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CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY PhD PROGRAM

CURRICULUM & INFORMATION HANDBOOK

June 2025

Please note that the information contained herein is subject to updates and changes and is intended to serve as a supplement to information available in the Department of Psychology & Neuroscience Graduate Student Handbook and FGS Guidelines.

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW	3
BACKGROUND:.....	3
MISSION STATEMENT	4
GOALS	5
CPA ACCREDITATION OFFICE AND	6
CONTACT INFORMATION.....	6
FACULTY	6
STUDENTS	7
THE CURRICULUM.....	8
COURSES:.....	8
DISSERTATION:.....	8
COMPREHENSIVES:	8
THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE:.....	9
PRACTICA OR FIELD PLACEMENTS	10
Practica or Field Placements	10
Payment for Practicum	11
TEACHING ASSISTANT (TA) REQUIREMENT:	11
RESIDENCY:	11
COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:.....	12
STUDENT PROGRESS.....	12
THE EVALUATION OF STUDENTS:	12
PROFESSIONAL SUITABILITY FOR THE PRACTICE OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY.....	13
RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS	13
FINANCIAL SUPPORT:	Error! Bookmark not defined.
TEST LIBRARY:.....	14
CLINICAL WORKSHOPS:	14
PROGRAM SUPPORT:	15
DEPARTMENT AND UNIVERSITY SUPPORT:	15
<i>OTHER IMPORTANT POLICIES</i>	15
CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK AND OTHER SCREENING PROCEDURES:	15
OUT-OF-PROVINCE PLACEMENT:	16
CO-SUPERVISOR:.....	16
CLINICAL MENTOR:.....	16
SPACE:.....	16
EQUALITY:.....	16

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS AND STUDENT APPEALS:	16
ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS	17
VACATION/PLANNED ABSENCES.....	17
PROGRAM EVENTS & AWARDS	17
CLINICAL COMMUNITY RECOGNITION & APPRECIATION (CCRA) RECEPTION:	17
THE CLINICAL STUDENT CITIZENSHIP AWARD	17
THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM.....	17
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS.....	21
YEAR 1.....	21
YEAR 2	22
YEAR 3	23
YEAR 4	24
YEAR 5	24
Appendix A.....	25
Dalhousie Clinical Psychology PhD Program	25
July 2024	25
Procedures for Review of Professional Suitability	25
Appendix B	30
Guidelines and Procedures for Decisions regarding Exemptions	30
for Students with Advanced Standing in the	30
Clinical Psychology PhD Program.....	30
Appendix C June 2025.....	32
Navigating Comprehensive Projects and Timelines:.....	32
Guidelines for Clinical Psychology Students	32

OVERVIEW

The goal of our program is to produce clinical psychologists who are thoroughly grounded in the science of psychology and the methods of clinical practice, and who strive to promote social justice in both domains. Our program and faculty strongly adhere to evidence-based practices, such as cognitive behavioural therapy.

The Clinical PhD program is a CPA accredited program, which follows the scientist-practitioner model. Clinical psychology is part of the science of psychology and we therefore emphasize both research and clinical practice. The program typically takes 6 - 7 years to complete, on average, including a one-year clinical residency/internship.

Beginning September 2011, our Clinical Psychology Program is a fast-track PhD program in which students entering from the Bachelor's degree are registered in an MSc and then fast-tracked into the PhD, without completing a Master's thesis or obtaining a Master's degree. Fast-tracking into the PhD program will occur sometime in the first or second year of the program, depending on the student's individual circumstances and needs. Students admitted with a Master's degree in Psychology or a closely related field are eligible for direct-entry into the PhD and may be eligible for advanced standing within the program; such standing is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. *Note that fast-tracking into the Clinical PhD requires that a student has been admitted to study Clinical Psychology. Fast-tracking does not refer to the time it takes students to complete the program.*

Even though students admitted to the Clinical Psychology PhD Program with a bachelor's degree are enrolled in an MSc before being fast-tracked to the Clinical PhD program, we do *not* offer a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology. In the rare circumstance where a student requests that we not fast-track the student into the Clinical PhD Program, the student would be required to satisfy any remaining degree requirements as specified for the Psychology MSc degree (including writing and defending a master's thesis); the student would not be eligible to enroll in practicum or other classes restricted to Clinical PhD students and would not be eligible for licensing as a clinical psychologist.

Students admitted into the Clinical Program with a master's degree in Psychology or a closely related field are eligible for direct-entry into the PhD Program (i.e., are not registered in the MSc program) and may be eligible for advanced standing within the program; such standing is evaluated on a case-by-case basis after admission. Students submit their requests directly to the director of clinical training (DCT), who, in consultation with the field placement coordinator and instructors for the course(s) under consideration, reviews all documentation and makes decisions regarding course exemptions and recognition of previous practica and/or thesis work. All applications for advanced placement must receive final approval by Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS). *Please see Appendix B for details about this process.* Requests for an exemption from one comprehensive project can be made by clinical students who are admitted with an empirical Master's following the successful presentation of the first clinical proposal. All such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will require the approval of the DCT and the dissertation supervisor. Approvals will be tentative until successful completion of the first comprehensive.

Students entering with an Honours degree in Psychology or with a non-clinical Master's degree will be admitted into a program with a 3-year residency requirement. Students entering with a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology will be admitted into a program with a 2-year residency requirement.

BACKGROUND:

The program began in 1989 and had been accredited by both the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) since its first possible application, in 1995. Since 2007, we have sought only CPA accreditation. Our Program was most recently reaccredited by CPA in 2024/2025 for a period of six years. Our program's next reaccreditation year will be 2030/2031.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Clinical Program is founded on a scientist-practitioner training model and is committed to prioritizing equity, diversity, and inclusion in all components of training. Graduates of the program will be thoroughly grounded in both the science of psychology and the methods of clinical practice, the integration of research and clinical practice, and the promotion of social justice in research and clinical practice. Clinical training focuses on evidence-based clinical practice. The program's generalist training allows students the opportunity to gain knowledge and experience in working with individuals across the lifespan as well as with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Students are also provided with the opportunity to expand their learning into areas of interest (e.g., child psychology, adult psychology, neuropsychology, addictions, health psychology). Students who want extensive training in both science and clinical practice are the best fit for our program. Our graduates are prepared to work as clinical psychologists in a range of settings and are particularly valued in settings receptive to the integration of research and practice.

VALUE STATEMENTS/PRINCIPLES

- 1. Scientist-Practitioner Model of Training**
Professional psychology advances itself through the scientific method.
- 2. Faculty Mentorship**
Faculty who are scientist-practitioners model the values this program wishes to instill in students. Faculty prioritize mentorship to meet the needs of students in the program.
- 3. Cultivated Critical Thinking**
Critical thinking skills are foundational skills for both science and practice and are fostered at all levels of training in the program.
- 4. Development-Based Learning**
A developmental model of supervision tailors feedback and supervision to a student's level to advance their learning.
- 5. Acceptance and Respect of Diversity**
Ethical thinking and practice permeates all aspects of the program; hence, the well-being, dignity, and respect of all peoples are paramount.
- 6. Collaborative Approach**
A collaborative framework where graduates learn to be effective members of multidisciplinary teams leads to better client-centred care and research.
- 7. Beyond the Classroom Learning**
Training is most effective if provided through multiple methods, including coursework, research (i.e., comprehensive projects and dissertation), practica, clinical workshops, and a full year internship/residency.

GOALS

1. To provide training consistent with the scientist-practitioner model by providing graduate students with experience in and knowledge of the science and practice of psychology, and the integration of science and practice.

Objective 1: To train graduates who are skilled researchers

Objective 2: To train graduates who are skilled clinicians

Objective 3: To train graduates who integrate science and practice

Objective 4: To train graduates who are skilled at integrating an understanding of human diversity into research and clinical practice
2. To provide generalist training that ensures breadth in research, practice, and teaching skills, thus making students competitive for residency and employment positions, and prepared to take on a range of careers in the field of clinical psychology.

Objective 5: To train graduates who have a broad knowledge of clinical skills that are applicable to work with clients of all ages.

Objective 6: To train graduates who have a broad knowledge of clinical skills in order to work with clients who present with a wide range of difficulties related to mental health and well-being

Objective 7: To train graduates who have a broad knowledge of clinical skills in order to work with clients from diverse backgrounds

3. To ensure that students develop the necessary skills for careers as Clinical Psychologists, as described in the MRA, and detailed in the CPA 2023 Accreditation Standards, in each of:

The **six general core content areas of psychology**: biological bases of behaviour; cognitive-affective bases of behaviour; social-cultural bases of behaviour; individual differences, diversity, growth and lifespan development; historical and scientific foundations of psychology; psychopharmacology.

The **eight foundational competencies**: individual, social, and cultural diversity; Indigenous interculturalism; evidence-based knowledge and methods; professionalism; interpersonal skills and communication; bias evaluation and reflective practice; ethics, standards, laws, policies; and interprofessional collaboration and service settings.

The **six core functional competencies**: assessment; interventions; consultation; research design and test construction; program development and evaluation; and supervision.

Objective 8: To train graduates who have strong knowledge in the core content areas to the level of preparedness necessary to enter the profession of clinical psychology

Objective 9: To train graduates who have clearly developed all core foundational and functional competency areas to the level of preparedness necessary to enter the profession of clinical psychology

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FACULTY

Our Clinical Psychology PhD Program currently has ten core clinical faculty members. These faculty members are active as scientist-practitioners in a variety of areas within clinical psychology including child and adult clinical psychology, addictions, neuropsychology, and health psychology. The core clinical faculty are responsible for teaching clinical core and elective courses. Some faculty also supervise practica as a component within their skills-based courses and in their other clinical roles in hospitals and private practices. Core clinical faculty, along with other departmental non-clinical faculty and adjunct faculty supervise comprehensive and dissertation research projects. The core clinical faculty participate in numerous other activities (e.g., administration, dissertation committees, program and curriculum development, practicum supervision) geared toward maintaining and enhancing the quality of the Clinical Program. For a complete listing of departmental and honorary faculty and their area(s) of interest, please consult the Department of Psychology & Neuroscience website (www.dal.ca/psychandneuro).

The core clinical faculty and their research interests are:

- **Dr. Christine Chambers** (.4 FTE)
 - pediatric (child health) psychology, pediatric pain, social media, knowledge translation
- **Dr. Penny Corkum** (1.0 FTE)
 - sleep and childhood psychopathology; attention, behaviour and academic disorders in children; psycho-social interventions; school psychology
- **Dr. Shannon Johnson** (1.0 FTE) – **Director of Clinical Training (DCT), Co-Director Centre for Psychological Health**
 - clinical and cognitive neuropsychology, environmental psychology with an emphasis on human interaction with nature, behaviour change to improve well-being

- **Dr. Alissa Pencer** (1.0 FTE) - senior instructor and **Field Placement Coordinator (FPC), Co-Director Centre for Psychological Health**
 - anxiety disorders and obsessive compulsive disorder in youth, substance use and mental health, prevention and early intervention in severe mental illness, e-mental health
- **Dr. Natalie Rosen** (.5 FTE) -- **Associate Director of Clinical Training (ADCT)**
 - sexual function and dysfunctions, transition to parenthood, sexuality and relationships, infertility
- **Dr. Meghan Rossi** (instructor) (1.0 FTE)
 - Clinical psychology; sexuality and close relationships; pain; sexual function/dysfunction; medically assisted reproduction; acute and chronic conditions (oncology, cardiac health, infertility)
- **Dr. Simon Sherry** (1.0 FTE)
 - personality and psychopathology (e.g., suicide, eating disorders, anxiety, and depression) perfectionism, alcohol problems
- **Dr. Sherry Stewart** (.4 FTE)
 - anxiety, substance abuse, problem gambling, comorbidity of mental health and addictions
- **Dr. Natalie Stratton** (instructor) (1.0 FTE)
 - sexual function/dysfunction, sexual & mental health interventions for LGBTQ+ populations, mood disorders, anxiety & anxiety-related disorders, Borderline Personality Disorder, clinical psychology, health psychology
- **Dr. Igor Yakovenko** (.6 FTE)
 - change determinants across addictive behaviours, transdiagnostic addiction and comorbidity, cannabis use and disordered gambling, online substance use interventions

We are fortunate to also have a large number of honorary faculty (e.g., cross, adjunct, clinical associate), who, depending on qualifications and eligibility, participate in the Clinical Psychology PhD Program in a variety of functions, e.g., teaching, supervising practica, comprehensive projects, and dissertations (NB: clinical associates are not eligible for dissertation supervision).

STUDENTS

As of September 2025, a total of 39 students are registered in the Program. All qualified applications are welcome and given serious consideration. As part of the university's vision and commitment to building a community of students, faculty, and staff in which diversity, equity and inclusion are fundamental values, we encourage applicants from underrepresented groups <https://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect/diversity-strategy/diversity-goals-objectives.html>. The Department of Psychology and Neuroscience values different perspectives and research in diverse populations. In addition, training in multicultural perspectives is required as part of the Clinical Program curriculum. Our Program is extremely competitive; usually a class of four to eight students is admitted each year. Class size depends on multiple factors, including supervisor availability and funding. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact potential supervisors from the list of departmental faculty, including eligible adjunct* and joint or cross* appointed faculty. (*Please see Co-Supervisor requirements, Page 16). Please note, clinical associates are not eligible for dissertation supervision.**

Students in our Program are active contributors to both research and clinical program planning and review. In terms of contributions to research, the novel nature of our comprehensive requirement (a series of three research or other professional projects, the first of which is supervised by the students' dissertation supervisor and the remaining two are supervised by other faculty members) greatly facilitates student involvement in research and related initiatives across the department. Students are credited appropriately for their research and professional contributions, and in most cases are listed as the first author on publications resulting from their work. We actively encourage and support our students in attending and presenting their work at academic meetings.

In terms of program planning and review, we host an informal session (referred to as "Program Pulse") on a monthly to bi-monthly basis to address student concerns and seek student feedback and input on program

decisions and issues. The session is hosted by the director of clinical training (DCT) and field placement coordinator (FPC). All students and core faculty in the Clinical Psychology PhD Program are invited to attend. The session is held as an unstructured and open forum, where students can bring forward comments, concerns, or compliments as appropriate. The DCT, FPC, and faculty answer questions and provide follow-up (in person or via e-mail) on any issues raised that cannot be addressed within the session. The Program and faculty find the input and feedback received from students in this forum to be very helpful in program planning and evaluation.

THE CURRICULUM

The Curriculum seeks to integrate research and clinical practice and to promote an understanding of the broad field of psychology. The following is a typical sequence of study:

COURSES:

Beginning in their first year, students take a structured set of courses designed to ensure appropriate depth and breadth of training in both the science and practice of psychology. Courses cover a range of topics, including child and adult psychopathology, assessment, and treatment, as well as general courses in professional ethics, research methods, and statistics.

DISSERTATION:

The doctoral dissertation is a major aspect of the student's research training. Students are admitted to work with specific faculty members; however, changes can be made during the Program. If a student is supervised by an adjunct faculty, a co-supervisor (see Page 16) must also be identified. Students supervised by adjunct or non-clinical departmental faculty are matched with a clinical faculty, in the capacity of clinical mentor (see Page 16). Dissertation committee members are selected from members of the department and suitable adjunct/cross appointed faculty and other individuals who can assist in the dissertation. As per FGS regulations, "All thesis candidates shall have one supervisor or two co-supervisors and at least two additional members." FGS requires that at least one of the two committee members is a member of the student's department and that 50% or more of the full committee must be 'regular members' of FGS. Adjunct faculty are not considered regular members of FGS.

Incoming clinical students should form a committee no later than February of their second year and must hold a meeting with that committee no later than the beginning of May in their second year. The Clinical Program committee will serve as the thesis committee for those students in their first year of the Clinical Program; written feedback associated with the annual progress evaluation will serve in place of the FGS form.

Note: Students are encouraged to form their dissertation committee early in their program, with the recognition that they may elect to change the composition of their committee, if necessary, as their project develops. Faculty supervisors are encouraged to discuss committee composition with students and to help guide the selection of appropriate committee members. Dissertation committee members may include comp supervisors. The dissertation must be officially approved during a dissertation committee meeting and the student must record this date on the Clinical Program annual report form. Data collection should be underway by the beginning of the third year. For more information about dissertation committees, please see the FGS Regulations.

COMPREHENSIVES:

Rather than a comprehensive exam, the department's comprehensive requirement is a series of two projects completed under the supervision of different faculty members. The comprehensive plan should be developed to ensure sufficient breadth of training in psychology.

The plan will comprise two comp projects in addition to the students' dissertation. One (of two) comps must be empirical in nature (i.e., includes all aspects of the scientific process) and the student must be involved in it

from conception of idea to dissemination of results (typically first comp). Each student's comprehensive plan is presented to and approved by the Clinical Program Committee at the (monthly) meeting. Some issues of particular relevance to students in the Clinical Program, as well as a summary of general issues relating to comprehensives, appear below. Students are also encouraged to consult the Comprehensive Guidelines for Clinical Psychology Students (Appendix C) for suggested timelines.

THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE:

The comprehensive project that is proposed early in the winter term of the first year in the Program (PSYO 5000) is considered the First Comprehensive. Generally, this project is conducted under the supervision of the dissertation supervisor and involves an empirical study involving original data collection. Students entering with Master's degrees complete their first comprehensive under the same conditions. The comprehensive examining committee for the first comprehensive comprises the dissertation supervisor(s), the DCT [or designate(s)], and two core clinical faculty members. The role of the committee is to evaluate quality and progress.

The first-year comprehensive project, including the written components and oral presentations and defense are important milestones in the student's completion of the degree. This project is a critical indicator of the student's research abilities. Student's performance throughout this process (written and oral) is evaluated by the examining committee, who determine whether they meet the required standards to continue in the program or not. Students must demonstrate a solid grasp of the theory/rationale, methods, statistics, and potential implications of their project.

Students will submit a **brief plan** for their first comprehensive project using the same comp form that is required when they submit their full comp plan (form available from the Graduate Program Administrator). This form requires a brief description of the project (approximately 1 page; include brief background, methods) as well as the specific objectives of the comp and expected endpoint(s). The plan should be signed by the dissertation supervisor and submitted in mid-October of first year (exact date to be announced in September), to be evaluated by the comprehensive examining committee.

A **written proposal** [(APA format) including Introduction, Methods, Expected Results, and Potential Implications, not exceeding ten (10) double spaced pages (not including references)] should be submitted to the Clinical Program administrative assistant, who will distribute to the comprehensive committee, at least two weeks prior to the presentation. This component is typically due at the end of the first term. A 2nd Reader, whose expertise is relevant to the student's project, will also review and provide feedback, which is submitted to the committee. The reader will be at arm's length from the student and supervisor (i.e., not a collaborator on the proposed project) and will ideally serve in this role for both the proposal and final version of the comp. The 2nd Reader is not a member of the examining committee. The Committee meets with the students in January of 1st year to help guide the process. For this meeting, an oral proposal of the comprehensive project is presented to the committee (15-minute presentation) and students answer questions about their proposal from the committee (15 minutes). All students who are presenting are expected to remain for the duration of all presentations. The committee must approve the written and the oral proposals for the student to continue with this project as their first year comprehensive.

The final version of the comprehensive project will be submitted in writing in early-May during the second year of the program. The **comprehensive defense** will occur approximately two weeks later (mid-May). If submitting in manuscript form, the title page should be altered to indicate it is the first comp and should contain just the student's name as author with supervisor(s) identified on a separate line. The bottom of the title page can contain the APA reference to the submitted paper as this acknowledges the contributions of the coauthors and allows the committee to see it has been submitted for publication. The comprehensive is examined orally (like a thesis defense) by the committee. The examination will usually be open to the public and will consist of a 10-minute oral presentation followed by questions. All students who are presenting are expected to remain for the duration of all presentations. The committee will recommend to the Director of Clinical Training a course of action with respect to student advancement in the Program. Following successful defense/completion of the first comprehensive, students must arrange to meet with both the dissertation supervision and comp chair together on an annual basis.

The Comprehensive Plan: Following completion of the first comprehensive, clinical students must meet jointly with their dissertation supervisor and comprehensive chair on an annual basis. One additional comprehensive project, approved by the CPC, must be completed. The remaining comprehensive is usually supervised by faculty other than the dissertation supervisor and may include up to one other dissertation committee member. The student selects the chair of the comprehensive committee, usually also the supervisor of this additional comprehensive project, who helps guide the student in the selection of comprehensives and the submission of a comprehensive plan. The plan must outline the comprehensive and the dissertation (to ensure sufficient breadth of training and to avoid too much overlap in content and/or methods) as well as the outcome for the completion of the comprehensive. The chair of the comprehensive committee is a faculty member who presents the plan for the comprehensive to the clinical faculty. The timing of this project is somewhat flexible, but it is generally advisable for students to have a plan presented for approval no later than December of Year 3.

The second comprehensive project would best be started early in the Fall or Winter of third year of the program. Care must be taken to craft a project that is significant enough to provide a valuable learning experience and not so extensive as to be a barrier to timely completion of the degree. Students should discuss this with both the individual supervisor of the project and with the chair of the comprehensive committee. The second comprehensive project often has a more limited scope than the first comprehensive project. The outcome of the second project depends on the type of project and the stage/aspect of the scientific process the student is working on. Students are encouraged to write-up the results of their comp projects for publication, but this does not need to be the endpoint for all comprehensive projects. Several example outcomes are provided in the Comprehensive Guidelines for Clinical Psychology Students (Appendix C). Comprehensives must be separate from the dissertation. They are designed to represent a breadth of experience to develop skills and knowledge in areas unrelated to the dissertation. A listing of possible comprehensives is compiled and distributed on an annual basis. A binder with examples of approved comprehensive plans is available in the Clinical Administrative Assistant's office. Students should refer to the Comprehensive Guidelines for Clinical Psychology Students for further details.

NB: Requests for an exemption from one comprehensive project may be made from clinical students who are admitted with an empirical Master's following the successful presentation of the first clinical comprehensive. All such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will require the approval of the DCT and the dissertation supervisor. Approvals will be tentative until the successful completion of the first comprehensive.

PRACTICA OR FIELD PLACEMENTS

Practica or Field Placements

(detailed information is contained in the Practicum Guidelines): It is expected that students complete a total of approximately 1000 practicum hours during their time in the program. Students are encouraged to review the policy regarding residency readiness developed by the Canadian Council of Professional Psychology Programs (CCPPP) for additional guidance regarding appropriate numbers and types of practicum hours. The Program discourages excessive practicum hours as this generally slows progress and does not increase competitiveness for residency. For all external practica, students must obtain the approval of the field placement coordinator (FPC) AND the dissertation supervisor for each practicum placement. The dissertation supervisor's approval is intended as a mechanism to ensure that the student is on track in all areas of their program. A student may appeal his or her supervisor's decision to deny permission to progress with additional practicum hours through the director of clinical training (or designate). Practica are planned in conjunction with the FPC to ensure that a broad range of experience covering various forms of clinical practice are undertaken. All clinical students must register for PSYO 8333.06 (each term), each year they are in the Program prior to residency as this is the course through which practicum hours are tracked. As well, registration in this course will allow for students to be covered for liability insurance reasons. There will be no regularly scheduled classes for this course, but rather students may be asked to meet for specific reasons, which would be communicated to the students in advance of the required meeting dates. Assuming all course requirements are

met for PSYO 8333.06, a grade of PASS will be recorded for each student prior to residency. Prior to receiving a PASS, the student will be assigned a grade of IP (In Progress).

Payment for Practicum

Under some circumstances, students may be provided with the opportunity to be paid for the work they are completing at a practicum. However, it is important to note that this is not typical, and most practica will be unpaid, and so payment should not be expected.

TEACHING ASSISTANT (TA) REQUIREMENT:

All Clinical Psychology PhD students are required to complete two TAships (up to 10 hrs/week for a total of 130 hours). Students will complete one TAship in their second year and one in their third year. Students with advanced standing also complete two TAships, unless they receive exemption for a maximum of one TAship (see Appendix B). All students, regardless of advanced standing, must enroll in PSYO 7100 (Seminar in Teaching Effectiveness) during their second year of the Program, which involves a concurrent mandatory teaching assistant experience in PSYO 2000/NESC 2007.

Students may also apply for additional TA/CUPE Marker positions as they become available, but note the following rules:

- 1) First year clinical students are not permitted to do TA/CUPE Marker positions.
- 2) A second year and beyond clinical student wanting to do more than one TA/CUPE Marker position in an academic year *must* have approval from their supervisor and the Director of Clinical Training.
- 3) Any clinical student hired to teach a course as a Part-Time Academic (PTA) *must* have approval from their supervisor and the Director of Clinical Training.
- 4) Students receiving FGS funding must not take on any TA/CUPE Marker/PTA positions that total more than an average of 16 hours per week (see Item 5.7.1 of the FGS Handbook).

RESIDENCY:

The final year of the Clinical Psychology PhD Program is a full year residency. All course work must be completed prior to beginning the residency. Comprehensives must be completed by the time of ranking residencies. Data collection for the dissertation must be completed before the beginning of the residency. In order to be granted permission by the DCT (or designate) to proceed with residency application, all (two) comprehensives need to be completed and the following items **MUST** be submitted to the DCT (or designate) by mid-September or earlier of the year prior to residency:

- 1) statement and outline [supported in writing (email) by the dissertation supervisor(s)] of status of dissertation.
- 2) statement from the supervisor(s) indicating:
 - a) Clinical Psychology PhD Program requirements completed and those remaining with timelines for their completion, and
 - b) indication of the supervisor's support of residency application.

NB: In order to apply to the DCT (or designate) to gain approval to apply for residency, one of two comprehensives must be completed, and course work should all be completed by the end of the academic year. The DCT (or designate) will not give approval unless it is **CERTAIN** that the comprehensives are (will be) complete by the time of ranking residencies. A statement to this effect from the comprehensive supervisor(s) is required.

- 3) a copy of student's CV
- 4) list of sites to which the student is planning to apply
- 5) statement of the student's residency goals and interests

Once the above documentation is received, a decision will be made regarding eligibility to apply for residency. If eligible, the DCT (or designate) will incorporate this information to personalize the APPIC Verification of Readiness. The verifications will be completed within one month of receipt of all relevant documentation.

Please note that students applying for residency are *strongly encouraged* to apply to a minimum of six residency sites and rank a minimum of four sites where they would be willing to attend, following their interviews. This guideline was developed to ensure that students have applied and ranked a sufficient number of residency sites to maximize match chances. APPIC data indicates that ranking a total of eleven residency sites is the ideal number. The residency must be approved by the DCT (or designate) and must follow the guidelines for residencies outlined by the Accreditation Standards of the Canadian Psychological Association.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

Although not a formal Clinical Psychology PhD Program requirement per se, all students in their residency years are expected to serve as student representatives on the various departmental committees. For example, up to two student representatives sit on the Clinical Program committee (CPC) and share one vote. They take the lead in seeking clinical student feedback and input on issues raised at CPC meetings. One of our program sub-committees, the clinical community recognition & appreciation (CCRA), is made up exclusively of students; however, the committee receives guidance and support from the director of clinical training/field placement coordinator and Clinical Psychology PhD Program admin assistant, as needed. Student contributions to our committees are greatly appreciated and student input is sought whenever possible. Serving on committees is a valuable learning experience for students and ensures that student perspectives are available.

STUDENT PROGRESS

THE EVALUATION OF STUDENTS:

The quality of the student's academic, clinical and research work is evaluated in accordance with current practices in the department. Students are provided with ongoing and comprehensive evaluations throughout their time in the Clinical Psychology PhD Program. The students take the equivalent of 96 credit hours and receive a combination of qualitative and quantitative feedback from their course instructors. In regard to comprehensives, students receive supportive feedback on their proposal and formal feedback on their final submission of their first comprehensive from the DCT (or designate(s)), in addition to the feedback the student receives from their comprehensive supervisor. The second comprehensive is evaluated by the comprehensive supervisor. The chair of the student's comprehensive committee monitors the student's progress through their second comprehensive project.

Students' competence for professional practice is also carefully monitored via review of evaluations completed by clinical supervisors. Although our Clinical Psychology PhD Program supports students in their decision to delay beginning practica until after their second year of study, many students start in the summer after their first year. Course work in the first year involves mastery of specific assessment skills and imparting knowledge of ethics related to testing. Given that the primary clinical focus in the first year is on assessment, it is necessary that practica in the summer after the first year are assessment-focused, rather than treatment-focused.

In order to provide an overall evaluation of the student's academic, research and applied work, as well as to ensure that the student has benefited from ongoing evaluation, the Clinical Program committee prepares an Annual Student Evaluation at the end of each academic year (typically in May). Each year, the student updates the web-based form, which includes noting progress in terms of courses, practica, and research as well as reviewing how they accomplished their goals from the previous year and setting goals for the upcoming academic year. Once the form is updated, the student's dissertation supervisor as well as the FPC provide qualitative feedback. The CPC reviews the information provided by the student, supervisor, and FPC during a meeting that is open to all CPC members (excluding the student representatives). Typically, the meeting consists of the director of clinical training (or designate), graduate program coordinator and field placement coordinator as well as the student's dissertation supervisor. The information on the web-based form is reviewed and qualitative feedback is provided by CPC. This feedback consists of written, individual feedback on each student's performance, highlighting the student's successes as well as any constructive feedback or concerns and is incorporated in the FGS annual report form.

At the residency level, it is the responsibility of the clinical supervisors and the director of training at the host residency institution to evaluate the competence and professional skills of the intern. The residency settings are required to inform the director of clinical training should any concerns regarding competence or ethical practice arise in their mid-year and year-end evaluations. In addition, a statement indicating successful or non-successful completion of the residency requirements is mandatory at the end of the residency.

PROFESSIONAL SUITABILITY FOR THE PRACTICE OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

The CPC may require a student to withdraw from the Clinical Psychology PhD Program on the grounds of unsuitability. Students in the Clinical Psychology PhD Program are required to abide by the Code of Ethics published by the Canadian Psychological Association and may be dismissed or suspended from the Clinical Psychology PhD Program for serious violations of this Code. Students may also be asked to suspend participation in the Clinical Psychology PhD Program if there is evidence of alcohol or drug abuse or other conditions that may compromise the student's ability to adhere to standards of practice. Ongoing concerns about the development of core competencies and failure to complete remediation plans are also potential reasons for a professional suitability review. Evidence of lack of professional suitability to practice clinical psychology will be brought to an ad hoc sub-committee of the Clinical Program Committee/Department. This committee will then make a recommendation to the Clinical Program Committee who will make a judgment and convey that judgment to the department chair for action. (Please refer to the Procedures for Review of Professional Suitability, Appendix A).

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

Ensuring students have adequate financial support, particularly in the first few years in the Program, is a priority in helping students focus their attention on meeting their training and professional goals. Although students are expected to apply for all sources of external support for which they are eligible, the department provides internal funding per year for each of the first five years (four years for students entering with a masters degree) for those students who are not successful in obtaining external awards.

The **current base level of Dalhousie Graduate Funding (DGF) support** is \$29,200 for first year Masters students, \$21,200 for 2nd year Master's students, and \$26,000 for PhD students.

Note that students who receive external support in an amount that is less than the minimum base DGF will be topped up by DGF funds to bring their scholarship level up to the minimum guaranteed level and, in some cases, beyond this level.

When a student receives an external scholarship greater than \$1000 but less than the department minimum, then \$1000 internal funds will be added to the external scholarship.

All clinical students are required to serve as a teaching assistant (TA) in the undergraduate program in Year 2 and Year 3 of their program (unless those with advanced placement receive an exemption for one). The typical TA commitment can range from 130 hours to 65 hours in one term, with a salary range of \$3907 to \$1953 [as per the CUPE Collective Agreement] for their work in this capacity.

Our students have been very successful in securing external funding. In addition to conference travel awards available to all students from the Faculty of Graduate Studies and other related institutions (e.g., IWK Health Centre), many supervisors provide funding from their grants for their students to attend such meetings.

In addition to **Financial Support** (above), there are many other resources available to students and are described in detail in the Department of Psychology & Neuroscience Graduate Student Handbook (available from the Graduate Secretary) and the [Faculty of Graduate Studies Regulations](https://academiccalendar.dal.ca/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=136&chapterid=9319&loaduseredits=False)
<https://academiccalendar.dal.ca/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=136&chapterid=9319&loaduseredits=False>

(Additional resources specific to Clinical Psychology PhD students are highlighted below.)

Please note that Standard III.F. of the **Canadian Psychological Association Accreditation Standards for Doctoral and Residency Programs in Professional Psychology**, 6th Revision, 2023, Page 12 stipulates that ***Students do not work more than an average of 20 hours per week in employment outside of the program. These hours do not include teaching and research assistantships or other program-sanctioned work or clinical experiences.*** However, as per the **Department of Psychology & Neuroscience Graduate Student Handbook**, following the FGS guidelines, the maximum allowable number of hours of work outside the Program is 16 hours.

TEST LIBRARY:

The Clinical Psychology PhD Program maintains a well-stocked test library and accompanying materials, including a laptop and a number of scoring programs. These items are located in an office anterior to the Clinical Psychology PhD Program administrative assistant's office and can be signed out during office hours. A list of these items is disseminated electronically as updated. We welcome suggestions from students and faculty regarding items to add to this collection.

CLINICAL WORKSHOPS:

In response to student interest, the Clinical Psychology PhD Program and the Centre for Psychological Health aims to arrange one or two clinical workshops to be held each year. These workshops are intended to have an applied focus and provide a clinical training opportunity to complement and supplement material taught in courses.

- 2006-2007: 1) Treating Disruptive Behaviour in Children and 2) Assessment and Management of Traumatic Brain Injury
- 2007/2008: 1) Sleep in Children and Adults, and 2) Treating Sexual Dysfunction
- 2008/2009: Childhood Sexual Abuse
- 2009/2010: Motivational Interviewing
- 2010/2011: 1) suicide assessment and intervention and 2) work-life balance organized by Saint Mary's University. In addition, our students were invited to attend a workshop on DBT offered in conjunction with the Department of Psychiatry
- 2011-2012: 1) Group Therapy in Health Psychology Populations and 2) Psychological intervention when the family is the focus for change
- 2012-2013: 1) Clinical Supervision and 2) Suicide Risk Assessment
- 2013-2014: Assessment and Treatment of Youth at Ultra High Risk of Psychosis
- 2014-2015: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- 2015-2016: 1) Learning Disabilities (led by IWK and co-sponsored by Mount St. Vincent University), and 2) motivational interviewing
- 2016-2017: Emotional Focused Therapy (EFT)
- 2017-2018: An Introductory Workshop on Short-Term Psychodynamic Psychotherapy
- 2018-2019: Let's Get Dialectical: Foundational Skills of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy
- 2020-2021:

Assessment and Evidence-Based Treatment of PTSD

- 2021-2022: Legal Rights, Supports, and Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Implications and Suggestions for Psychologists
- 2023-2024: 1) Indigenous Adapted CBT for Beginners; 2) Psychological Assessment with Indigenous Peoples: A Strength-Based Approach for Children, Youth and Adults; 3) Navigating Linguistic Dynamics when Communicating with Limited Language Proficiency (LLP) Clients; 4) Working with Interpreters in a Therapy Setting

PROGRAM SUPPORT:

The director of clinical training (or designate) and FPC meet with students once monthly or bimonthly (at a session called “Program Pulse”) in order to discuss any program issues, provide information requested by the students, and communicate important program decisions to students. The DCT (or designate) is always available to students to discuss any issues. The DCT (or designate) is available by appointment or may have set office hours once per week so that students can discuss any issues individually or in small groups. The field placement coordinator is also available by appointment to meet with the students to help solve any problems related to the students’ applied experiences.

DEPARTMENT AND UNIVERSITY SUPPORT:

The departmental ombud, selected by the students, is available to assist students with any individual difficulties they experience with academic issues or other difficulties that have bearing on their involvement in the program. There is also a formal process for addressing concerns which is referred to in the Departmental Graduate Student Handbook (Section III.D) and Section 12 of the FGS Regulations. The ombud is available to help students develop a plan for resolution before, and/or during, going through any formal processes. Students considering a supervisory change should consult with the DCT (or designate) and potentially also the departmental ombud.”

At the university level, students also have access to the [Dalhousie Ombudsperson](#), who can assist with student/supervisor or student/instructor relationships, support through an appeal process, clarification of university regulations, and situations of abuse of power.

OTHER IMPORTANT POLICIES

CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK AND OTHER SCREENING PROCEDURES:

The Clinical Psychology PhD Program in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience at Dalhousie University does not require a criminal records check or other screening procedures (e.g., child abuse registry check) as a condition of admission into its program. However, students should be aware that such record checks or other screening procedures are required by facilities outside the university in which students complete practica and residency placements, as well as for some research activities. Successful completion of these activities is necessary for completion of the Clinical Psychology PhD Program. It is the student’s responsibility to have such procedures completed PRIOR TO REGISTERING IN PSYO 6107.03, Assessment Practicum: Child AND PSYO 6108, Assessment Practicum: Adult, i.e., IN THE FALL OF FIRST YEAR. The student is also responsible to pay all associated application fees.

Training facilities may refuse to accept students on the basis of information contained in the record check or other screening procedure(s). If the student is unable to complete a requirement due to a failure to meet the record check or screening requirements of the facility, or if the student is refused access to the facility on the basis of the information provided, the student may fail the course/clinical experience, and as a result may not be eligible for progression or graduation, i.e. may be dismissed from the Clinical Psychology PhD Program. Note that respective facility requirements may change from time to time and are beyond the control of the university.

Students should also be aware that many of the regulatory bodies for psychology require a satisfactory record check as a condition of professional licensure. In Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners (NSBEP) accepts graduation from a CPA accredited program as satisfactory to be placed on the Candidate Register. For more information, please review the documentation under the link entitled "Supervision Forms and Process" on <http://www.nsbep.org/>. For information about Criminal Records Check and Child Abuse Registry Check, please consult the field placement coordinator, the practicum manual, or see the following links: <http://www.halifax.ca/police/CriminalRecordCheck.php> and <http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/abuse/ChildAbuseRegister.html>

OUT-OF-PROVINCE PLACEMENT:

Students interested in pursuing out-of-province practica (or comprehensives) must seek permission from their supervisor and DCT (or designate). Since long-distance practica pose some administrative and logistical issues, permission from the field placement coordinator is also required.

CO-SUPERVISOR:

Supervisors external (i.e., adjunct, cross-appointed) to the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience are required to have a co-supervisor until a record of supervision within the clinical psychology program is established. The co-supervisor must have an established track record of supervision within our program and meet the FGS requirements for co-supervision. For more information about co-supervisory requirements see: <https://academiccalendar.dal.ca/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=106&chapterid=6499&topicgroupid=28468&loaduseredits=False>.

CLINICAL MENTOR:

Students supervised by adjunct, cross-appointed, or non-clinical departmental faculty are matched with a clinical faculty, in the capacity of clinical mentor. The clinical mentor is intended to supplement advice and guidance specifically on clinical program information and related issues, e.g., clinical meetings/ organizations, practicum, residency, etc. The clinical mentor is not a required or official appointment and sought out as often as mutually agreeable during the student's program.

SPACE:

The department provides office space for all graduate students, but the responsibility for providing the space and equipment needed to complete the student's research falls to the dissertation supervisor.

EQUALITY:

The Clinical Psychology PhD Program endorses Dalhousie University's policies on human rights. We actively oppose sexual harassment and discrimination based on race, gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or age. For information about these policies, please search www.dal.ca.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS AND STUDENT APPEALS:

Students are directed to acquaint themselves with the academic regulations contained in the latest editions of the Graduate Calendar (<https://academiccalendar.dal.ca/~Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=82&topicgroupid=19618>) and both the Department of Psychology & Neuroscience *Graduate Student Handbook* (available from the Graduate Secretary) and Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) Regulations (<https://academiccalendar.dal.ca/~Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=82&topicgroupid=19618>). Specific information on student appeals can be found under Section VII.B. in the Departmental Graduate Handbook and Section XII in the FGS Regulations. Appeals process for practicum is contained in the Clinical Program Practicum Handbook.

ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS

(please see Student Records Management Guidelines Clinical Psychology PhD Program available from the program admin)

Access to student records shall be restricted except for:

- the student in question,
- the departmental chair,
- those authorized by these guidelines,
- the administrative assistants of those authorized by these guidelines, but only at the direction of those authorized, or
- as required by law, no other individual may access Student Records unless the student provides their express written consent.
- students may access any records containing their personal information. Clinical psychology PhD students seeking to access their records should make a request in writing to the director of clinical training. Students are provided information regarding access to their records in the Graduate Student Handbook and the Clinical Program Information Booklet. Students may access their practicum files at any time by contacting the field placement coordinator.

VACATION/PLANNED ABSENCES

It is essential that before booking time away (e.g., vacation, conference attendance), the student consults and obtains approval from whomever they are working with at the time. This includes the dissertation supervisor, practicum supervisor, and instructors of courses the student is enrolled in. Reading weeks (both Fall and Winter) are not vacation from the program. These are scheduled course breaks to allow time to catch up on one's workload, but research and practicum continue uninterrupted. In addition, a request to change from in-person to virtual attendance should always be communicated well in advance to supervisors, except in unavoidable circumstances (e.g., sudden illness). Students are expected to attend classes in-person unless the Instructor says otherwise.

PROGRAM EVENTS & AWARDS

CLINICAL COMMUNITY RECOGNITION & APPRECIATION (CCRA) RECEPTION:

This event is held annually in honour of the many members of the clinical psychology community for their invaluable contributions to the training of the Clinical Psychology PhD Program students, as well as their contribution to the ongoing development of the Program. The organization of this event is overseen by a committee of students, with assistance from the Clinical Program administrative assistant and a faculty member.

THE CLINICAL STUDENT CITIZENSHIP AWARD

(aka Beatrice Award) is awarded annually to the graduate student in the Clinical Psychology PhD Program who is deemed to have been the "best citizen" and the most positively helpful or supportive to fellow students (graduate or undergraduate) during their time in the Program. The award will be decided by a committee of students, Program Admin, and the DCT (or designate). This award is made possible through the generous donation by Dr. Patrick J. McGrath, who established the Clinical PhD Program in his position as inaugural Coordinator (Director of Clinical Training) from 1989 to 1998 and served again from 2002 to 2004.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM

The Clinical Program is governed by the Clinical Program Committee (CPC). Major policies about student admissions to the Clinical Psychology PhD Program, student progress, and curriculum are developed by the

Clinical Program committee, and are brought to departmental meetings, through the graduate program committee, for final approval. Specific duties of the CPC are as follows:

- to make recommendations to the graduate program committee of the Department on student admissions and funding
- to arrange for those contributions to the Clinical Program from psychologists and agencies external to the Department
- to recommend to the Department major changes in the Clinical Program
- to appoint advisors and thesis supervisors for clinical students
- to provide to all clinical students a written (web) evaluation of their work at the end of each academic year

The CPC comprises:

- director of clinical training (DCT)
- associate director of clinical training (if appointed)
- chair of the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience or designate
- graduate program coordinator or designate
- all core clinical faculty
- up to two clinical graduate student(s) (who share one vote)

YEAR 1	
Fall Term	
Course #	Course Title
5000.06	Research Assignment (First Comprehensive)
6103.03	Historical & Contemporary Perspectives & Practical Applications on Adult Assessment (short title: Psychological Assessment: Adult)
6104.03	Psychopathology: A Lifespan Perspective (short title: Psychopathology: Lifespan)
6105.03	Ethics and Professional Decision Making
6106.03	Foundational Practice Skills in Clinical Psychology
8011.03	Colloquium
8333.06	Field Placement
9530.00	PhD Thesis
Winter Term	
Course #	Course Title
5000.06	Research Assignment (First Comprehensive)
6001.03	Statistics and Design
6102.03	Historical & Contemporary Perspectives & Practical Applications on Child Assessment (short title: Psychological Assessment: Child)
6108.03	Mental Health and Psychoeducational Assessment Practicum: Adult (short title: Assessment Practicum: Adult)
8011.03	Colloquium
8333.06	Field Placement
9530.00	PhD Thesis
Spring/Summer Term	
Course #	Course Title
6107.03	Mental Health and Psychoeducational Assessment Practicum: Child (short title: Assessment Practicum: Child)

YEAR 2	
Fall Term	
Course #	Course Title
6003.03	Multivariate Statistics
6204.03	Cognitive-Affective & Behavioural Bases of Intervention: A Lifespan Perspective (short title: Intervention: Lifespan)
8012.03	Colloquium
8333.06	Field Placement
9530.00	PhD Thesis
<i>Comprehensive Project II²</i> Second comprehensive should be completed in Year 2	
XXXX.03 ²	Teaching Assistantship
Winter Term	
Course #	Course Title
6209.03	Research Seminar
6213.03	Culture and Identity: Diversity Issues in Clinical Psychology (short title: Diversity)
6214.03	Professional Practice in Intervention (short title: Prof Pract in Intervention)
7100.03	Seminar in Teaching Effectiveness
8012.03	Colloquium
8333.06	Field Placement
9530.00	PhD Thesis
<i>Comprehensive Project II²</i> Second comprehensive should be completed in Year 2	
XXXX.03 ²	Teaching Assistantship
pp. 19 & 20 are examples of the program structure – courses may be offered in alternate terms in the respective year. Please always consult the current timetable.	

YEAR 3	
Fall Term	
Course #	Course Title
6208.03 ^{1 & 3}	Clinical Neuropsychology
<i>or</i>	
6804.03 ^{1 & 3}	Topics in Neuropsychology
6301.03	Advanced Clinical Intervention : Child ³
6304.06	Clinical Rounds/Case Conference
XXXX.03 ⁴	Elective Seminar
8013.03	Colloquium
8333.06	Field Placement
9530.00	PhD Thesis
XXXX.03 ²	Teaching Assistantship
Winter Term	
Course #	Course Title
6302.03	Advanced Clinical Intervention : Adult ³
6303.03	Advanced Clinical Practice Skills in Supervision, Consultation & Program Evaluation (short title: Adv Clin Practice Skills)
6304.06	Clinical Rounds/Case Conference
XXXX.03 ⁴	Elective Seminar
8013.03	Colloquium
8333.06	Field Placement
9530.00	PhD Thesis
Supervision Practicum ²	
XXXX.03 ²	Teaching Assistantship

YEAR 4	
Fall Term	
Course #	Course Title
XXXX.03 ⁴	Elective Seminar
8333.06	Field Placement
9530.00	PhD Thesis
Winter Term	
Course #	Course Title
XXXX.03 ⁴	Elective Seminar
8333.06	Field Placement
9530.00	PhD Thesis
YEAR 5	
8333.06	Field Placement
9100.00	Pre-Doctoral Internship
9530.00	PhD Thesis

¹ In consultation with supervisor(s) and DCT (or designate), P6208, Neuropsychology may be taken in Year 1 (if offered that year), especially if the student is planning to start a neuropsychology comprehensive or a field placement in a clinical neuropsychology setting in Year 1 or early in Year 2 of the Program. For important additional information, please also see ³ below and PSYO 6804 in *Course Descriptions* under Year 3.

² **Requirements** for which the student will not register, i.e. Teaching Assistantship, Supervision Practicum (in-house supervision practicum should be completed in Year 3 or 4 after completion of PSYO 6303), Comprehensives II.

³ Students are required to take **ONE** of either of these two (either PSYO 6301 or PSYO 6302 and either PSYO 6208 or PSYO 6804) classes, depending on their area of specialization. These courses are likely to be offered every other or alternating year. Students may choose to take both PSYO 6301 and PSYO 6302 and may count the other as the one required elective or take advantage of auditing the course.

⁴ **Elective** - for a total program requirement of **one** .03 credit hour course. Elective should be selected based on individual career goals and gaps in training. In consultation with the DCT (or designate) and supervisor(s), an elective may be taken in other departments within or outside Dalhousie University. Additional electives may be taken/audited with permission by the supervisor(s) and DCT (or designate).

NB: If a student has not completed all of the requirements for the PhD within five years, the Faculty of Graduate Studies may grant a 1-year extension at the request of the Department. However, the Department may request no more than three such extensions on behalf of the student, and will do so only if there is evidence of satisfactory progress.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

YEAR 1

5000.06 - Research Assignment

Students become actively involved in ongoing research in the laboratory of a faculty supervisor. In addition to research training, this class aims to improve the student's oral presentations and scientific writing. A final report (e.g. in the form of Journal article) is required. (The first year project serves as Comprehensive No. 1) (see Page 8 and GS Handbook).

6001.03 - Statistics and Design

This class will survey some common parametric statistical procedures in psychology, including analysis of variance and covariance. Major emphasis is placed on the general linear model and how best to apply the model as a function of the type of data, experimental design, and hypothesis under investigation. Some knowledge of basic statistics is assumed.

6003.03 - Multivariate Statistics

This class will cover a variety of topics in multivariate statistics, such as factor analysis, regression, multivariate analysis of variance and covariance, and discriminant function analysis. Some topics in categorical data analysis may also be covered, such as multiway frequency analysis and logic models.

6102.03 - Historical & Contemporary Perspectives & Practical Applications on Child Assessment

This class addresses the theoretical and applied foundations of psychological measurement as it relates to child assessment. Historical, theoretical and psychometric issues are addressed to provide the students with a sound knowledge base in issues related to test development. The second part of the class emphasizes the development of skills in assessment of cognitive abilities, personality, behaviour and emotional function of children. Students learn to administer, score and interpret performance on a variety of assessment instruments for children. Report writing skills are developed through case studies.

6103.03 - Historical & Contemporary Perspectives & Practical Applications on Adult Assessment

This class addresses the theoretical and applied foundations of psychological measurement as it relates to adult assessment. Historical, theoretical and psychometric issues are addressed to provide the students with a sound knowledge base in issues related to test development. The second part of the class emphasizes the development of skills in assessment of cognitive abilities, personality, behaviour and emotional functioning of adults. Students learn to administer, score and interpret performance on a variety of assessment instruments for adults. Report writing skills are developed through case studies.

6104.03 – Psychopathology: A Lifespan Perspective

This class is an overview of psychopathology from a lifespan perspective. The objective is to provide knowledge of diagnostic criteria, and evidence on etiology and treatment of the major mental health disorders. Historical, social, cultural, and contextual aspects of psychopathology are examined and current research in the field is highlighted.

6105.03 - Ethics and Professional Decision Making

This class covers ethical and professional issues arising in various fields of Psychology, including clinical practice and research. Students will be encouraged to develop a methodology for appraising their ethical and professional behaviour through an understanding of such issues as the legal regulation of psychology, codes of ethics and professional standards, and malpractice. The class will introduce students to the concepts of quality and risk, and explore the relationship between psychology and other professions in multi-disciplinary contexts. The class will also examine the relation between psychology standards and standards established by organizations in which psychologists work, such as health facility accreditation.

6106.03 - Foundational Practice Skills for Clinical Psychology

This class provides an introduction to foundational clinical skills necessary for intervention and assessment practice with clients. Students will learn clinical interviewing techniques and their application with clients across the lifespan. Students will learn how to select techniques and structure interviews to meet specific assessment and intervention goals, keeping with the referral question and the client's

developmental status. Students will also become familiar with professional standards of practice, core competencies, and key ethical issues related to clinical practice as a preparation for practicum training.

6107.03 - Mental Health and Psychoeducational Assessment Practicum: Child

This class will provide students with the opportunity to gain applied experience in conducting psychoeducational and mental health assessments with children. Students will be able to apply the skills learned in PSYO 6102 Child Assessment, while conducting one to two assessments. Students will attend class as well as practicum to complete one to two psychological assessments. Students will receive course credit for taking PSYO 6107 as well as accumulate practicum hours to a maximum of 80 hours.

6108.03 - Mental Health and Psychoeducational Assessment Practicum: Adult

This class will provide students with the opportunity to gain applied experience in conducting psychoeducational and mental health assessments with adults. Students will be able to apply the skills learned in PSYO 6103 Adult Assessment, while conducting one to two assessments. Students will attend class as well as practicum to complete one to two psychological assessments. Students will receive course credit for taking PSYO 6108 as well as accumulate practicum hours to a maximum of 80 hours.

8011.03 – Psychology & Neuroscience Colloquium Masters – whole year

Students are required to go to the Colloquium Series.

8333.06 - Field Placement

Students are assigned to field placements in co-operating institutions where the student will spend one day per week (or equivalent). Placements are individually arranged to provide the student with experience in a variety of clinical environments. Field placements are coordinated and monitored by the Field Placement Coordinator.

NOTES: Credit can be given for this course only when the student has completed the course requirements -- students must register in this course until final grade is provided. Students are expected to register in this course each term, receiving a grade of IP until all course requirements are completed.

9530.00 - PhD Thesis

Students are expected to be involved in research from the onset of the program, culminating in their PhD dissertation. Students are required to submit a proposal for dissertation research to their Thesis Supervisor, Thesis Committee, and the director of clinical training. In the first two years of the program, students are expected to plan their dissertation research and conduct appropriate literature reviews. It is expected that by the beginning of the third year, students will have begun data collection and will have selected a thesis committee.

YEAR 2

6204.03 - Cognitive-Affective & Behavioural Bases of Intervention: A Lifespan Perspective

This class is an overview of major classes and modes of psychotherapy from a lifespan perspective. The objective is to provide knowledge of the history, development, current research findings, and practical considerations for implementing psychological interventions. Skills and knowledge for evaluating research evidence for specific treatments will be highlighted.

6209.03 - Research Seminar

This class focuses on theoretical and substantive aspects of research design. Topics include reliability and validity of measurement, correlational, quasi-experimental, and experimental designs, measurement redundancy, and power analysis. Students present on selected topics, as well as present on design issues related to their dissertation.

6213.03 – Culture and Identity: Diversity Issues in Clinical Psychology

This course is an introduction to the interrelated concepts of culture and identity as they intersect in clinical psychology. It is intended to promote an appreciation of the impact of diverse and cultural influences on who we understand ourselves and others to be. This class will serve as an initial step towards developing cultural competence.

6214.03 – Professional Practice in Intervention

This class will provide students with the opportunity to gain applied experience in conducting psychological interventions. Students will be able to apply the skills learned in PSYO 6204 Intervention Lifespan. Students will attend class as well as practicum to complete intervention with one client or group. Students will receive course credit for taking PSYO 6214 as well as accumulate practicum hours to a maximum of 80 hours.

7100.03 - Seminar in Teaching Effectiveness

Students currently engaged as Teaching Assistants in PSYO 2000.03 and NESC 2007.03 must concurrently enroll in this class, which has two components: 1) a weekly meeting in which all students meet to discuss general and specific issues related to class planning, assessment of student performance and dealing with problems; 2) actual teaching experience in class for 2 hours/week. Teaching performance is intermittently observed and feedback provided on an individual basis.

8012.03 – Psychology & Neuroscience Colloquium PhD Year 1 – whole year

Students are required to go to the Colloquium Series.

8333.06 - Field Placement

(see Year 1)

9530.00 - PhD Thesis (see Year 1)

Comprehensive Project II

During the course of the graduate program, students are required to complete one additional comprehensive project. Clinical students are encouraged to work with both clinical and non-clinical faculty on their comprehensive projects. The student and the comprehensive supervisor are expected to reach agreement on the specific goals of a comprehensive project. Students are free to choose from a wide range of topics constrained by the availability of a suitable supervisor, and by provision of minimal overlap with their dissertation topic. Each student is assigned a comprehensive project chairperson who oversees progress toward comprehensive completion. When all projects have been completed, the comprehensive project chairperson informs the Clinical Program Committee.

XXXX.03 - Teaching Assistantship

All clinical students will complete two TAships (unless exempted from one TAship as outlined in Appendix B). Students will work as teaching

assistants for one term of designated undergraduate courses. Teaching assistantships will involve a maximum of 10 hours per week.

YEAR 3

6208.03 - Clinical Neuropsychology

This course emphasizes the development of a knowledge base and applied skills in clinical neuropsychology. Topics include functional neuroanatomy, neurological exam, neuroimaging, process of neuropsychological assessment and differential diagnosis, and introduction to common neurological disorders. The course will involve a combination of instructor- and student-led lectures and discussions, guided readings, observation of clinical cases, and hands-on practice.

(See PSYO 6804 for additional important information).

PSYO 6804 - Topics in Neuropsychology

These seminars will vary from term to term and will focus on brain-behaviour relationships. Topics may include: neuropsychological assessment, functional neuroanatomy, neurological, psychiatric and medical neuropsychology, cognitive rehabilitation, psychopharmacology, and other related topics.

NB: Beginning 2019/2020, PSYO 6804: Topics in Neuropsychology (cross-listed with an undergraduate honours course) will be offered: This course will meet the foundational knowledge requirement of the biological bases of behaviour and will be offered annually, or as determined by the Program. This course will be a required course (i.e., not an elective) for all clinical psychology students, OR the student chooses PSYO 6208. PSYO 6804 is typically taken in Year 3. PSYO 6208, Clinical Neuropsychology is an advanced skills course in clinical neuropsychology, to be offered in alternate years, or as determined by the Program.

6301.03 - Advanced Clinical Intervention : Child

This class focuses on a wide range of theoretical and applied aspects of child intervention. The class involves instruction in case conceptualization, treatment planning, and treatment evaluation. Students may choose to take this class or PSYO 6302.03, Advanced Clinical Intervention: Adult, based on their specialization, i.e., only one of either PSYO 6301.03 OR PSYO 6302.03 must be taken. Students may choose to take both classes, however, not in lieu of another core class (except elective).

6302.03 - Advanced Clinical Intervention: Adult

This course is the adult equivalent of 6301.03; the emphasis is on Adult Advanced Clinical Intervention. Students may choose to take this class or PSYO 6301.03, Advanced Clinical Intervention: Child, based on their specialization, i.e. only one of either PSYO 6301.03 OR PSYO 6302.03 must be taken. Students may choose to take both classes, however, not in lieu of another core class (except elective).

6303.03 - Advanced Clinical Practice Skills in Supervision, Consultation & Program Evaluation

Clinical supervision, consultation, and program development and evaluation constitute three critically important skill areas for clinical psychologists. This course will provide students with hands-on experience in supervision as well as theoretical and practical knowledge in consultation and program development and evaluation.

6304.06 - Clinical Rounds/Case Conference

All students are expected to attend clinical rounds and presentations in various clinical settings in the community. Students are also expected to attend clinical case conferences that will be held on a monthly basis through the Fall and Winter terms. Clinical psychologists from the community and senior students are invited to present cases from their clinical practice. The aim of this class is to familiarize students with different ways of conceptualizing psychological problems, planning and initiating interventions, and evaluating outcome. Evaluation is based on student attendance and participation. (NOTE: Credit can only be given for this class if X and Y are completed in consecutive terms and partial credit cannot be given for a single term.)

8013.03 – Psychology & Neuroscience**Colloquium PhD Year 2 – whole year**

Students are required to go to the Colloquium Series.

8333.06 - Field Placement

(see Year 1)

XXXX.03 - Elective Seminar

(see Note⁴, Page 19)

Elective seminars vary from term to term and focus on different topics related to aspects of psychology. Clinical seminars may address methods or strategies

of clinical assessment and intervention in the context of individual, group, or family therapy, cognitive therapy, behaviour therapy, sex therapy, and pharmacotherapy. Clinical seminars held to date have included Topics in Schizophrenia, Clinical Seminar on Depression, Clinical Seminar on Cognitive Therapy, Topics in Developmental Psychopathology and Topics in Health Psychology. Non-clinical seminars may address methods or strategies of empirical enquiry, and topics in behaviour, cognitive and neuroscience. Students are required to take only ONE elective of their choice, i.e. either clinical or non-clinical, based on individual career goals and gaps in training. In consultation with the DCT (or designate) and dissertation supervisor, the student may seek an appropriate elective in other departments within or outside Dalhousie University.

9530.00 - PhD Thesis (see Year 1)**XXXX.03 - Teaching Assistantship**

(see Year 1)

YEAR 4

XXXX.03 - Elective Seminar

(see above)

8333.06 - Field Placement

(see Year 1)

9530.00 - PhD Thesis

YEAR 5

8333.06 - Field Placement

(see Year 1)

9100.00 – Pre-Doctoral Internship

A 12-month, full-time internship in an approved setting is required. Typically, the internship setting will be accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association or the American Psychological Association.

9530.00 - PhD Thesis

Appendix A

Dalhousie Clinical Psychology PhD Program **Procedures for Review of Professional Suitability**

July 2024

These guidelines have been developed to outline the steps in the review of professional suitability.

Taking into account the need for expedient review, the designation “in writing” in each of the following steps may be in the form of electronic mail.

In situations where professional suitability is being evaluated a sub-committee will be formed and will include two core clinical faculty members and a non-clinical departmental faculty, appointed by the DCT and Department Chair.

In the review process, the student has the right to representation, such as the department’s Graduate Affairs Ombudsperson or a university-level ombudsperson. The student is required to inform the Sub-Committee Chair, in writing, they will have a representative present during the review hearing.

There are several pathways/scenarios that may initiate this process including, but not limited to, an informal complaint from an instructor or supervisor, ongoing concerns regarding development of competencies, and/or a failed remediation plan. When the DCT determines that a review of professional suitability *may be* warranted, a meeting of the Clinical Faculty members of the Clinical Program Committee will be called to discuss the complaint/concerns, vote on whether to proceed with a review, and to select the clinical members of the sub-committee. The Department Chair will be asked to identify a non-clinical committee member.

1. Within two (2) days of the Clinical Program Committee’s decision to proceed with a review, the student shall receive a copy of these procedures and a formal, written notification of the Sub-Committee’s composition and the intention to review the student’s suitability for practice. The student shall be informed of their right to representation and their right to consult with the department’s or university’s student ombudsperson (https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html).

2. Within ten (10) days of the notification to the student, a written complaint shall be submitted by the complainant(s) to the Sub-Committee. This submission should include:

- a. a description of the exact nature of the observations leading to the complainant’s concerns with regard to suitability for practice, including a specific description of events and chronology

- b. a description of any steps taken by the complainant to address or remediate the complaint with the student
 - c. a description of the student's response to this remediation
 - d. all related documentation
 - e. suggestions for resolution of the concerns, which may include but are not limited to, remedial training and/or supervision, restriction on the student's participation in clinical work, and/or suspension or dismissal from the program
- 3. In recognition that the issue of professional suitability requires consideration of patterns of behaviour, rather than isolated events, written submissions may be sought from others within or involved with the Program who are in a position to observe and evaluate the student's behaviour, skills, conduct, and competence as they relate to clinical practice. The Sub-Committee will review the complaint and will determine if additional written submissions are required. If applicable, a list of those from whom written submissions will be requested will be generated and requests for written submissions will be made within 7 days of receiving the written complaint. The Sub-Committee will request that written submissions be provided to the committee within 10 days. The student shall be informed, in writing, of the names of those from whom submissions are being sought.
- 4. Upon receipt of the complaint by the Chair of the Sub-Committee, the procedure is as follows:
 - a. The Chair shall acknowledge the complaint in writing, informing the complainant of the procedure to be followed.
 - b. Following the written submissions deadline, the Chair shall write to the student, enclosing a copy of all written submission(s) received and a description of the review process, and shall invite the student to submit a written response to the Sub-Committee Chair within fourteen (14) days. This written response may include, but is not limited to:
 - i) a description of the events leading to the complaint
 - ii) details of any relevant circumstances seen to mitigate the impact of these events on the student's suitability for practice
 - iii) a description of any steps taken by the student to remediate the complaint
 - iv) all supporting documentation
 - v) response to suggestions for resolution of the concerns; alternative suggestions may be included
 - c. The Chair shall copy all materials received [complaint(s), additional submissions, and student response] to the members of the Sub-Committee.
 - d. Review Hearing: A review hearing shall be scheduled to take place within sixty (60) days of the initial notification to the student, unless the student has voluntarily withdrawn from the Program or has notified the Chair that they refuse to participate in the hearing. The Sub-Committee Chair will decide the student's status in the program and allowable activities during the period

between the initial complaint and the hearing based on the nature of the complaint.

The complainant(s) and the student shall be informed of the date, time, place, and duration of the hearing, and all relevant submissions (complaint(s) and student response) shall be copied to the complainant(s), student, and Sub-Committee members.

Parties with legitimate standing or parties who provided written submissions to the committee may be called as witnesses during the hearing.

No new materials may be introduced during the review hearing without the approval of the Sub-Committee. All parties with legitimate standing will be called as witnesses at the hearing and will only be present at the hearing when called in as a witness.

Following the hearing, there will be a private deliberation by the Sub-Committee.

All parties who attend will be reminded that all aspects of the hearing are confidential.

The following order shall be observed and all participation is voluntary:

- i) Presentation by the complainant(s)
 - ii) Presentation by the student or representative
 - iii) Presentations by other parties with legitimate standing recognized by the Chair
 - iv) Questions to the complainant by the student or representative, to the student by the complainant(s), questions to either the student or complainant from parties with legitimate standing; and questions to parties with legitimate standing by the student
 - v) Any questions by the Sub-Committee
 - vi) A closed deliberation session will follow and include only the Sub-Committee members; the Sub-Committee's decision may propose such remedies as it considers appropriate and are within the power of the Sub-Committee under Departmental, Faculty, and University regulations
- e. In judging the student's professional suitability, the Sub-Committee shall rely upon the information obtained through the review process outlined above and shall be guided by the following statement, adapted from the University of Saskatchewan, Department of Psychology's Policy on Evaluation of Student Competence:

Criteria for the Evaluation of Professional Suitability:

The goal of Dalhousie's Clinical Psychology PhD Program is to produce clinical psychologists who are thoroughly grounded in both the science of psychology and the methods of clinical practice. The Program also has an ethical and legal obligation to protect both the public and the profession from any foreseeable harm resulting from the professional activities of its faculty or students. The Program offers advanced training relating to Core Competencies and areas of Foundational Knowledge in Clinical Psychology in order to prepare students for clinical work. However, it is understood that, in addition to this training, students in the program must possess a basic professional suitability for clinical psychology practice, sufficient to allow them to meet the standards laid out in the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists. Thus, Faculty, Supervisors, and Administrators in the Program have a responsibility to evaluate students' performance and abilities in coursework, seminars, scholarship, comprehensive examinations, practica, or related program requirements, as well as the student's professional and ethical conduct in the fulfillment of these program requirements as outlined in section iii (a to d) below.

A student may be deemed to have inadequate professional suitability under any of the following circumstances:

- i. The student's conduct clearly and demonstrably impacts the performance, development, or functioning of the student; represents a risk to public safety; or damages the representation of psychology to the profession or public
- ii. The student has engaged in one or more serious violations of the [Canadian Psychology Association's Code of Ethics](#), beyond those which would be expected given the student's level of training and professional experience
- iii. The student has demonstrated a pattern of behavior which suggests significant deficits in any of the following areas:
 - a. Interpersonal and professional competence (e.g., the ways in which student-trainees relate to clients/patients, peers, faculty, allied professionals, the public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds or histories)
 - b. Self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-evaluation (e.g., knowledge of the content and potential impact of one's own beliefs and values on patients/clients, peers, faculty, allied professionals, the public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds or histories)
 - c. Openness to processes of supervision (e.g., the ability and willingness to explore issues that either interfere with the appropriate provision of care or impede professional development or functioning)
 - d. Resolution of issues or problems that interfere with professional development or functioning in a satisfactory manner (e.g., by responding constructively to feedback from supervisors or program faculty; by the successful completion of remediation plans; by participating in personal therapy in order to resolve issues or problems)

Where any of the above conditions have been met, and it is deemed that the student is likely to benefit sufficiently from additional intervention, training, and/or supervision to allow the student to function in accordance with the Canadian Code of Ethics, the student may be suspended or restricted in their participation in the program until such time as such remediation has taken place and the student is deemed to have demonstrated sufficient improvement in their abilities, conduct and/or behavior.

Where any of the above conditions have been met and the student has failed to benefit from remedial training, intervention or supervision, or is deemed unlikely to benefit from

such intervention, training, and/or supervision, the student shall be dismissed from the Program.

- g. Following the Review Hearing, the Sub-Committee shall prepare a written decision, including a summary of the facts of the case, a discussion of the implications of these facts for the student's professional suitability, and recommendations for further action. This decision shall be forwarded to the Director of Clinical Training, for the consideration of the Clinical Program Committee in rendering its final decision in the matter. A copy of this decision shall be made available to the student and the complainant(s) and all parties will be informed that confidentiality regarding the decision must be maintained.
- h. The Director of Clinical Training shall inform the student and the Department Chair of the Clinical Program Committee's final decision, and any resulting action.
- i. Further appeal of the decision at the Faculty of Graduate Studies level, according to University Regulations ([FGS Academic Appeals Committee Procedures](#)), is possible if the student is not satisfied with the process at the Departmental level.

Appendix B

Guidelines and Procedures for Decisions regarding Exemptions for Students with Advanced Standing in the Clinical Psychology PhD Program

Note: Advanced placement refers to all students in the Clinical Psychology PhD Program who enter the Program with a Master's degree, regardless of whether the degree is in Psychology or whether it has a clinical focus. All requests for advanced placement will be vetted by the DCT, FPC, and respective instructors, and are subject to approval by the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS).

Process

1. Once students have accepted the offer of admission into the Clinical Psychology PhD Program, those with Master's degrees are reviewed to determine exemptions. Students are not reviewed for exemptions prior to being admitted or prior to their confirmation of acceptance.¹ Prior to admission/acceptance, the Director of Clinical Training (DCT), if asked by the student, will share with the student the process that is taken to evaluate for exemptions and the likely outcome. However, this information is informal until the time the student accepts admission into the Program.
2. Once the student with advanced standing (e.g., Master's degree) accepts our admission offer, the student is contacted via email by the Program Administrative Assistant asking for detailed information that will allow the DCT, in consultation with respective course instructor(s), the Associate DCT and/or the Field Placement Coordinator (FPC), to evaluate previously completed courses for exemptions.
3. In order to be evaluated for course exemptions, the student is asked to submit:
 - a. A table listing the course(s) the student is requesting to be exempted from, as well as the calendar description(s) of the course(s) that the student believes fulfill the Clinical Psychology PhD course credit.
 - i. For example, if the student is requesting to be exempted from PSYO 6102.03, Psychological Assessment: Child, the student would include this in the first column of the table, the next column would list the corresponding course title(s) and calendar description(s) of the course(s) that they had taken in their Master's degree that is believed to be equivalent.
 - b. The syllabus for each course from their Master's degree that they believe fulfills a course requirement in the Dalhousie Clinical PhD Program.
4. Students with a Master's degree may apply for exemption for one of the two required Teaching Assistantships. In order to be granted exemption for one TAship, the course outline(s) of courses for which the student TAed must be submitted.

5. The DCT will review the information submitted by the student and will consult with the respective course instructors of the courses for which the student is requesting an exemption.
6. The submission is reviewed by the DCT in consultation with the Associate DCT and/or the Field Placement Coordinator and respective course instructor(s).
7. A formal letter detailing the decision regarding exemptions is sent via email to the student (and copied to the respective instructor(s), and the dissertation supervisor(s).). Outcomes of the review include that the student may not receive an exemption, may be exempted from the entire course, may be asked to complete certain components of the course, or may be asked to audit the course².
8. Students with questions or concerns about the decision are encouraged to discuss these with the DCT. All concerns brought to the DCT are revisited by the DCT with the Associate DCT and/or the Field Placement Coordinator, and the respective instructor(s). Any changes are communicated to the student via another formal letter sent by email. If no changes are made, the rationale for the decision is communicated to the student.
9. If the student is not satisfied with the decision made by the DCT, in collaboration with the course instructor(s), Associate DCT and/or the Field Placement Coordinator, then the student's concerns would be brought to the Clinical Program Committee (CPC) and discussed in a closed meeting. The CPC's vote would represent the final decision, unless the student chooses to put forth a formal grievance. At this point, the Program would follow the procedures outlined by the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS).
10. Requests for an exemption from one comprehensive project can be made from clinical students who are admitted with an empirical Master's following the successful proposal of the first clinical comprehensive. All such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will require the approval of the DCT and the dissertation supervisor.

Footnotes:

1. The decision to wait until after the student accepts our offer of admission was made as it is a lengthy and time-consuming process to conduct the review to determine exemptions. The program does not want to engage in this process if the student is unsure of whether they will accept our admission offer.
2. Given that some of our courses are lifespan focused, students may be exempted from only certain components of the course. For example, a student coming into our program with a school psychology master's degree will have training in child psychology but not adult psychology and so would be required to complete all adult components of the courses. Also, there may be situations where a student's past course does not cover all the material in one of our courses (e.g., a previous statistics course may not have covered a certain statistical technique) and in these situations we may require that the student complete this component in our course, even though they are generally exempted from the course. In situations where partial exemption is given, a student may be required to complete an independent studies course to cover these components.

Appendix C

June 2025

Navigating Comprehensive Projects and Timelines:

Guidelines for Clinical Psychology Students

This document is intended to highlight key parts of the comprehensive requirements and suggested timelines for clinical psychology students. It does not include *all* relevant information and students should carefully refer to both the [Clinical Program Handbook](#) and the Department of Psychology Graduate Student Handbook on the [Brightspace](#) page for more details and information. The comprehensive system is a unique opportunity to tailor student learning to individual needs and goals, while ensuring a breadth of exposure and experience in the field of psychology.

What are the comprehensive requirements?

Rather than a Comprehensive Exam, the Clinical Program's comprehensive requirement is a series of two projects. The comprehensive plan, which consists of a set of brief proposals for these two projects as well as for the dissertation, should be developed in collaboration with the dissertation supervisor (for the dissertation component) and a comprehensive chair (selected by the student; see timeline below for further description of this role) to ensure sufficient breadth of training in the field of psychology. A template for the comprehensive plan is available from Graduate Program Administrator. The Clinical Program Administrator also has a binder of sample comprehensive plans that students are encouraged to consult. Each clinical student's comprehensive plan is presented—by their comprehensive chair—to and approved by the clinical faculty at their regular meetings (held every 1-2 months).

The following definitions apply. See also example outcomes for comps, in the section below.

Empirical study: A study that includes all aspects of the scientific method from conceptualization, data collection, data analysis through to dissemination. The study may be quantitative or qualitative in nature so long as it follows rigorous methods. A meta-analysis is also an empirical study.

Empirical project: A project which may include some, but not all, aspects of the scientific process as outlined above. An empirical project may also include a systematic review or meta-analysis.

The comprehensive projects include one empirical study and one empirical study or project:

1. The first comprehensive project is an empirical study completed under the supervision of the dissertation supervisor[s]. Students entering the program with a Master's degree complete their first comprehensive under the same conditions, though they may request an exemption from their second comprehensive project after successful presentation of the first one. In such cases, a description of the Master's project should be included in the comp plan in place of the second comp project. Eligibility for an exemption must be discussed with and approved by the DCT; further details on this process can be found in the [Clinical Program Handbook](#). Students must submit a formal (a) brief plan for the first comprehensive project, (b) written proposal for this first comprehensive project and (c) orally present their proposal. They must also submit a final manuscript summarizing the results of this project and successfully complete an oral defense of the project. All written and oral presentations are evaluated by a Comprehensive Examining Committee consisting of the dissertation supervisor(s), the DCT [or designate(s)], and two core clinical faculty members. Please refer to projected timelines below.
2. A comprehensive project that can be an empirical study or project completed under the supervision of a different faculty member to enhance breadth of training and exposure to different supervision models. Students can also choose to complete a teaching certificate for their second comprehensive project.

Limitations and exceptions

Of the two comprehensive projects, only one can include a meta-analysis or systematic review. Neither are required, however.

What is the ideal scope of each comprehensive project and what are the expected outcomes?

Comp 1: The first comprehensive project has the largest scope as it typically includes all phases of the scientific process from conceptualization to manuscript writing. The expected outcome is a draft of a manuscript incorporating at least one round of feedback from the supervisor as well as successful completion of the written and oral components as deemed by the examining committee.

Comp 2: While empirical in nature, comp 2 often has a more limited scope than comp 1. For example, students might use archival data rather than collecting their own data. Whether a written product is required for the comp may depend on what stage of the scientific process the student becomes involved with. Students are encouraged to write-up the results of their comp for publication, but this does not need to be the endpoint. Many students work on a corresponding publication after their comp is officially completed given the benefits to their training as well as to their academic record (e.g., for scholarship applications).

Example outcomes might include, but are not limited to:

- Learning a new statistical analysis, completing the analyses, and drafting the data analysis and results section of a manuscript
- Completing the analyses for a study and presenting the results at a conference (i.e., also becoming familiar with the relevant content literature, preparing an abstract and presentation)
- Learning a new data collection technique and collecting a pre-determined amount of data. Writing the corresponding Methods section for a manuscript (i.e., while another co-author has written the other sections).
- Conducting a meta-analysis and writing the results section of a manuscript (i.e., while another co-author has written the Introduction and Discussion)
- Conducting a scoping or systematic review for a new research area and writing the results section of a manuscript (i.e., while another co-author has written the Introduction and Discussion).
- Learning about a new theory and literature and writing the Introduction, Methods and Discussion sections of a paper (i.e., while another co-author has conducted the analyses and written the results).
- Completing a teaching certificate through Dal's Centre for Learning and Teaching <https://www.dal.ca/dept/clt/programs/CUTL.html>

When should I complete each of the comprehensive requirements?

Please note that the description below is intended to be a guideline and there is flexibility depending on individual circumstances and preferences. A graphical depiction of these guidelines is presented at the end of this document.

Comp 1 planning: Planning for the first comprehensive project should begin immediately upon entering the program in September of Year 1.

Comp 1 plan: A completed comp plan form (the same one that is used for submitting the full comp plan—examples available from the Clinical Program Administrator) for the first comprehensive project is typically due mid-October.

Comp 1 proposal submission & presentation: The Comp 1 proposal is typically due at the end of December (before the break) of Year 1 in the program. The presentation is typically in January.

Comp 1 final manuscript submission & defence: The Comp 1 final manuscript is typically due in May of Year 2 in the program. The defence is approximately two weeks after the manuscript has been submitted.

Comp plan (planning and approval): Students should begin discussing their comprehensive plan with the dissertation supervisor and comprehensives chair in Summer of Year 2 (i.e., after defending Comp 1). This is after the term in which students take Research Methods (P6209),

wherein they will complete an assignment to assist with dissertation planning. Students should aim to submit a comprehensive plan no later than December of Year 3. Thus, this 6-month period will be a busy “planning” phase in the program as students will need to:

- a) Identify a comps chair. The comps chair is a faculty member who is familiar with our comp system (i.e., if your dissertation and comps are all supervised by external faculty, we recommend you choose an internal faculty member as your comps chair). They will assist in preparing the comprehensive plan to ensure it meets the program requirements. The comps chair will present the student’s plan for approval and is also responsible for collecting and submitting comp completion forms from all supervisors.
- b) Identify supervisor(s) for comp #2
- c) Develop brief proposal for comp #2 (approximately 0.5-1 page each)
- d) Develop your dissertation proposal (approximately 2 pages)

Note: If you have your comps planned but have not completely finalized your dissertation, you can still submit your comp plan for approval. You will be required to submit an amendment to your comp plan once your dissertation proposal is finalized.

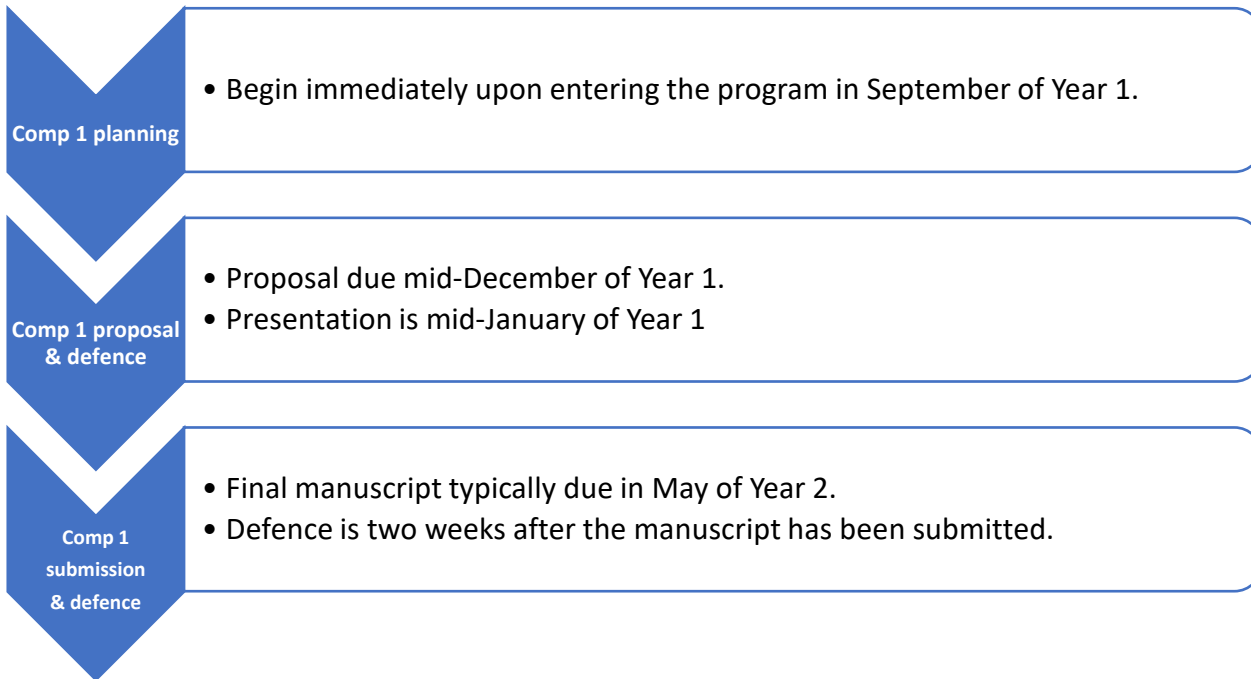
Comp 2: Aim to begin Comp 2 in Year 3 of the program. Allow for up to one year to complete this comp.

Dissertation: Data collection for the dissertation should begin in Year 3 at the latest. The reason we recommend allotting one year to complete your second comp is because students will also be conducting dissertation research at the same time. However, the comp project itself should not require a full year to complete; rather, it is completed simultaneously with the dissertation, courses, and clinical practica. Students should consider when they have “quieter” periods in their dissertation research and make a push to complete the second comp during that time.

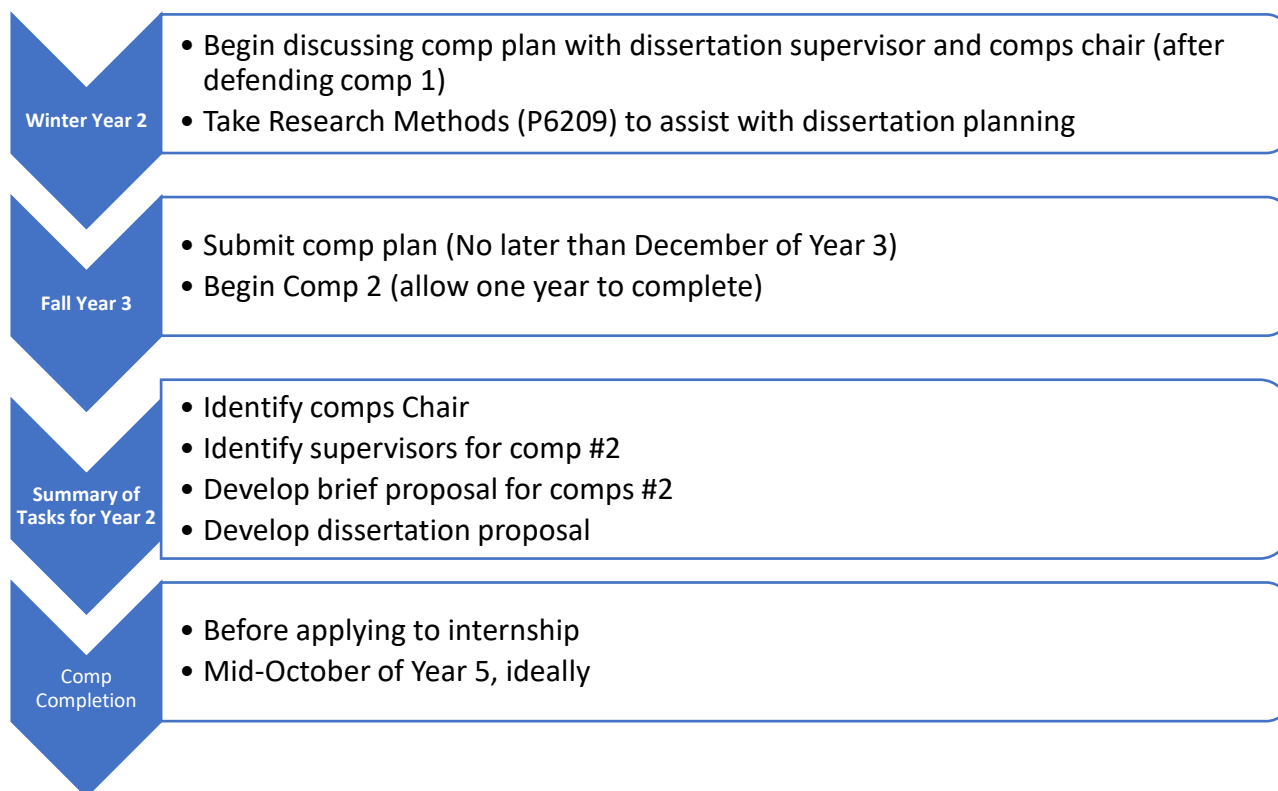
Comp completion: Both comprehensives must be completed and signed off by the supervisors and comps chair **prior to the student applying for internship (i.e., by mid-October in Year 5, ideally, but in later years the deadline would still be mid-October for applying to residency that year).** This requirement is in relation to the comps and does not include the dissertation. The supervisor of the second comp must submit a completion form to the comps chair. The student should ensure the supervisor has the form and has completed it. All forms are available from Patti.

Please note that the descriptions below are intended to be a guideline and there is flexibility depending on individual circumstances and preferences. If you have your comps planned but have not completely finalized your dissertation, you can still submit your comp plan for approval. You will be required to submit an amendment to your comp plan once your dissertation proposal is finalized.

Comp 1



Comp Planning & Approval



Comp Changes as of April 2024

In March 2024, the clinical program faculty approved the removal of one comprehensive project such that students are now required to complete two comprehensive projects (instead of three). Students who currently have comprehensive plans approved may choose to complete either two or three comps. If they elect to do two comps, then they must ensure that the 2nd comp meets the requirements outlined in this document. If students have already completed a 2nd comp with their dissertation supervisor/co-supervisor, or have started data collection on a 2nd comp with their dissertation supervisor/co-supervisor, then this will be accepted as their 2nd comp. If they have not yet started their 2nd comp, it should be with a different faculty member. Students who have planned a third comp with a supervisor but have not yet started, or who have already begun working on a third comp with a supervisor, are encouraged to approach the situation professionally. Please keep in mind that comp supervisors may be counting on you for a particular project and there may be implications if you withdraw altogether with little notice. We encourage students to initiate a conversation with the comp supervisor to discuss how they would like to proceed. Here are some potential options:

- Continue the project as planned but outside of the formal comp system.
- Continue to collaborate on the project but in a different or more limited capacity (e.g., timeline, role) than was originally planned for the comp (e.g., finish the current analyses but defer writing the paper to later when you might have more time).
- Withdraw from the planned project altogether, in discussion with the comp supervisor.

Please consult with the DCT or ADCT if you have questions about your particular situation.