

# CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY, DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D.) WITH A CONCENTRATION IN BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE

## Program accreditation

American Psychological Association

## Program goal

The Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical Psychology offered by VCU is accredited by the American Psychological Association. The clinical psychology program at VCU is committed to excellence in scholarship and clinical training from the scientist-practitioner model. The doctoral program in clinical psychology is designed to require four to five years of academic work plus one additional year devoted to a full-time APA-accredited predoctoral internship placement. The first three years of graduate school residence concentrate on course work, thesis research and practicum experience, with the fourth and fifth year largely reserved for the completion of off-campus practicum experience and dissertation research. A student entering the program with a master's degree and extensive clinical experience may petition to reduce the practicum requirements by one year, resulting in three rather than four years of residency. All academic training occurs while the student is in residence at VCU.

The goal of the program is to train clinical psychologists in scientific principles and evidence-based theoretical models to guide the study and treatment of psychopathology for diverse groups of individuals. Accordingly, student learning outcomes include demonstrating competence in scientific research; the delivery of clinical services and related documentation; and cultural competence in science and practice. The clinical program is designed to provide students with foundational clinical and research competencies in two broad specialty areas: behavioral medicine and child and adolescent. The concentration in behavioral medicine emphasizes training in clinical health psychology, prevention, program development, consultation and health promotion. The concentration in clinical child focuses on developmental psychopathology and treatment of underserved youth in schools and community settings. The program also has a strong focus on meeting the needs of underserved populations within these two broad specialty areas. The program prepares students for faculty, staff, administrative and practitioner positions in university departments of psychology, medical schools, community mental health centers, clinics, hospitals, prisons, state departments of mental health and private practice.

The Center for Psychological Services and Development, a campus-based community service agency operated by the department, provides training opportunities for graduate students in all departmental programs, including practicum and research training for graduate students in the clinical psychology program. A wide variety of other on- and off-campus practicum placements also are available.

The department maintains laboratory facilities for research in the areas of behavioral assessment, behavioral medicine, developmental, learning, behavioral pharmacology, psychophysiology, psychotherapy process, social perception, social influence and group dynamics. Opportunities for field research also are available in a variety of settings.

## Student learning outcomes

### Program core learning outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate competence in scientific research.
2. Students will demonstrate cultural competence in science and practice.

### Behavioral medicine concentration-specific outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate competence in the delivery of clinical services to adults and in related documentation.

## VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the **Graduate School website** and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

**Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students.**

## Degree candidacy requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master's or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student's graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student's faculty regarding the student's academic achievements and the student's readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

**Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements.**

## Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

**Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements.**

Apply online today. (<https://www.vcu.edu/admissions/apply/graduate/>)

## Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
Ph.D.	Fall	Dec 1	

Please note that the GRE is no longer required as part of the application for admission.

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements/>), the following requirements represent the minimum acceptable standards for admission.

1. Applicants must have graduated with a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, but not necessarily with a major in psychology.
2. Applicants must present 18 semester hours of undergraduate course work in psychology. This is the minimal, but not optimal, number of hours for an applicant to be considered for admission. Included must be each of the following courses: general psychology, statistics and experimental psychology. Exceptionally well-qualified applicants with less than a major in psychology, or applicants whose undergraduate work is considered outdated by the admissions committee, may be advised to complete some additional undergraduate courses at the beginning of their graduate study program.
3. Applicants must present an undergraduate record indicating superior academic potential.
4. Three letters of recommendation are required (e.g., research supervisor, clinical supervisor, previous instructor).
5. A personal interview may be required at the discretion of the department

The number of students who can be admitted is limited by the facilities and staff available. All applicants will be notified of the decision made. The screening process may begin as early as Jan. 1. First offers of admission are made by April 1. By June 1, after other offers to alternates have been made and final acceptances by students have been received, admissions may be closed.

Transfer credit hours for graduate work at other institutions will be evaluated after the completion of nine semester hours in the department.

## Degree requirements

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>), students are required to complete course work in core and elective courses and to conduct significant research. All work toward the Ph.D. degree must be completed within eight years of the first enrollment.

1. Credit hour requirements: Students in the clinical psychology Ph.D. program are required to earn a minimum of 87.5 graduate-level credit hours beyond the baccalaureate. At least one-half of the credit hours presented for graduation must be at the 600 level or higher.
2. Grade requirement: Receipt of a grade of C or lower in two courses, or grades of C or lower in more than six credit hours of psychology courses, constitutes automatic dismissal of a student from the program.
3. Master's-level candidacy and requirements: All students in the Department of Psychology are required to complete a department

core curriculum (17 credit hours) or its equivalent for students entering with a master's degree. Students who receive a grade of C or lower in one of the department core courses must either (a) satisfactorily complete a re-examination of the material covered in the course within one semester following the receipt of the grade (this re-examination is to be arranged and evaluated by the course instructor) or (b) repeat the course for credit the next time it is offered and receive a grade of B or better. Regardless of which of these approaches is chosen, the students will be given only one opportunity to demonstrate that they have mastered the course material. Students who either fail the re-examination or repeat the course and receive a grade of C or lower will have failed the examination and will be dismissed from the program. Additional courses and training experiences will be determined in consultation with and subject to the approval of the student's faculty adviser and graduate program committee. All students are required to complete a master's thesis and to defend it successfully in an oral examination. The successful proposal of the thesis will elevate the student to master's degree candidacy status. Ideally, the thesis should be publishable as a piece of research and make a contribution to the field of psychology. Students who have previously completed a master's thesis in psychology at another university may have the thesis requirement waived if the thesis is accepted by their graduate program committee. The residence requirement for the master's degree is 18 hours, nine in each of two consecutive semesters. Completion of the degree usually requires four semesters. At least six credit hours in PSYC 798 must be completed, and no more than six can be counted toward the M.S. degree.

4. Doctoral candidacy and requirements: Students are obligated to request, in writing from their program committees, continuation of study beyond the master's degree and approval of their doctoral plan of study. Application from a student for continuation beyond the master's level will be evaluated by the appropriate program committee after completion of all requirements for the master's degree. The program committee reviews the student's request and approves or disapproves the request. The student must pass a written preliminary examination to become a doctoral candidate. Students are required to complete this requirement prior to defense of their dissertations and prior to leaving on internship for students in the clinical and counseling psychology programs. With the consent of the program committee, doctoral students may design a minor consisting of courses in departments other than psychology or courses in an area of psychology other than the major. Both the clinical and counseling psychology programs require completion of applied practica and a one-year predoctoral internship approved by the program committee. Research practica are required by all programs. Practicum credit hours will vary depending on the program. Internship will be one-half credit hour per semester. A dissertation requiring the planning, completion and oral defense of an original research project is an integral part of the doctoral program. At least 12 credit hours in PSYC 898 must be completed, and no more than 12 can be counted toward the Ph.D. degree. Completion of the entire program usually requires four to six years (including the internship year for students in the clinical and counseling programs). Candidates must complete all requirements for the Ph.D. degree within an eight-year period from the date of admission to the graduate program unless permission is granted for an extension. In some cases, specific programs and divisions may have requirements in addition to those stated here.

A more detailed description of the requirements for each of the graduate programs is included in the Department of Psychology's Graduate

Student Handbook, which is provided to each incoming graduate student. Visit the website for more information: [psychology.vcu.edu](http://www.psychology.vcu.edu) (<http://www.psychology.vcu.edu/>).

## Curriculum requirements

Course	Title	Hours
<b>Department core courses</b>		
PSYC 619	Learning and Cognition <sup>1</sup>	3
PSYC 629	Biological Basis of Behavior <sup>1</sup>	3
PSYC 673	Diversity Dialogues <sup>1</sup>	2
PSYC 680	Statistics in Psychological Research I <sup>1</sup>	3
PSYC 681	Statistics in Psychological Research II <sup>1</sup>	3
PSYC 684	Research Methods in Psychology <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>Required clinical courses</b>		
PSYC 616	Psychopathology <sup>1</sup>	3
PSYC 643	Principles of Psychological Measurement	2
PSYC 644	Individual Tests of Intelligence <sup>1</sup>	3
PSYC 651	Theories of Counseling and Interviewing <sup>1</sup>	2
PSYC 660	Health Psychology	3
PSYC 661	Clinical Applications of Health Psychology	3
PSYC 662	Diagnostic and Behavioral Assessment	3
PSYC 667	Behavior Therapy <sup>1</sup>	3
PSYC 675	Ethical Principles of Psychology	2
<b>Research and clinical practica</b>		
PSYC 694	Clinical Practicum (variable credit course repeated for maximum of 12 credit hours for Ph.D., six credit hours for M.S.) <sup>1,2</sup>	12
<b>Developmental course</b>		
PSYC 603	Developmental Processes	3
<b>Social aspects of behavior course</b>		
PSYC 630	Social Psychology	3
<b>Cultural/individual diversity course</b>		
PSYC 677	Minority Issues in Mental Health	3
<b>Electives</b>		
PSYC	electives at 600-level or higher.	6
<b>Approved internship</b>		
PSYC 696	Internship (0.5 credit hours for three consecutive semesters)	1.5
<b>Thesis/dissertation</b>		
PSYC 798	M.S. Thesis <sup>1</sup>	6
PSYC 898	Doctoral Dissertation	12
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>87.5</b>

<sup>1</sup>

Required course for M.S. degree (40 credit hours minimum)

<sup>2</sup>

Up to two credit hours of PSYC 694 may be waived depending on experience and ability.

**The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 87.5.**

### Contact

Terri Sullivan, Ph.D.  
Professor and graduate program co-director  
[tnsulliv@vcu.edu](mailto:tnsulliv@vcu.edu)  
(804) 828-9304

Robin S. Everhart, Ph.D.  
Professor and graduate program co-director  
[reverhart@vcu.edu](mailto:reverhart@vcu.edu)  
(804) 828-7249

### Additional contact

Rosalie Corona, Ph.D.  
Professor and director, clinical psychology training program  
[racorona@vcu.edu](mailto:racorona@vcu.edu)  
(804) 828-8059

**Program website:** <https://psychology.vcu.edu/graduate/phd-in-clinical-psychology/>