

UNSW School of Psychology

Master of Psychology (Clinical)

2022 Program Guide

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The School of Psychology at UNSW Sydney

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

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

The Master of Psychology (Clinical) Program

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

The program is accredited by the [Australian Psychology Accreditation Council \(APAC\)](#) as the fifth and sixth years of study leading to registration as a psychologist with the [Psychology Board of Australia \(PsyBA\)](#). Graduates of the program are eligible to undertake the registrar program in the area of Clinical Psychology and upon completion of the registrar program can apply to the PsyBA for [endorsement](#) as a Clinical Psychologist.

Aims of the Program

The Master of Psychology (Clinical) program provides post-graduate training for candidates who intend to work as clinical psychologists in hospitals, community health, and other settings where they might be engaged in health promotion and the diagnosis, assessment, and treatment of people with a range of psychological difficulties including neuropsychological conditions.

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

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

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

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



Program Structure

The University year is divided into [3 standard terms](#). There is an optional summer term, however no postgraduate courses are scheduled in this term. Certain courses in the program do run outside the standard term dates. Further, practical work (e.g., field placements and Clinic work) continues throughout the year including during term breaks. Trainees are expected to participate in all components of the program.

The program has been designed to be taken as a two-year full-time program although part-time progression plans can be developed in careful consultation with the Program Director.

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

The table following shows the structure of the program as it applies to full-time trainees. The progression plan for part-time trainees will need to be discussed and finalised with the Program Director. Classes are usually scheduled on Mondays and Tuesdays. The timetable is usually made available a few weeks prior to the commencement of a new term. Only a limited amount of timetable information will be available [online](#) or via your [Class Schedule](#) on myUNSW.

Once a term gets underway, the timetable will be published/updated on the School's Master of Psychology (Clinical) [webpage](#) (see the right-hand side menu) and all postgraduate [Moodle](#) pages.

Standalone Program Structure		Units of Credit	Approximate Hours per Week		
			Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Stage 1					
PSYC7212	Adult and Child Clinical Psychology 1	6	3 (from 0 week)		
PSYC7001	Psychological Assessment	6	3		
PSYC7204	Adult and Child Clinical Psychology 2	6	3		
PSYC7221	Experimental Clinical Psychology	6	4 & Workshops		
PSYC7210	Clinical Neuropsychology	6	3		
PSYC7223	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 1	6	Varied		
PSYC7224	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 2	6	Varied		
PSYC7233	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 3	6	Varied		
Stage 2					
PSYC7220	Psychology of Health and Illness	6	2		
PSYC7222	Advanced Topics in Clinical Psychology	6	Workshop Block		
PSYC7234	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 4	6	Varied		
PSYC7235	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 5	6	Varied		
PSYC7236	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 6	6	Varied		
PSYC7230	Research Thesis (Clinical) 1	6	Varied		
PSYC7231	Research Thesis (Clinical) 2	6	Varied		
PSYC7232	Research Thesis (Clinical) 2	6	Varied		

NB: The program structure has significantly changed since 2021 so the above structure might not apply to trainees who have started their program prior to 2021. For further clarification, please contact the Program Director.



Combining MPsych(Clin) with a PhD

A combined Doctor of Philosophy/Master of Psychology (Clinical) degree program is available over four full-time years. This program consists of a research project (PhD) on a clinical topic in addition to the coursework and professional practice components (13 courses) in the Master of Psychology (Clinical) degree. Trainees work on their research project across the four years and concurrently take Masters courses in each year. This program is restricted to those trainees who have completed an Honours Class 1 degree in Psychology, and is subject to the availability of adequate supervision and research infrastructure. Full details can be found on the School of Psychology [website](#).

The table following shows the typical structure of the program as it applies to full-time combined trainees. It is standard practice for combined trainees to complete the clinical courses in the first year before going on to start their professional practicum training from the second year onwards. Of note is that Professional and Ethical Practice 4 is carried over between Terms 1 and 2 of the third year. The actual progression plan for each combined trainee will need to be discussed and finalised with the Program Director and the Combined Program Coordinator at the start of the program.

Combined Program Structure		Approximate Hours per Week		
		Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Stage 1				
PSYC7212	Adult and Child Clinical Psychology 1	3 (from 0 week)		
PSYC7001	Psychological Assessment	3		
PSYC7204	Adult and Child Clinical Psychology 2		3	
PSYC7221	Experimental Clinical Psychology		4 & Workshops	
PSYC7210	Clinical Neuropsychology			3
Stage 2				
PSYC7223	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 1	Varied		
PSYC7224	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 2		Varied	
PSYC7233	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 3			Varied
PSYC7220	Psychology of Health and Illness		2	
PSYC7222	Advanced Topics in Clinical Psychology	Workshop Block		
Stage 3				
PSYC7234	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 4	Varied (across Terms 1 & 2)		
PSYC7235	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 4		Varied (across Terms 1 & 2)	
PSYC7236	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 5			Varied
Stage 4				
PSYC7236	Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 5	Varied		



Trainee Attendance & Requirements

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

Before the commencement of training, trainees must be registered as [Provisional Psychologists](#) with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). Trainees must maintain their registration **for the duration of their candidature, irrespective of when they are on placement (Combined PhD/MPsych trainees must maintain registration for the duration of the combined degree).**

Trainees will also need to have read and be ready to comply with the [Code of Ethics](#) endorsed by the Psychology Board of Australia. As part of the program, trainees will also be required to complete a set of compliance checks (e.g., [Working with Children Check](#), [Australia National Police Check](#)) and [vaccination requirements](#) in line with NSW Health requirements for students undertaking placements in a NSW Health facility.

There will be costs associated with AHPRA registration, compliance checks and vaccination requirements which trainees will need to cover.

Program Components

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

I. Course Work (42 units of credit)

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

PSYC7212 Adult and Child Clinical Psychology 1

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

PSYC7204 Adult and Child Clinical Psychology 2

This course is an extension of PSYC7212 and provides further theoretical knowledge and practical skills in areas of child and adult clinical psychology. The focus is on aetiology, assessment, diagnosis, case conceptualisation, and empirically supported treatment of mental health issues in children and adults. These problems will be considered within the individual's relevant social context (including family, school, and peers as relevant). The course covers best practice guidelines and is guided by a scientist-practitioner approach.

PSYC7001 Psychological Assessment

This course is designed to equip trainees with basic skills in psychological assessment and report writing. The course focuses upon the assessment of intelligence in adults and children. Trainees will be taught the theoretical and empirical underpinnings of intelligence testing using the Wechsler scales and will develop competency in the administration, scoring and interpretation of these. This course also provides trainees with basic knowledge and skills in the administration and interpretation of the Wechsler Memory Scales and other tests commonly used in neuropsychological assessment. Finally this course emphasises the importance of accurately detecting changes in client functioning, including the estimation of premorbid intelligence, the detection of improvement over time that may indicate treatment efficacy or spontaneous recovery and changes that implicate deterioration of function.



PSYC7221 Experimental Clinical Psychology

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

PSYC7210 Clinical Neuropsychology

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

PSYC7220 Psychology of Health and Illness

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

PSYC7222 Advanced Topics in Clinical Psychology

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

II. Professional Practice (36 units of credit)

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

Trainees complete professional practice via six separate one-term courses which are all UNSW approved WIL (Work Integrated Learning) courses:

- ***PSYC7223 Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 1***
- ***PSYC7224 Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 2***
- ***PSYC7233 Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 3***
- ***PSYC7234 Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 4***
- ***PSYC7235 Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 5***
- ***PSYC7236 Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 6***

Each Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) course is a prerequisite for the next Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) course.

Professional practice involves the following two components:

A. Professional Practice in the UNSW Psychology Clinic

By the end of the two-year program, trainees are required to have completed a minimum of 1,000 hours of activity related to professional practice in order to be eligible for assessment in this component. A large proportion (around half) of these hours will be devoted to clinical work within the [UNSW Psychology Clinic](#). This work will involve assessing and treating clients, under the supervision of various members of the clinical staff. Trainees will begin seeing clients in their first year of enrolment. Client work in the clinic involves seeing both adult and child clients



for therapy and psychometric assessments. Trainees will be allocated cases to be seen individually or in partnership with another trainee. Trainees would also be expected to be involved in facilitating group programs.

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

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

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

Throughout professional practice, strong emphases will be placed on the technical skills, professionalism and ethical practices of the trainee. All trainees will be expected to demonstrate satisfactory performance across all 11 areas of professional competencies:

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

B. Field Placements

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

Trainees usually commence their first external placement in Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) 4. The evaluation of the trainee's performance in each setting, completed by the supervising Clinical Psychologist, will contribute to the trainee's final grade in the Professional Practice component of the program.

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

All trainees on placement, must be enrolled in one of the six PEP courses (PSYC7223, PSYC7224, PSYC7233, PSYC7234, PSYC7235 or PSYC7236) for the entire duration of their placement. If the professional placement



associated with a PEP course is not satisfactorily completed, the trainee may be awarded an 'Unsatisfactory Fail' (UF) for the PEP course (refer to [Program rules](#), below).

III. Research Thesis (18 units of credit)

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

The research thesis component aims to help the trainee develop research skills that would be relevant to their subsequent clinical work. The thesis, therefore, involves an investigation into some aspect of clinical psychology. The research project may be conducted either at the University or in a suitable clinical setting (usually in collaboration with a qualified Clinical Psychologist or other health care workers in that setting). No particular type of project is stipulated, (i.e., it could involve a controlled treatment outcome study, the development of a clinically relevant measure, or the evaluation of an existing treatment program) but the trainee must make a major contribution to the design, implementation, and evaluation of the research project. The thesis is written as a journal article suitable for submission to a specific peer-reviewed journal.

Work on the thesis can commence from the first year of the program, when trainees are assigned to a research supervisor.

Full-time stand-alone Master trainees complete their research thesis via three separate one-term courses in the second year of the program (with timing of the thesis courses varying for part-time trainees):

- ***PSYC7230 Research Thesis (Clinical) 1***
- ***PSYC7231 Research Thesis (Clinical) 2***
- ***PSYC7232 Research Thesis (Clinical) 3***

The thesis is due around mid-October, in the second year of the program for full-time Master of Psychology (Clinical) trainees. Trainees must satisfactorily complete each Research Thesis (Clinical) course before they can progress to the next Research Thesis (Clinical) course.

Trainees enrolled in the Combined Masters/PhD program are not required to enrol in the Research Thesis (Clinical) courses as the research component of their program is subsumed under their PhD research degree.



Program Rules and Award of degree

For prerequisite information on each individual course, please refer to individual Course Outlines.

1. Trainees must satisfactorily complete PSYC7230 Research Thesis (Clinical) 1 before they can enrol in PSYC7231 Research Thesis (Clinical) 2. Trainees must complete PSYC7232 Research Thesis (Clinical) 2 before they can enrol in PSYC7232 Research Thesis (Clinical) 3.
2. Trainees must satisfactorily complete each Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) course before they can progress on to the next Professional and Ethical Practice (Clinical) course.
3. Each professional placement in the program is linked to a Professional and Ethical Practice (PEP) course. Until the placement has been successfully completed, a PE grade will be applied to the PEP course. If the placement is not completed to a satisfactory standard, or placement requirements have not been met (as determined by both the Placement Coordinator and Program Director), a UF grade will be applied to the PEP course. Failure to meet placement requirements and to successfully complete the placement will lead to failure of the PEP course. No hours from an unsatisfactory placement will count towards the minimum 1000 hours of supervised practicum experience required for completion of the program.
4. Should a trainee fail a course*, approval to enrol in the failed course again will be at the discretion of the Program Director^ (and Placement Coordinator, in the case of PEP courses). Alternatively, the Program Director may recommend that the trainee withdraw from the program.

*Any course required for the program, including the three Research Thesis (Clinical) courses and the six Professional and Ethical Practice courses.

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

5. Should a trainee fail a course the second time, the Program Director will recommend that their place in the program be terminated. That is, a trainee may only attempt any course twice as a maximum.

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

Program Leave

Program Leave may be granted subject to the [rules and procedures](#) outlined by the university. Given the nature of a professional training program, including AHPRA registration requirements and practicum work relating to client care, it is important for trainees who wish to take program leave to discuss the plan with the Program Director in advance. A trainee who is not enrolled at the relevant census date, and has not applied for and been granted approved program leave for that term, will be discontinued from their program and must formally apply for re-admission if they want to enrol in a future term.



Fees and Charges

Commonwealth Supported Places are available to trainees in the program. A Commonwealth Supported Place is a higher education place for which the Government makes a contribution towards the cost of the student's education, and the student pays a [Student Contribution amount](#). Full information on fees and charges may be found on the university [Fee webpage](#).

Program Staff

Program Director & Placement Coordinator

Dr Chien Hoong Gooi, BCom UNSW, BSc (Hons) UNSW, MSc Syd, DClinPsych Syd

Program Administrator

Emmalee Taylor

Combined Program Coordinator

Professor Angela Nickerson BA(Hons) UQ, MPsych(Clin), PhD UNSW

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Contact Information

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The information contained in this guide is correct as at 7 February 2022. Prospective trainees should contact UNSW to confirm admission requirements and availability of programs. UNSW reserves the right to change any programs, admission requirement or other information herein without any prior notice. CRICOS Provider No. 000098G.

