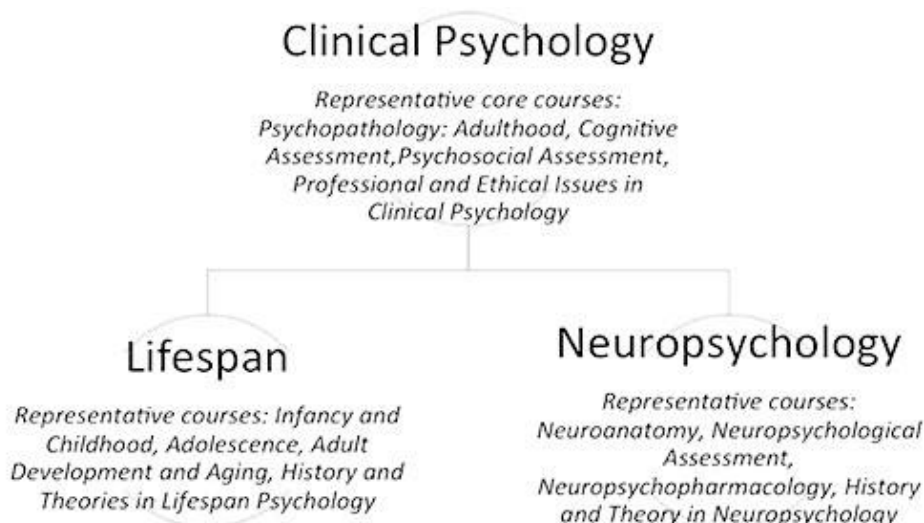
There are currently 12 core clinical faculty members in the Clinical Psychology graduate program. Our faculty members are involved in research spanning the entire lifespan and encompassing diverse topics such as neuropsychology of executive functions, trauma and self-regulation; Indigenous mental health; immigrant adaptation and family relationships; traumatic brain injury; substance misuse; neurocognition, health and aging; interpersonal violence; mindfulness meditation; and non-suicidal self-injury, to name just a few. Although faculty members specialize in different parts of the lifespan, they all bring a developmental lifespan perspective to their work. Multiple specific theoretical perspectives are represented in the clinical work of our faculty members, including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Interpersonal Therapy, Family Systems, Attachment theory, Narrative Therapy, Indigenous ways of healing, Mindfulness, and Humanistic/Existential approaches.

In addition to the core faculty, the graduate program benefits from the instruction and mentoring of 15 complementary faculty members in the Department of Psychology. These complementary faculty members teach courses, supervise, and serve on supervisory committees of clinical psychology graduate students. An additional 40+ Registered Psychologists are involved in supervising the clinical training of our students in various locations in the Victoria community (and occasionally beyond).

Specialty Tracks

Clinical Lifespan Specialization. The Clinical Lifespan track emphasizes the social, cognitive, and emotional development of individuals from childhood through late adulthood. Clinical psychology students in the Lifespan track received specialized training in the conceptualization of multiple and intersecting influences on mental health, including normative and pathological developmental pathways and age-specific risk and protective factors. Students in this track develop expertise in using this knowledge to inform developmentally sensitive assessment and intervention techniques and recommendations that outline trajectories of potential risks yet also point to specific developmental opportunities for positive growth. Current clinically-related research topics include (a) Indigenous mental health; (b) cultural identity formation in adolescence; (c) couples' relationship functioning at the transition to parenthood; (d) addiction and substance misuse; (e) mental health, health behaviours, and health risks in adolescents/young adults; (f) acculturation dynamics and parent-child relationships within immigrant families; and (h) development of risky and self-damaging behaviours.

Clinical Neuropsychology Specialization. The Clinical Neuropsychology track focuses on brain organization and the impact of brain dysfunction on various aspects of cognitive, behavioural, and emotional functioning. Clinical Neuropsychology students are provided with advanced training in the clinical neuropsychological assessment, management, and rehabilitation of cognitive, memory, sensorimotor, attention, executive, social, emotional functioning for clients with neurological and/or neuropsychiatric disorders. We adhere to the Houston Conference Guidelines for clinical training in Neuropsychology, such that our students qualify for accredited residencies and post-docs in Clinical Neuropsychology if they wish to pursue further certification with the American boards in Neuropsychology later in their careers. Clinical Neuropsychologists are noted for their ability to integrate medical, psychiatric, and occupational aspects of rehabilitation into effective and focused treatment planning. Current clinically-related research topics in the department include (a) use of multimodal neuroimaging to understand healthy aging and neurodegenerative disorders (e.g., Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, MS); (b) the intersections of mental health, addictions, and traumatic brain injury; (c) examination of the effects of physical activity on cognition; (d) neurocognition, psychosocial functioning, and health outcomes with aging and chronic illness; (e) cognitive rehabilitation in children with neurodevelopmental disabilities including ASD, FASD, and ADHD; and (f) neuropsychological interventions for adults, particularly mindfulness-based interventions, as well as the intersection of trauma and medical illness.



Admissions

The Admissions Committee will review applications based on:

- background, interests, research and volunteer experience
- competitiveness of transcripts
- a personal statement of field of interest
- a personal interview
- match with selected individual faculty

Although we rely upon traditional criteria in our evaluation of applicants, we also consider applicants' special aptitudes and abilities, and value the contribution of unique experiences to the program. Trainee selection is competitive. Admitted students typically have a Psychology Honours degree or a Psychology Major with strong research experience and at least some exposure to clinical work or clinical populations. Students typically enter at the Masters level. Advancement from the Masters to the Ph.D. program is not competitive, but is dependent on demonstrating appropriate academic, research, and clinical progress.

Preparing for graduate training in clinical psychology

Psychology undergraduate courses in areas such as Adult and/or Children's Mental Health/Psychopathology, Clinical Neuropsychology, and Introduction to Clinical Psychology may be helpful to you in deciding whether graduate training in clinical psychology is really for you and also to prepare you for more in-depth graduate training in those areas. Seeking out opportunities to work with others through applied coursework, volunteer positions, or employment experiences may also be valuable in determining if a career in clinical psychology is a good match to your skills and interests. These clinical psychology-focused undergraduate courses, however, must be balanced with a broad background in the scientific foundations of general psychology. Most APA- and CPA-accredited graduate programs in Clinical Psychology require graduate courses in the four areas listed below. Some examples of 3rd or 4th year undergraduate coursework that might prepare you for this graduate course work or possibly be counted as equivalents include:

- Biological Bases of Behaviour (e.g., Biological Psychology, Physiological Psychology, Neuropsychology)
- Cognitive Bases of Behaviour (e.g., Learning, Memory, Cognition)
- Social Bases of Behaviour (e.g., Social Psychology, Group Processes)
- Individual Differences (e.g., Abnormal Psychology, Developmental Psychopathology, Personality)

For more information, please contact the Graduate Secretary at psychgrd@uvic.ca.

Program Requirements

Completion of the Clinical Psychology graduate program requires substantial core coursework in areas such as psychopathology (in childhood/adolescence and adulthood), cognitive and psychosocial assessment (introductory and advanced), evidence based intervention (both general and within specific theoretical traditions), professional ethics, research methods and design, statistical analyses, and psychometrics. In addition, each specialty track requires additional specialized coursework.

Successful completion of the program *a/so* requires the completion of:

- 1,200 hours of supervised practicum experience providing professional psychological services to the community, including assessments and therapeutic interventions for children, adults, couples, and families (these practicum hours are typically completed across at least 3 different settings)
- two candidacy examinations (a clinical candidacy exam and a specialty candidacy exam)
- a master's thesis and doctoral dissertation
- a year-long CPA-accredited clinical residency

Psychology Clinic

The Psychology Clinic has the dual purpose of serving the community and training clinical psychology graduate students. Services are provided by students in the M.Sc. and Ph.D. clinical psychology programs and are supervised by Registered Psychologists. Students completed their first practicum training experience in our Psychology Clinic.

The Psychology Clinic seeks to provide intensive applied training experiences for graduate students, as well as effective, ethical, and economic psychological services for the community.

- *Our Mission:* To work with individuals and communities to improve health. We provide care, educate, conduct research, and advocate.
- *Our Vision:* To foster healthy individuals and communities by applying specialized psychological knowledge in a teaching outpatient clinic setting.
- *Accountability:* We are responsible for providing superior client-centered services in a manner that shows recognition of effective resource management and modeling of professionalism to student-trainees. All services are provided with consideration of the practice standards set by the College of Psychologists of British Columbia (CPBC).
- *Respect:* Our services, relationships and actions convey our values of integrating compassion and caring with the highest training ideals in the professional preparation of clinical psychology graduate students.

Accreditation

The Graduate Program in Clinical Psychology has been fully accredited since 1997. In May 2022, we were awarded a 6-year accreditation term from CPA and will undergo our next reaccreditation visit in 2027-28. We were also accredited by APA until they ceased accrediting programs outside the United States in 2015. APA and CPA signed the “First Street Accord” which is a mutual recognition agreement of the equivalence of accreditation between APA and CPA (<http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/first-street-accord.aspx>). As a fully accredited Graduate Program in Clinical Psychology, we adhere to all standards, guidelines and policies of CPA and APA. The CPA accreditation office can be reached at:

Canadian Psychological Association
141 Laurier Ave. West, Suite 702
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5J3
1-613-237-2144 or 1-888-472-0657 (toll free)
cpa@cpa.ca

Our Students

Typically, five to seven students are admitted each year from a pool of approximately 300 applicants. The average age of students in the program at this time is 28 years old (ranging from 22-43). Currently, approximately 65% of our students self-identify as diverse (e.g., identify as LGBTQ+, have a disability, and/or originate from a minority background). The vast majority of students who enter our program complete the Ph.D. degree.

Students with a learning disability, mental health issue, or long-term recurring physical or sensory disability can receive support through the University of Victoria’s Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) (<http://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/>). Program faculty members are committed to working with students and the CAL to ensure equitable and usable learning opportunities.

Most of our students receive internal or external funding. For example, in 2022-23, 94% of students were funded by some form of an external or internal scholarship. In addition, 40% of these students received funding for a Teaching Assistant position and 56% received funding from a research assistant position. The monetary value of these fellowships and TA and RA positions varies greatly. In the 2022-23 year, the average amount of funding self-reported by students prior to residency was \$23,595/year. Pre-residency funding ranged from \$7,000 to \$55,000, with a median of \$21,038.

All of our students complete a fully funded, accredited residency as their final training requirement. In addition, all of our recent graduates are fully registered (or are becoming registered) and are employed as Psychologists or post-doctoral fellows. In a poll completed in 2020 of program alumni from the prior 7 years, 100% of our alumni said that they would recommend our program to someone interested in studying clinical psychology.