



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA

**CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM
FAQ**

ARE THERE PRE-REQUISITES FOR THE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM?

Yes, during the course of the program, students take advanced graduate level coursework in the discipline-specific knowledge areas of psychology (areas of psychology we think that all psychologists should have knowledge in): affective, biological, cognitive, developmental, and social aspects of behavior. To be prepared for this level of coursework, we require in-coming students to have undergraduate coursework in each of these areas. This link will take you to the [catalog information about requirements](#). **HOWEVER, PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PREREQUISITES ARE NOT REQUIRED TO APPLY TO THE PROGRAM.** If you are accepted and still need one or more of the prerequisites, we work with you to complete those prior to starting the program.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO COMPLETE THE PROGRAM?

The USD Clinical Psychology program is a fulltime PhD program that requires four full years in residence and one additional year of fulltime internship, for which students compete nationally. Students are required to complete a master's thesis and a doctoral dissertation and receive a non-terminal master's degree at the completion of the thesis.

IF I HAVE A MASTER'S DEGREE, CAN I GET THROUGH THE PROGRAM IN A SHORTER TIME?

No, the Clinical Faculty may accept your master's degree if it is in Psychology (or a closely related field), it is no more than five years old, and if it included an empirical thesis. If your master's degree is accepted, you will not have to complete another thesis but you will still have four years in residence in order to complete the coursework and clinical experiences.

ARE GRADUATE STUDENTS IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY ELIGIBLE FOR ASSISTANTSHIPS?

Yes, all students accepted into the program are guaranteed at least four years of funding that provides a partial tuition remission and a monthly stipend. In the first two years, the graduate assistantship may be in the form of a Teaching Assistantship or a Research Assistantship. In Years 3 and 4, students work two days per week at a community mental health facility and receive their assistantship for that work. Assistantships are currently approximately \$13,000 for the 12 months. We try to increase a bit each year. Students also have full access to the USD Financial Aid services to assist with direct loans for tuition and cost-of-living expenses.

CAN I COMPLETE THE PROGRAM VIA INTERNET OR DISTANCE TECHNOLOGY?

No, students are required to be in residence for a full four years.

CAN I COMPLETE THE PROGRAM AS A PART-TIME STUDENT?

No, the program is intended to be fulltime. Because of the demand of courses, assistantship duties, research, and clinical experiences, students need to be available full time.

CAN I WORK AT AN OUTSIDE JOB WHILE I AM IN THE PROGRAM?

Usually, it is not possible to work at another job while participating in the program. Any time that is not spent in classes, doing assistantship duties, or in clinical work will likely be spent in completing the thesis and dissertation research. In rare cases, in consultation with the research mentor and Director, students may be able to take on short-term outside employment.

DOES THE PROGRAM FOCUS MORE ON RESEARCH OR CLINICAL WORK?

The overarching goal of the Clinical Psychology PhD program at the University of South Dakota is to train generalist psychologists. To this end, we provide a truly equal balance of research and clinical training. Graduates of our program have been able to craft the experiences they need to successfully obtain research, clinical, and/or academic positions.

Clinical Training: Students receive intensive and in-depth clinical training during at least three yearlong clinical practica, as well as a fulltime clinical internship. In addition, all students see clients in our in-house Psychological Services Center throughout their time in the program and are supervised by Clinical Program faculty.

Internship Training: Our students successfully compete for internship positions in the most competitive institutions nationally and locally. The doctoral program has had a 100% match rate for the past nine years. By the end of the third year in the program, students complete the Clinical Orals qualifying exam, which is designed to demonstrate competence in fundamental clinical skills, assessment, intervention, discipline-specific knowledge, diversity, and ethics.

Research Training. Students receive research training by working closely with a primary research mentor in a designated lab for the length of their time in the program, producing a master's thesis and dissertation, as well as contributing to research through peer-reviewed presentations and publications.

WHERE DO GRADUATES OF THE PROGRAM TYPICALLY GET JOBS?

The PhD program provides intensive training in the clinical practice and science of psychology, along with the specific training that makes our students competitive for careers as clinical psychologists conducting research and/or clinical work in academic healthcare systems, VA medical centers, children's hospitals, community mental health and similar healthcare settings, and student counseling centers. Students who have sought academic and/or research careers have been able to secure those positions as well.