

# PsyD in Clinical Psychology

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APU's Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) in Clinical Psychology (<https://www.apu.edu/bas/programs/psyd/>) is a professional doctorate that identifies as a practitioner-scholar program. The curriculum provides the courses and training necessary to meet the educational requirements in the state of California for licensure as a psychologist.

## Program Aim

The PsyD program at Azusa Pacific University has developed a unifying aim to guide the mission of the program: Cultivate culturally competent practitioner-scholars who are equipped to serve a wide range of clients with a special emphasis in systems thinking, diversity, and the integration of faith/spirituality and practice.

## Profession-wide Competencies in Health Service Psychology <sup>1</sup>

In alignment with accreditation standards from the American Psychological Association, APU's PsyD program and curriculum focus on profession-wide competencies in health service psychology. See Program Learning Outcomes (p. ) for more details.

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from APA (Am. Psychol. Assoc.). 2015. *Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology*. Washington, DC: APA

## APU PsyD Program's Special Emphases

In addition to the profession-wide competencies (Program Learning Outcomes), the PsyD program at APU has three areas of special emphasis:

1. Systems Approach (Family Psychology)
2. Diversity and Justice
3. Integration of Faith/Spirituality and Practice

### Systems Approach (Family Psychology)

Based on systems theory, the discipline of family psychology recognizes the dynamic interaction between persons and environments without detracting from an awareness of individual, intrapsychic issues. The PsyD program's emphasis in family psychology incorporates numerous elements from several disciplines within psychology (e.g., clinical psychology, developmental psychology, personality theory, environmental psychology, neuropsychology, psychobiology, and social psychology). All the disciplines are related by the theoretical understanding of the dynamic, reciprocal relationship between these factors as they impact human behavior. This theoretical foundation undergirds the program courses at APU. In courses that have traditionally had an individual focus, systemic aspects relevant to the content area are incorporated. The PsyD program strives to equip students to think systemically and apply systemic analysis to clinical situations.

### Diversity and Justice

The PsyD program has a strong commitment to individual and cultural diversity and is committed to creating an inclusive and positive environment for diverse students and faculty, and the development of competency in serving diverse populations. Diversity competence is interwoven throughout every course; additionally, there are specific courses that focus on developing diversity competency. The program is also committed to addressing disparity and encouraging social action and advocacy. In addition to coursework, the PsyD program supports student-run diversity committees that are focused on addressing diversity issues in the program through forums, guest speakers, and trainings.

### Integration of Faith/Spirituality and Practice (Interdisciplinary Integration)

Azusa Pacific University has a strong Christian heritage and commitment to integrating evangelical Christian thought into university programs. The PsyD expresses this heritage and commitment through an emphasis on the integration of psychology with theological anthropology, ethics, and spiritual formation. Students explore how their own cultural, philosophical, theological, and/or spiritual foundations and tradition(s), implicit or explicit, inform and/or influence their understanding of human nature, development, illness, health, and change. This self-exploration and awareness of, reflection on, and interaction with theological and spiritual traditions forms a foundation for understanding the self in context—embodied and embedded culturally, ethnically, religiously—and provides a source of personal and professional identity.

The PsyD program also has a strong commitment to open enrollment. As such, individuals from any religious or nonreligious tradition may be admitted to the PsyD program. However, it is important for prospective students to recognize that coursework and training are structured using Christian values and principles. Students are asked to learn and thoughtfully interact with the content of courses, as well as to reflect on their own beliefs and values as they relate to preparation for professional practice. In addition to providing students with an interdisciplinary framework from which to understand psychological theory and practice, the emphasis also facilitates and enhances the development of competency with respect to addressing religious and spiritual diversity in clinical practice.

## Admission

University graduate admission and program-specific requirements must be met before an application is complete (see Admission to the University (<http://catalog.apu.edu/admissions/>)). **Program-specific application requirements are available online (<https://www.apu.edu/graduateprofessional/apply/>).**

International students should contact Graduate and Professional Admissions (<https://www.apu.edu/graduateprofessional/apply/>) for application procedures.

## Application Deadline

**Priority Deadline: December 1.** Students who apply prior to this date will be given priority consideration for admission.

**General Deadline: January 15.** Students who apply prior to this date will be given consideration for admission after the priority applications are reviewed.

## Interview Process, Acceptance, and Deposit

Upon invitation, PsyD applicants complete an interview with the PsyD faculty. The purpose of the interview is to determine the applicant's potential for success in the PsyD program. Applicants who are accepted into the PsyD program are notified after the interview process. Upon notification of admission, applicants must confirm intent to attend in writing to the department by April 15. A \$500 deposit is also required by April 15. Please note that the deposit is nonrefundable, but 100% of the deposit is applied toward tuition.

## Scholarships

### Scholarship for Integrated Psychology (Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy and Christian Theology)

The Department of Clinical Psychology has been awarded scholarship money from an external foundation for students interested in the integration of psychoanalytic psychotherapy and Christian theology. First-year students who have been nominated by a faculty member are invited to apply. The grant funds up to three APU PsyD students per year who meet program criteria, which include goals for clinical practice and research that integrate psychoanalytic psychotherapy and Christian theology and spirituality. In addition to maintaining a 3.7 GPA, scholarship students participate in a monthly mentoring group and complete a sequence of courses focused on integrating religion and spirituality into clinical practice, as well as a sequence of courses to develop clinical competencies in psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Through the scholarship program, students develop vocational and professional goals that apply the knowledge, skills, and abilities they have learned through the scholarship program to their chosen area of research and professional practice.

For more information, contact Theresa Clement Tisdale, PhD, PsyD, Scholarship for Integrated Psychology program coordinator, at [tctisdale@apu.edu](mailto:tctisdale@apu.edu) or (626) 815-6000, Ext. 5205.

### Project Expand Program and Stipend

The Department of Clinical Psychology has been awarded a three-year, \$1.4M award from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) focused on further equipping psychology doctoral students with high-quality interdisciplinary, integrated behavioral health training and practicum experiences specific to addressing co-occurring disorders (CODs—a mental health condition and a substance use disorder) in community care settings, including school wellness centers, in high-need and high-demand areas for clinical psychology services. The goal of the grant, named Project Expand, is to provide up to 10 students each academic year with one-year training and practicum opportunities in settings that serve adults with CODs and adolescent youth at risk for the development of CODs. Interested students who are in the second year or above within the PsyD program can apply. Awarded students receive a \$25,000 stipend for successful participation in the program.

For more information, contact Rachel Castaneda, PhD, MPH, and PI, at [rcastaneda@apu.edu](mailto:rcastaneda@apu.edu) or Samuel Girguis, PsyD and co-PI, at [sgirguis@apu.edu](mailto:sgirguis@apu.edu).

### PsyD Doctoral Assistantships (TRAs)

Funds are allocated to provide teaching-research assistantships (TRAs) for each academic cohort. Recipients of the assistantships receive \$9,000 tuition remission per year for the first four years of the program for a scholarship total of \$36,000. TRAs provide 8 hours of service per week in the Department of Clinical Psychology during September through June of the academic year. The department chair (or designee) determines the roles and responsibilities of the TRAs. Students may apply for the assistantship during the first semester of the first year of their PsyD program. Preference is given to applicants who evidence strong academic credentials (high GPA and GRE scores, in particular), financial need, cultural knowledge and language skills that facilitate the provision of psychological services in an underserved community, and commitment to provide psychological services in an underserved community following graduation. Applications for the assistantships and criteria for evaluation of applications are available in the Department of Clinical Psychology.

TRAs will be reviewed annually and must meet minimum standards to continue the assistantship. This review is intended to guarantee that persons awarded an assistantship will continue to evidence the qualities that led to their original selection. Minimum standards for continuation include maintaining good standing throughout all aspects of the program, including maintenance of a 3.5 GPA; sufficient progress on dissertation; positive

evaluations from clinical training sites; willingness to receive constructive criticism regarding performance of tasks; demonstrated remediation of performance deficits that have been formally identified to the student by the PsyD program, department chair, and/or the designated supervisor; and continued ability to be available on a schedule that meets the needs of the department.

Any student who has been awarded an assistantship and who has received tuition remission is responsible to repay the amount equal to the tuition remission if the student withdraws from the PsyD program prior to graduation. Such students may work with Student Financial Services to arrange a repayment plan for the loan balance.

## Computer and Email Access Required

Students are required to own or have ready access to a computer during their tenure in the PsyD program, and required to maintain and utilize a student email address. Students are also responsible for the information sent to them by the program or department via email, and for responding to email in a consistent and timely manner.

## Academic Advising

In addition to the advisement by the program director and the directors of clinical training, each student selects a dissertation committee chair during their first year in the program who also serves as the student's academic advisor throughout the program.

## Progress Review and Annual Evaluation

Department faculty review the progress of all students in the PsyD program each semester in order to encourage professional development and successful completion of the program. Since personal characteristics are important to competency in clinical psychology, students are evaluated regularly on categories determined to be professional standards in the field of clinical psychology. The evaluation form, noting the dimensions for evaluation, is provided to students upon entrance to the program (or earlier by request). Student behavior that does not reflect the professional standards in the field of clinical psychology will be documented on the evaluations form and the student will receive a written notice. Furthermore, the student will be required to meet with their faculty advisor, the program director, and/or the Clinical Training Committee to determine a personal development plan. Students who fail to improve according to their development plan may be dismissed from the program. Students who receive more than one written notice during a semester may be dismissed from the program. Students who receive more than three written notices while in the program may be dismissed from the program.

An annual student progress evaluation is conducted in July, following the summer term. All aspects of student progress in the program are reviewed and a letter is sent to students informing them of the results of the review, noting strengths or completion of particular requirements and areas for improvement or remediation needed in order to remain current in the program.

The program evaluates multiple domains of student training beyond that of academic success. Other areas of evaluation that are expected competencies of health service psychologists include intrapersonal, interpersonal, and professional development and functioning. In addition to policies outlined in the catalog, other sources of program policy include the clinical training manual, the program manual, and the dissertation manual.

## Student Grievance and Due Process Procedures

Students' rights to due process are clearly outlined in the Academic Policies and Procedures (<http://catalog.apu.edu/policies-procedures/graduate/grievance-appeal-procedures/>) section of this catalog. Additional information may be found in the program manual and the clinical training manual.

## Five- and Six-Year Academic Plans and Time to Degree Completion

### Five-Year Program

Participation in the full-time plan requires attending classes during the day or evening at least two days per week, plus occasional Saturday courses (usually four Saturdays in a year). An additional 15-20 hours per week minimum for practicum is required throughout the program.

### Six-Year Program

Starting in the third year of the program, participation in a reduced-load-per-semester, six-year plan requires attending classes during the day or evening at least two days per week plus occasional Saturday courses (usually four Saturdays in a year). An additional 15-20 hours per week minimum for practicum is required in the first three years of the program or more, depending upon student progress.

## Time to Degree Completion

PsyD students are permitted 8 years from the date of initial enrollment to complete all requirements. Extensions beyond the 8-year limit may be granted for students experiencing unusual circumstances, at the discretion of the department with approval from the dean of the School of Behavioral and Applied Sciences.

## Other Degree Requirements for the PsyD program

### Clinical Training

Clinical training is central to the practitioner-scholar (PsyD) model for educating clinical psychologists. Azusa Pacific's program is committed to assisting students in developing the essential knowledge base, attitudes, and therapeutic skills necessary to function as clinical psychologists. In their clinical placements (practicum sites), students gain experience in a variety of clinical settings including outpatient, inpatient/residential, child/adolescent, older adult, brief/managed care, and settings utilizing psychological assessment. Supervision is provided by the field placement sites while APU faculty concurrently provide students with clinical and professional consultation. Students entering the program with existing clinical training or licensure must still complete the program's clinical training sequence. Clinical training involves three years of practicum and a full-time, yearlong predoctoral internship (a limited number of two-year, half-time internships are available in some settings).

Practicum training is taken along with coursework as a means of enriching the academic experience, and is designed to provide the student with exposure to assessment and clinical treatment. A minimum of 1,500 practicum hours are required. Some students may elect to obtain an additional year of practicum experience in their fifth year and complete their internship during a sixth year. Concurrent with their supervised external practicum, students are required to participate in a 1-unit clinical consultation course (PPSY 720) that provides input from faculty on the student's clinical and professional development. Students are also required to document their practicum hours using the program Time2Track (<https://time2track.com/>).

The predoctoral internship is required at the end of the program when coursework and the 1,500 hours (three years) of practicum experience are complete. Internship provides the student with a more in-depth training experience. A minimum of 1,500 hours are required for internship training, though some sites may require 2,000 hours. It is highly recommended that the internship be APA/APPIC-approved, but alternative internships are provided by CAPIC. All placements must be an APA-, APPIC-, or CAPIC-approved site; this is a state law for California licensure. Permission to not seek an APA/APPIC internship must be requested from the director of clinical training and/or the Clinical Training Committee.

For those students who are licensed or registered in mental health professions other than psychology, the Department of Clinical Psychology requires that all practicum training in the PsyD program be entirely separate from any practice under such existing license or registration. For purposes of clinical training in health service psychology, all students are to be identified exclusively as psychology trainees, psychology students, or psychology interns. Practicum students are not allowed to make known in any manner any other status they may hold in other mental health professions. Practicum hours from training in psychology may not be "double counted" toward training required for other mental health professions. If a student conducts a clinical practice or performs mental health services under an existing nonpsychology mental health license while he or she is a student in the PsyD program, the Department of Clinical Psychology officially recommends that these students consider the impact of their education and training in psychology on such practice and that they seek supervision for any services that may be deemed to be part of the profession of psychology.

To facilitate the identification of students with the profession of psychology, all students are required to join the American Psychological Association as student members upon acceptance into the program. APA membership provides many benefits, including subscriptions to the *Monitor on Psychology* and *American Psychologist*. Students are also required to maintain liability insurance while in the program.

### Clinical Training Manual

Every fall semester, a clinical training manual is released to students, who are responsible for understanding its contents and being aware of any changes required by the department.

### Quality Assurance in Clinical Placements

The directors of clinical training of internship and practicum (DCTs) and the Clinical Training Committee have an ongoing responsibility to ensure that the program's clinical training standards meet all state licensing and APA requirements. All clinical training is intended to be consistent with the requirements stated in the *California Board of Psychology Laws and Regulations*. Modifications in state law shall be reflected in program changes to ensure training consistent with the current practice of psychology. Additionally, the clinical training required by the PsyD program is consistent with APA ethical and professional standards and training guidelines.

### Evaluation of Clinical Training

The clinical training goals and objectives are integrated into the clinical practicum sequence and coordinated with the clinical courses in the program. Outcomes in the clinical sequence are measured throughout the program and include regular presentations of audio- or videotaped work of students, classroom demonstrations and role plays, assessment reports presented in class, supervisor evaluations, Clinical Competency Exam, internship acceptance and completion, and licensure acquisition.

#### Formative Evaluation

Formative evaluation consists of feedback given to students by their clinical supervisors, the directors of clinical training and program director, and the faculty. Although primarily verbal and situational, this kind of evaluation is of great importance due to its immediacy to clinical interventions and the issues arising during the students' clinical placements.

#### Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluation occurs at the end of each semester of clinical placement. Students are evaluated by their field site supervisor as well as by all faculty members. The site supervisor evaluation is discussed with students prior to its being sent to the DCT and becoming part of the students' clinical files. Students receiving inadequate evaluations are placed on probation, counseled by their faculty advisor, and, should their clinical performance

fail to meet expected standards, dismissed from the program. The Clinical Training Committee (CTC) may require students to complete remediation assignments to meet competency standards. As noted above, students are evaluated at the end of each semester for the achievement of competency in key clinical areas. This helps prepare the student for the Clinical Competency Exam, a cumulative evaluation of readiness for the predoctoral internship.

Students also evaluate their site experience and site supervisor at the end of each semester. These evaluations are submitted to the DCT and are used to ensure the quality of placement sites and on-campus supervision groups.

## Clinical Competency Examination

As a final evaluation measure, each student must pass a Clinical Competency Exam (CCE) after completing required coursework and clinical training.

For the CCE, a student submits a sample of their clinical work (case presentation, psychological assessment, and a videotape of a psychotherapy session), along with their clinical portfolio (including supervisor evaluation, verification of practicum hours, list of assessments performed, curriculum vita, and conference presentations or published works), to a two-member faculty committee. In addition, the student must respond to case vignettes illustrating various clinical issues. The purpose of this exam is to ensure that the student has developed the clinical competencies and requisite skills to begin an internship. Therefore, successful completion of the exam is required before applying to internship.

## Research Competence and Dissertation

The PsyD program requires the successful proposing, conducting, and defending of a dissertation. Further details are provided in the PsyD Dissertation Handbook.

Students are required to take the following courses as part of the dissertation process: PPSY 722 Research Design I; PPSY 723 Research Design II; PPSY 731 Dissertation Development, and six 1-unit dissertation courses (PPSY 745, PPSY 746, PPSY 747, PPSY 748, PPSY 755, PPSY 756). If, upon completion of these dissertation courses, a student has not yet defended their dissertation, they must enroll in PPSY 787 Dissertation Continuation every semester until they successfully defend their dissertation and submit it to the APU Libraries for binding and publication. Please note that even though PPSY 787 Dissertation Continuation is 0 units, the student will be charged 1 unit per semester until the dissertation process is complete.

Students are required to consult the APU Doctoral Programs Handbook for Style and Format Requirements for the year of their dissertation defense to determine specific deadlines for May graduation.

## Minimum Levels of Acceptable Achievement (MLAs)

In order to successfully complete the PsyD program, the following minimum levels of acceptable achievement are required:

- Obtaining a grade of *B-* or better (or a grade of *Credit*) in all coursework (see academic probation policy for process if a grade below a *B-* (or a grade of *No Credit*) is obtained in any class)
- Completing a minimum of three years of clinical practicum (see clinical training manual for details) and obtaining an overall score of 3 or better on summative supervision evaluations (see clinical training manual for process if the overall score on summative evaluations is below a 3)
- Successfully passing Parts I-IV of the Clinical Competency Exam (CCE)
- Successfully proposing a dissertation (see dissertation manual for process if the dissertation is not successfully proposed)
- Successfully defending a dissertation and submitting it for binding and/or publication through APU Libraries (see dissertation manual for process if the dissertation is not successfully defended)
- Completing a minimum of 1,500 hours of a predoctoral internship (see clinical training manual for further details)

## Personal Psychotherapy Required

All PsyD students must complete 30 hours of psychotherapy with a licensed psychologist of their choice. Additional individual psychotherapy may be recommended or required by the program as part of the degree requirements if deemed necessary by department faculty.

## Degree Posting

The doctoral degree is posted after the student has met all program requirements, including verification of the following:

- Completion of all required coursework (prior to commencing internship)
- Passing of Clinical Competency Exam
- Successful dissertation defense
- Submission of dissertation for binding
- Verification of completion of personal psychotherapy hours (see above)
- Verification of completion of the predoctoral internship

Note: Doctoral degree posting dates conform to those published in the catalog. (<http://catalog.apu.edu/policies-procedures/graduate/graduation-requirements-commencement/degree-posting/>)

## **Academic Psychology Licensure**

The APU PsyD program fulfills the graduate education requirements in the state of California for licensure as a psychologist. Students seeking licensure in California may obtain information regarding requirements by contacting:

California Board of Psychology  
1625 N. Market Blvd., Ste. N-215  
Sacramento, CA 95834  
(916) 574-7720  
bopmail@dca.ca.gov  
psychology.ca.gov (<https://www.psychology.ca.gov/>)

Students seeking licensure in another state should contact the appropriate examining board in that state.