



School of Psychology

Master of Psychology (Clinical) 2019 Program Guide

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The School of Psychology at UNSW Sydney

The School of Psychology is located in the Faculty of Science, UNSW Sydney. As one of the largest psychology departments in Australia, the School has excellent research and professional training facilities. It has extensive computing facilities, a psychological test library, a psychology clinic, a technical workshop and laboratories in all areas of experimental psychology. The School also has strong links with professional practitioners in the areas of clinical, neuropsychological and forensic psychology.

The School is well known for its research tradition. Many of the staff have international reputations in their respective fields and a number are Fellows of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences. Our staff attract several million dollars in external research funds per year. Staff publications receive more citations than any other psychology department in Australia and the School has one of the highest rates of PhD graduations in Psychology of any Australian university.

The Master of Psychology (Clinical) program

The Master of Psychology (Clinical) program began in 1971. The School's theoretical orientation has primarily been one of experimental empiricism, and the clinical program adheres to the scientist-practitioner model for clinical training. The program has an emphasis on cognitive-behavioural approaches to the understanding and management of clinical problems. The program focuses on adult, adolescent and child clinical psychology, neuropsychological assessment and rehabilitation.

The program is accredited by the [Australian Psychology Accreditation Council \(APAC\)](#) as the fifth and sixth years of study leading to full membership of the [Australian Psychological Society \(APS\)](#) and registration as a psychologist with the [Psychology Board of Australia \(PsyBA\)](#). Graduates of the program are eligible for Associate Membership of the [APS College of Clinical Psychologists](#). After completing a further two years of full-time equivalent supervised practice (the Clinical Psychology Registrar Program), graduates of the program are eligible to apply for full membership and [endorsement](#) as a Clinical Psychologist.

Aims of the program

The Masters degree in Clinical Psychology provides post-graduate training for psychologists who intend to work as clinicians in hospitals, community health, and other settings where they might be engaged in health promotion and the diagnosis, assessment, and treatment of people with a range of psychological problems and disabilities including neuropsychological disorders.

The primary aim of the program is to enable trainees to develop a broad range of psychological expertise, based on academic knowledge, research abilities, and clinical skills. Emphasis is placed on the ability to adapt these core skills to a wide range of settings and different client groups.

Throughout the program, the trainee will be assisted to develop skills in the processes of assessment, formulation, intervention, evaluation, and reporting. Field placements and internal placements in the UNSW Psychology Clinic enables trainees to gain experience in working with children, adolescents, and adults, with both acute and chronic difficulties. All trainees should have some experience, either on placement or within the Clinic activities, in both individual and non-individual treatment (i.e., with groups, couples, or families).

The program aims to encourage the development of a scholarly and critical approach to the scientific foundations of Clinical Psychology. Trainees are encouraged to make explicit links between practical experience and the scientific and theoretical background to their work. Equally critical is the development of an ethical approach to clinical work, so that, for example, the trainee can recognise the limits to their own competence and the range of applicability of the models and methods they are using.

Before the commencement of training, trainees must be registered as [Provisional Psychologists](#) with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). Trainees will also need to have read and be ready to comply with the Code of Ethics endorsed by the Psychology Board of Australia. At present, this is the same as the Code of Ethics of the Australian Psychological Society, and can be downloaded from the APS website <http://www.psychology.org.au/about/ethics/>.

Training in research and evaluation methods also plays a central role in the program. The research thesis component in the program focuses on the development of the trainee’s area(s) of specialisation and interest. Its inclusion enables trainees to carry out intensive study of one particular clinical area.

Program structure

The University year is divided into 3 standard terms – Term 1 (18 February – 1 May), Term 2 (3 June – 12 August), and Term 3 (16 September – 25 November). There is an optional summer term, however no postgraduate courses are scheduled in this term. Certain postgraduate courses run outside the standard term dates. Further, practical work (e.g., field placements and Clinic work) continues throughout the year including during term breaks. Trainees are expected to participate in all components of the program.

The degree can be taken as a two-year full-time program, or spread over four years of part-time study. Trainees intending to complete the program part-time should plan their enrolment in careful consultation with the Program Director, and are expected to complete the program within four years.

Please note that this program of study is very intense. Professional practice activities, in particular, are time consuming and not limited to particular hours detailed on the timetable. It is NOT possible to complete the course part-time while working full-time.

The table following shows the structure of the program as it applies to full-time trainees. It is usually recommended that part-time trainees complete the core clinical courses first (Adult and Child Clinical Psychology 1 and 2, Experimental Clinical Psychology, and Psychological Assessment). Classes are usually scheduled on Monday and Tuesday. As classes for all but one course (PSYC7000) are scheduled by the School, not centrally, the timetable is usually made available a few weeks prior to the commencement of a new term. Only a limited amount of timetable information will be available online (<http://timetable.unsw.edu.au/2019/PSYCKENS.html#PGRD>) or via your Class Schedule on myUNSW (<https://student.unsw.edu.au/class-timetable-guide>).

Once a term gets underway, the timetable will be published/updated on the School’s website (see the right-hand side menu at <http://www.psy.unsw.edu.au/postgraduate-coursework/master-psychology-clinical>) and all postgraduate Moodle pages.

2019 Program Structure		Units of Credit	Hours per Week		
			Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Stage 1					
PSYC7212	Adult and Child Clinical Psychology 1	6	3	-	
PSYC7001	Psychological Assessment	6	3	-	-
PSYC7204	Adult and Child Clinical Psychology 2	6	-	3	-
PSYC7221	Experimental Clinical Psychology	6	-	4 and workshops	
PSYC7210	Clinical Neuropsychology	6	-	-	3
PSYC7000	Research and Evaluation Methods	6	-	-	2
PSYC7223	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 1	6	Varied	Varied	
PSYC7224	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 2	6		Varied	Varied

Stage 2					
PSYC7220	Psychology of Health and Illness	6	-	2	
PSYC7222	Advanced Topics in Clinical Psychology	6	Workshops	-	
PSYC7225	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 3	6	Varied	Varied	
PSYC7226	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 4	6		Varied	Varied
PSYC7227	Research Thesis (Clinical) 1	12	Varied	Varied	-
PSYC7228	Research Thesis (Clinical) 2	12	-	Varied	Varied

Trainee attendance

It should be emphasised that this is not an external program. Trainees enrolled in the program are expected to attend all formal lectures, seminars, and meetings. Absences from programmed coursework will need to be explained to the staff member involved and, if appropriate, leave requested from the Program or Clinic Director. Trainees are also encouraged to participate in the general academic and social life of the School, by attending School meetings, seminars and social gatherings.

When a trainee commences the program, they are required to be registered with AHPRA (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency) as a Provisional Psychologist (<http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Registration/Provisional/Higher-Degree.aspx>). Trainees must maintain their provisional registration **for the duration of their candidature, irrespective of when they are on placement (please note, Combined PhD/MPsych students must maintain registration for the duration of the combined degree)**. As a provisionally registered Psychologist, trainees are governed not only by the relevant University and placement provider regulations, but also by AHPRA regulations. Failure to adhere to relevant regulations and guidelines could result in cancellation of a trainee's registration or limits imposed on the trainee's registration by AHPRA.

Program components

The program consists of three components, all of which are compulsory, totalling 96 units of credit (48 in each Stage): Coursework, Professional Practice and a Research Thesis.

I. Course Work (48 units of credit)

This component consists of weekly lectures and seminars with associated written forms of assessment (reports/essays, class tests and final examinations).

[PSYC7212 Adult and Child Clinical Psychology 1](#)

This course takes a scientist-practitioner approach, linking conceptual models of the aetiology and maintenance of clinical disorders with empirically-supported clinical interventions for both adults and children. A strong emphasis will be placed on links between experimental psychology and clinical practice.

[PSYC7204 Adult and Child Clinical Psychology 2](#)

The course provides theoretical knowledge and practical skills in child and adult clinical psychology. The focus is on etiology, assessment, diagnosis, case conceptualisation, and empirically supported treatment of psychopathology in children and adults. These problems will be considered within the individual's relevant social context (including family, school, and peers as relevant). The course covers best practice guidelines and is guided by a scientist-practitioner approach.

[PSYC7001 Psychological Assessment](#)

This course is designed to equip professional psychologists with basic skills in psychological assessment and report writing. The course focuses upon the assessment of intelligence in adults and children. Trainees will be taught the theoretical and empirical underpinnings of intelligence testing using the Wechsler scales and

will develop competency in the administration, scoring and interpretation of these. This course also provides trainees with basic knowledge and skills in the administration and interpretation of the Wechsler Memory Scales and other tests commonly used in neuropsychological assessment. Finally this course emphasizes the importance of accurately detecting changes in functioning, including the estimation of premorbid intelligence, the detection of improvement over time that may indicate treatment efficacy or spontaneous recovery and changes that implicate deterioration of function.

PSYC7221 Experimental Clinical Psychology

A continuation of the problem-oriented approach commenced in PSYC7212, this course examines the theoretical basis of models of psychopathology, assessment and intervention, and related professional issues. This course covers a range of topics which include psychopharmacology and evidence-based practice.

PSYC7210 Clinical Neuropsychology

This course introduces clinical psychologists to the principles of neuropsychology. The course commences with an overview of the neuroanatomy of the brain, followed by discussion of major areas of cognitive function that can be disrupted by focal brain lesions. Some common neurological disorders will then be described including characteristic presentations on cognitive testing. The course will finish with a focus on rehabilitation of brain injury and evidence based practice for interventions to address neuropsychological disorders.

PSYC7000 Research and Evaluation Methods

An examination of threats to the validity of casual inferences from randomised experiments, quasi-experiments and passive observational studies, with particular reference to field studies and program evaluations. Statistical power analysis, the analysis of data from non-equivalent control group designs, interrupted time series analysis, and structural modelling.

PSYC7220 Psychology of Health and Illness

Applications of psychological principles, derived from human and animal research, to human health and rehabilitation including health promotion, risk factor reduction, psychological assessment, management and remediation of medical and neurological disorders, with a special focus on chronic illnesses.

PSYC7222 Experimental Clinical Psychology

This course is comprised of four workshops in which trainees are encouraged to take a strong scientist-practitioner approach, linking conceptual models of the aetiology and maintenance of clinical disorders with empirically-supported clinical interventions. An emphasis is placed on the links between experimental psychology and clinical practice. In this course trainees learn about the clinical skills and procedures that they need to diagnose, assess and deliver cognitive-behavioural treatments for each of the complex psychological conditions covered.

II. Professional Practice (24 units of credit)

In this part of the training, trainees complete a minimum of 1,000 hours under supervision within the UNSW Psychology Clinic and in at least two different field clinical settings. The information below provides an overview of the professional practice component of the program and for additional information please see the *Professional Practice Guidelines* and *Psychology Clinic Handbook* documents.

Trainees complete professional practice via four separate one-term courses: PSYC7223 Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 1, PSYC7224 Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 2, PSYC7225 Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 3, and PSYC7226 Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 4.

Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 1 is a prerequisite for Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 2, while Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 2 is a prerequisite for Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 3 and 4.

Professional practice involves the following two components:

A. Professional Practice in the UNSW Psychology Clinic

By the end of the two-year program, trainees are required to have completed a minimum of 1,000 hours of activity related to professional practice in order to be eligible for assessment in this component. A large proportion of these hours will be devoted to clinical work within the Psychology Clinic. This work will involve assessing and treating clients, under the supervision of various members of the clinical staff. Trainees will begin seeing clients in their first year of enrolment. Client work in the clinic involves seeing both adult and child clients for therapy and psychometric assessments. Trainees will be allocated cases to be seen individually or in partnership with another trainee. Trainees would also be expected to be involved in facilitating group programs. Visit the Psychology Clinic website for more information about the services offered in the clinic: <http://clinic.psy.unsw.edu.au>.

While seeing clients in the Psychology Clinic, trainees are required to attend approximately 3 hours of weekly supervision sessions with their assigned Clinical Supervisors (not shown in program structure table). Supervision sessions are conducted in both individual and group formats.

Professional Practice also includes weekly professional meetings (held throughout each year of the program) and Skills Training Workshops. The Skills Training Workshops cover a variety of clinically-relevant topics including core assessment skills, working with children, adolescents and family systems, case formulation, cognitive therapy skills, emotional regulation strategies and working with high risk clients.

The Professional Practice component of the program is assessed in a variety of ways including audio and video session recordings, case presentations, case reports, workshop training journals and Supervisor reports.

Throughout professional practice, strong emphases will be placed on the technical skills, professionalism and ethical practices of the trainee. All trainees will be expected to demonstrate satisfactory performance across all core competencies. There are 10 areas of professional competence:

- i. Diagnosis and Clinical Assessment: Knowledge and Knowledge Application
- ii. Case Conceptualisation and Interventions: Knowledge and Knowledge Application
- iii. Individual and Cultural Diversity
- iv. Effective and Skilful Assessment and Intervention
- v. Psychological Testing
- vi. Relational and Communication
- vii. Reflective Practitioner
- viii. Scientist Practitioner: Attitudes and Values
- ix. Ethical Practice: Knowledge and Knowledge Application
- x. Professionalism: Organised and Disciplined Practice
- xi. Professionalism: Attitudes and Values

B. Field Placements

In order to satisfy the field professional practice requirements of the program, trainees must satisfactorily complete placements in two different clinical settings (external placements). Typically, these external field placements are 40 days long for each placement. Placements are usually completed by attending two days per week for a period of 20 weeks. Some variation of the typical placement program may be negotiated on a case-by-case basis (e.g., one day per week for 40 weeks) and needs to be approved by the Placement Coordinator.

Trainees usually commence their first external placement in Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 3. The evaluation of the trainee's performance in each setting, completed by the supervising Clinical Psychologist, will contribute to the trainee's final grade in the Professional Practice component of the program.

A range of external field placement options is available including adult mental health, psychiatry, consultation, medical psychology, developmental disability, neuropsychology, child and family, psychogeriatric, and general community health settings. It may be possible to negotiate alternative placements for trainees with special career interests although the availability of these placements depend on the capacity of field placement supervisors to take on trainees. In many cases, trainees will be required to undergo a selection interview with placement sites in order to secure a placement.

All trainees on placement, must be enrolled in one of the four PEP courses (PSYC7223, PSYC7224, PSYC7225 or PSYC7226) for the entire duration of their placement. If the professional placement associated with a PEP course is not satisfactorily completed, the trainee may be awarded an 'Unsatisfactory Fail' (UF) for the PEP course (refer to [Program rules](#), below).

III. Research Thesis (24 units of credit)

All trainees are required to complete a clinically-relevant research thesis involving the collection of data on a topic of their choice. The thesis is to be presented as an article suitable for submission to an appropriate journal and of approximately 7,500 words.

The research project and thesis component aims to help the trainee to develop research skills that would be relevant to their subsequent clinical work. The thesis, therefore, involves an investigation into some aspect of clinical psychology. The research project may be conducted either at the University or in a suitable clinical setting (usually in collaboration with a qualified Clinical Psychologist or other health care workers in that setting). No particular type of project is stipulated, (i.e., it could involve a controlled treatment outcome study, the development of a clinically relevant measure, or the evaluation of an existing treatment program) but the trainee must make a major contribution to the design, implementation, and evaluation of the research project. The thesis is written as a journal article suitable for submission to a specific refereed journal. Work on the thesis commences in the first year of the program, when trainees are assigned to a supervisor. In the first year (for full-time trainees), a research proposal is submitted as part of PSYC7221 Experimental and Clinical Psychology (ECP), and a panel meeting is conducted with a member of academic staff to review the research outlined in the proposal. Trainees enrolled in a Combined Masters/PhD program are required to submit their PhD proposal in ECP. Full-time stand-alone Master trainees then enrol in PSYC7227 Research Thesis (Clinical) 1, and PSYC7227 Research Thesis (Clinical) 2 in the second year of the program (with timing of the thesis courses varying for part-time trainees). The thesis is due at the end of October, in the second year of the program for full-time Master of Psychology (Clinical) students. Trainees must satisfactorily complete PSYC7227 Research Thesis (Clinical) 1 before they can enrol in PSYC7228 Research Thesis (Clinical) 2.

Program rules and award of degree

Refer to individual Course Outlines for prerequisite information.

1. Students must satisfactorily complete PSYC7227 Research Thesis (Clinical) 1 before they can enrol in PSYC7228 Research Thesis (Clinical) 2.
2. Each professional placement in the program is linked to a Professional and Ethical Practice (PEP) course. Until the placement has been successfully completed, a PE grade will be applied to the PEP course. If the placement is not completed to a satisfactory standard, or placement requirements have not been met (as determined by both the Placement Coordinator and Program Director), a UF grade will be applied to the PEP course. Failure to meet placement requirements and successfully complete the placement will lead to failure of the PEP course. No hours from an unsatisfactory placement will count towards the minimum 1000 hours of supervised practical placement experience required for completion of the program.

3. Should a student fail a course*, approval to enrol in the failed course again will be at the discretion of the Program Director (and Placement Coordinator, in the case of PEP courses)^. Alternatively, the Program Director may recommend that the student withdraw from the program.

* Any of the 14 courses required for the program, including PSYC7227 (Research Thesis (Clinical) 1), PSYC7228 (Research Thesis (Clinical) 2) and any of the four PEP courses.

^ In Australia, the psychology profession is regulated by the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act as overseen by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). The School of Psychology is responsible for adhering to federally legislated professional and accreditation standards for training provisionally registered psychologists in full compliance with the APS Code of Ethics and Ethical Guidelines. Master of Psychology students, as provisionally registered psychologists, are expected to display the competencies, professionalism and reputable behaviours the discipline demands. In making their recommendation, the Program Director will consider these factors not simply from an academic standpoint, but as the discipline's chief authority on such professional and ethical matters within the program.

Should a student disagree with a recommendation made by the Program Director, their avenue of appeal will be to the Head of School and/or School Board.

A trainee that completes the stand-alone Master degree with a weighted average mark (WAM – <https://student.unsw.edu.au/wam>) of 80 or more will be awarded their degree 'with Excellence'. Eligible trainees do not need to apply for this award, but will be identified by the School as part of graduation eligibility checks.

Program leave

Program Leave may be granted subject to the restrictions outlined at <https://student.unsw.edu.au/program-leave>. A trainee who is not enrolled at the relevant census date, and has not applied for and been granted approved program leave for that term, will be discontinued from their program and must formally apply for re-admission if they want to enrol in a future term.

Combining MPsych(Clin) with a PhD

A combined Doctor of Philosophy/Master of Psychology (Clinical) degree program is available over four full-time years. This program consists of a research project (PhD) on a clinical topic and the coursework and professional practice components (12 courses) from the MPsych(Clin) degree. Trainees work on their research project across the four years and concurrently take Masters courses in each year. This program is restricted to those trainees who have completed an Honours Class 1 degree in Psychology, and is subject to the availability of adequate supervision and research infrastructure. Full details can be found at <http://www.psy.unsw.edu.au/future-students/postgraduate-research/programs>.

Fees and charges

Commonwealth Supported Places are available to trainees in the program. A Commonwealth Supported Place is a higher education place for which the Government makes a contribution towards the cost of the student's education, and the student pays a Student Contribution amount (previously known as HECS charges; <https://student.unsw.edu.au/fees-student-contribution-rates>). Full information on fees and charges may be found at <https://student.unsw.edu.au/fees>.

Program Staff

Program Director

Associate Professor Angela Nickerson BA(Hons) UQ, MPsych(Clinical)/PhD UNSW

Professor Jessica Grisham BA UPenn, MA, PhD Boston University (Acting Director March to June 2019)

Associate Professor Bronwyn Graham, BAdvSci, MPsych(Clinical)/PhD, UNSW (Acting Director June to September 2019)

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Dr Jill Newby, BA(Hons) UNSW, MPsych(Clinical)/PhD UNSW

Professor Lenny Vartanian, PhD, Toronto

Clinic Director & Placement Coordinator

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Postgraduate Support

Emmalee O'Grady

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The information contained in this guide is correct as at January 2019. Prospective students should contact UNSW to confirm admission requirements and availability of programs. UNSW reserves the right to change any programs, admission requirement or other information herein without any prior notice. CRICOS Provider No. 000098G.