

WHY STUDY CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY?

Train as a Clinical Psychologist

Clinical psychologists are involved in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of a wide range of psychological disorders. While most clinical psychologists are practitioners, they may also teach and conduct research in various settings such as universities, hospitals, schools, and community health centres.

Accredited by Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) and Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA)

The MCP and MCP/PhD programs are accredited by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) as a 5th and 6th year of training and recognised by the Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA) for the purposes of registration and for endorsement of practice in clinical psychology. Both programs are an approved qualification for Associate Membership of the Australian Clinical Psychology Association (ACPA) and the Australian Psychological Society (APS) College of Clinical Psychologists.

The MCP and MCP/PhD degrees are recognized, in principle, by the New South Wales Ministry of Health as qualifying the holder for progression to the grade of Clinical Psychologist. In order to gain endorsement from the Psychology Registration Board of Australia as a Clinical Psychologist, following the completion of the MCP or MCP/PhD program, graduates need to undertake a two-year full time equivalent Clinical Psychology Registrar program which involves clinical psychology practice, supervision, and continuing professional development.

MCP (2 years full time study)

The Master of Clinical Psychology (MCP) is a two-year full-time program comprised of academic coursework, supervised clinical placements and research. The coursework involves lectures, workshops, and seminars by University of Sydney academic staff and is timetabled on-campus during business hours. Clinical placement experience is gained through two internal clinical placements in the on-campus Psychology Clinic and two external clinical placements in hospital and community settings. The program includes 1200 hours of supervised clinical placement experience.

Coursework is timetabled throughout the two years of the program, with the most intensive component in first semester of first year. The subsequent semesters average at one and a half days per week for coursework and two days per week for clinical placements. Students are expected to devote approximately a half day per week to research in the first year, with this load increasing to one per week in the second year. Due to the intensive workload and timetable, students often only manage to work one day per week.

MCP/PhD Double degree (4.5 years full time study)

The Master of Clinical Psychology and Doctor of Philosophy (MCP/PhD) double degree provides clinical psychology training to candidates who also wish to complete a PhD because they are interested in a research or academic career in clinical psychology. The program is structured so that 96 credit points of the MCP coursework is completed over three years: students enrol full time in the MCP coursework in first year; the second and third years involve concurrent part time enrolment in the MCP coursework and full-time enrolment in the PhD. Students will enrol full time in the PhD for the remaining four semesters. The total duration of this double degree is 4.5 years (or 9 semesters).

Financial support

Students enrolled in the MCP degree and the first year of the MCP/PhD are eligible for Centrelink support. In regard to the MCP/PhD double degree, full time enrolment in the PhD will allow students to be eligible for research scholarships from the second year of the program.

International equivalency

Students are advised to contact the relevant accreditation and registration bodies in their own country for accurate advice regarding international equivalency for accreditation and registration of the MCP and MCP/PhD programs. However, with careful selection of clinical placements and additional clinical placements hours, MCP graduates can meet UK and European standards, and MCP/PhD graduate may meet US and Canadian standards.

Learning and Teaching Philosophy

The MCP adopts a Scientist-Practitioner model with an emphasis on cognitive-behavioural approaches, providing students with expertise, both practical and academic, to enable them to work as a professional Clinical Psychologist in a variety of clinical settings across the lifespan. Our clinical students become proficient in the application of CBT, but also are offered training in other approaches, such as family therapy, schema therapy, dialectical behaviour therapy, and integrated psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Advanced units of student and external clinical placements allow students to develop a depth and breadth of clinical experience as they are introduced to additional therapeutic approaches.

Emphasis on professional practice and personal development

The academic and practical components of the program are focused on providing a sound research-based foundation of diverse knowledge for professional clinical practice and trainees are strongly supported in the application of this knowledge to develop skills, understanding, ethical values and approaches necessary for good clinical practice.

The Clinical Psychology Unit prides itself on developing a curriculum that responds to the social and emotional well-being of diverse populations. We aim to challenge students to engage in reflective practice and to examine their own privilege, to prepare students for work with aboriginal communities, refugee communities, and also to include direct engagement with peer workers and others involved in the mental health recovery movement. We from time to time include people with lived experience in the classroom, who tell their story alongside academic knowledge. Our aim is to maintain a progressive agenda in the development of scientist and activist practitioners, capable of critical analysis of the effects of the historical and social context on conceptualisations of mental health.

Clinical Placements in focus

The recently refurbished Psychology Clinic offers psychological services to the general community for a broad range of problems for adults, children, adolescents and families, psychometric assessments and group therapy. The Clinic receives a steady flow of referrals, often with a waiting list of clients. Students receive both one to one and group supervision. Supervisors are able to observe the student's work directly through a one-way observation window, through a live direct feed audio-visual system, and through audio and video recordings. Expert supervision is provided by academic and clinical staff in the practical application of knowledge and theory. A developmental model of supervision is utilised whereby clear direction and focus is offered early on with a gradual increase in self-direction by trainees over time as confidence and skills build.

The clinical program has excellent links with major teaching hospitals in Sydney (both public and private) as well as community-based settings. The University of Sydney is focussed on strengthening links with the Westmead campus, and as a result, we have outstanding placement opportunities at both Westmead Hospital and the Children's Hospital at Westmead. Our location in the Brain and Mind Centre also facilitates links with co-located services such as the Child Behaviour Research Clinic and headspace Camperdown. We are able to offer clinical placements in diverse settings resulting in our students becoming competent treating adults, adolescents, children and older adults, with complex psychiatric/psychological disorders.

Excellent clinical research opportunities

Academic staff have expertise and are able to supervise research projects in a range of areas, including anxiety disorders, eating disorders, health psychology, gambling, neurological conditions, child clinical psychology, neuropsychological disorders, and child clinical neuropsychology. Students have the opportunity to specialize within the MCP program by tailoring both their choice of external clinical placements and research project to their area of interest.