

Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) in Clinical Psychology

Program Information

The Illinois School of Professional Psychology (ISPP) at National Louis University is housed under the School of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences. ISPP offers the doctoral degree in clinical psychology (Psy.D.). Our program follows the practitioner-scholar model of clinical training, which prepares aspiring psychologists to develop the essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for successful clinical practice. ISPP was founded in 1976 and was the first Psy.D. program in the Midwest. We graduated our first class of Psy.D. candidates in 1980. Since the inception of ISPP, the focus has been on providing a strong foundation in clinical theory, evidence-based practice, preparation for working with diverse populations, and service to the community and the profession in an environment of close mentoring and supervision. Now, as part of National Louis University, this tradition continues.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- A practitioner-scholar model that offers a curriculum designed to prepare clinicians who provide scientifically grounded, theoretically informed, and culturally responsive psychological services
- A strong foundation in the science of psychology, close guidance in clinical practice, and encouragement of growth through experiential learning
- Rich exposure to the theories of psychological change; students take core courses in each of the major systems of psychotherapy – Cognitive Behavioral, Family Systems, Person-Centered, and Psychoanalytic. In addition, students complete an advanced intervention course for deeper study in one of the major orientation or focus on an additional area of intervention. Psychological intervention is rooted in theory and the empirical basis of change.
- Both the program and the university emphasize the importance of training students to serve the diverse people who make up our local communities. ISPP is committed to training psychologists from traditionally underrepresented racial and ethnic groups and to prepare all students to provide culturally-informed psychological services.
- Optional concentrations in Trauma, Health Psychology, and Client-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapies

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A real strength of the program lies in the commitment to fostering students' personal and professional development. As psychologists, we are our own tools and it is essential that we regularly engage in self-care, self-reflection, and awareness of our impact on others. The ISPP faculty value a lifelong focus on knowing oneself and recognizing that there are parts of ourselves that we do not know. Openness to feedback and willingness to change are essential skills in our profession. As faculty and as a program, we take this responsibility seriously and strongly encourage students to engage in healthy self-care and self-reflection. In the first year, each student takes a course called "Personal and Professional Development." This course focuses on increasing knowledge, enhancing skills, and examining attitudes and values involved in interpersonal and group interaction. In this experiential approach, students learn to increase self-awareness and empathic understanding of others, practice more effective listening and communication skills, and work on developing greater interpersonal competency in order to guide their development as clinicians and professional psychologists. Throughout the program, students are invited to share aspects of themselves in class or in training and supervisory relationships. Many of the required courses call on students to reflect on their own upbringing and life experiences and how these have shaped their response to others and the world; including examining one's stereotypes and biases and the impacts of societal and cultural messages on one's belief structure. These tasks are essential to foster development as a psychologist.

TRAINING PLACEMENTS

ISPP at National Louis University, Chicago's current list of approved sites includes community mental health centers, consortiums, state, community, and private psychiatric hospitals, medical and trauma centers, university counseling centers, schools, correctional facilities, residential treatment programs, independent and group practices, and corporate settings. Some sites serve the general population while others service specific populations (e.g., children, adolescents, older adults, people with chronic behavioral health issues, people involved with the criminal justice system, etc.).

Diagnostic Practicum

The Diagnostic Practicum teaches students clinical assessment techniques and diagnostic formulation, so that appropriate clinical services can be recommended. The use of psychological testing instruments continues to distinguish psychologists from other mental health professionals. Competence in the use of these tests remains central to the identity of the clinical psychologist. Students must complete a minimum 625 hours at their site—usually 16-20 hours per week for 40 weeks.

Therapy Practicum

The therapy practicum teaches psychotherapy intervention skills. Students develop competence with establishing a working therapeutic alliance, active listening, empathic responding, validation and reflection in the therapy relationship. Students learn therapy interventions particular to a theoretical orientation, rooted in the empirical basis of that treatment approach. The therapy practicum is designed to provide an opportunity for the student to work in an established program in a way that is mutually beneficial to the training site and to the student's professional growth. Students must complete a minimum 625 hours at their site—usually 16-20 hours per week for 40 weeks.

Advanced Practicum

Doctoral students accumulate a minimum of 1,250 hours of supervised clinical experience before starting the internship. However, to be competitive for internship sites, students are strongly encouraged to accumulate as many hours as possible. Students are encouraged to pursue additional training through an advanced practicum experience in order to meet the student's specific interests in specialized settings. The advanced practicum allows students the opportunity to build expertise in a particular type of therapy intervention or psychological assessment; to gain experience in working with a different population or in a new setting; and to straighten their clinical psychology skills and readiness for internship.

PRE-DOCTORAL INTERNSHIP

Trainees apply for pre-doctoral internship when they are in the fourth year of the full-time curriculum. Successful completion of a pre-doctoral internship, approved by the ISPP, is a requirement for graduation with the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology. The internship is a year-long, organized training experience that is completed at a site within the United States or Canada. ISPP requires all of its students to obtain internships affiliated with the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) and, where possible, American Psychological Association (APA) or Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) accredited internships.

PSY.D. ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

- Completed admissions application
- A bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution
- An undergraduate degree grade point average of at least 3.0 on a scale of 4.0 or a conferred graduate degree grade point average of 3.25 (on a scale of 4.0).
- Official transcripts from all schools attended
- Current resume
- Personal/professional goal statement with a self-appraisal of qualifications for the profession
- Three professional letters of recommendation, with a minimum of 1 from a faculty member. Letters of recommendation must be written by individuals who know the candidate from an academic or professional perspective and are able to comment on the candidate's capacity for undertaking graduate studies.
- Completion of an interview with members of the program faculty, by invitation

ADVISEMENT

The success of the students at ISPP is of utmost importance to the program faculty. Therefore, each student is assigned a faculty advisor during their first year in the program; students will have input into this advisor assignment. ISPP utilizes a mentoring model for advising. Faculty advisors are available for consultation regarding student professional development, academic and training progress and other school and professional development issues. Faculty advisors also assist students with academic and professional decision-making, provide regular and annual feedback from faculty, and serve as a liaison to the program, the university, and the professional community.

ISPP PROGRAM CORE FACULTY

One of the keys to our students' growth and success lies in the expert support and guidance of ISPP's faculty. Through these relationships, students apply their theoretical knowledge, implement clinical techniques, and integrate research findings to enhance their abilities as clinicians. These close mentoring relationships extend beyond the classroom to professional collaborations on presentations and publications. Additionally, many of our students have opportunities to work with faculty as teaching assistants. These roles can enhance professional collaborations. As a result, ISPP students gain experiences that will better prepare them to acquire professional licensure, maintain ethical relationships with patients and colleagues, and develop a professional network.

Our faculty specialize in a diverse range of clinical areas, including health psychology, trauma, client-centered therapy, and assessment of children, adolescents, couples and families. Our faculty are actively engaged in the profession including providing psychological services in the community; presenting at conferences and workshops; serving as peer editors of professional journals; and participating in state, regional, and national psychological associations.

MA DEGREE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Students enrolled in the Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) in Clinical Psychology degree program who wish to earn the Master of Arts (M.A.) in Clinical Psychology degree while working toward the doctoral degree must petition for the degree, and successfully complete a minimum of 50 credit hours of doctoral level coursework, including successful completion of the doctoral diagnostic practicum. In addition, students must submit, to the University Registrar, a degree finalization form to graduate. The master's degree earned as a student enrolled in the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology degree program is not a license-eligible degree within the State of Illinois.

CLINICAL RESEARCH PROJECT

All students in the Psy.D. program are required to develop a Clinical Research Project (CRP) as a requirement for graduation. The Clinical Research Project (PSYD856) is a scholarly work that is designed to provide students with an opportunity to deepen their knowledge and thought about a particular clinical area, to demonstrate the ability to critically analyze methodological issues, and to produce an original and potentially publishable piece of research and/or scholarly work in the field of clinical psychology. Students are expected to apply theoretical and scientific knowledge to the examination of meaningful research questions related to the clinical practice of psychology.

Recently completed Clinical Research Projects include:

"Exploring the Relationship Between Mindfulness, Self-Compassion, and Empathy in Student Therapists"

"Experience of Graduate Level Students of Color With Race in Psychology Diversity Courses"

"Racial Identity Orientation Among Latino Psychologists and Psychologists in Training"

"Review of Transgender Healthcare Process"

"Violence Prone Neighborhoods: A Proposed Intervention Program"

"Accurately Diagnosing Autism Spectrum Disorder among a Comorbid Population"

"The Impact of Social Media on the Self-Esteem of Youth -10-17 Years Old"

"Exploration of the Link between Migration and Acculturation Related-Stress, Attachment Style, and Psychological Distress in Arab Immigrants, Refugees and Asylees"

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY (Psy.D.) CURRICULUM

PREREQUISITES

The Illinois School of Professional Psychology at National Louis University requires applicants to successfully complete five undergraduate courses that serve as a basic foundation for course work in clinical psychology. Students must complete foundation courses before they matriculate in the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology degree program. The following courses are required:

- Introduction to Psychology/General Psychology*
- Statistics or Research Methods
- Abnormal Psychology, Psychopathology, or Maladaptive
- 2 additional courses in Psychology

* This course may be waived if the applicant has completed a Bachelors or Master's degree in Psychology or related mental health field.

COURSE SEQUENCE

The following is a suggested course sequence. The program is designed to be completed in five years. All courses are 3 credits unless otherwise indicated.

Year 1

Fall

- PSYD 719 Health and Dysfunction I
- PSYD 732 Child and Adolescent Development
- PSYD 742 Cognitive Assessment
- PSYD 708 Personal and Professional Development Group (2)
- PSYD 715 Professionalization Group I (0)

Winter

- PSYD 722 Health and Dysfunction II
- PSYD 738 Clinical Interviewing (1.5)
- PSYD 752 Personality Assessment (4)
- PSYD 753 Survey of Multicultural Psychology
- PSYD 716 Professionalization Group II (0)

Summer

- PSYD 847 Adult Development and Aging
- Integrated Assessment Elective- Choose 1 of 3 (as available)

Year 2

Fall

PSYD 802 Person Centered Theory and Therapy
PSYD 710 Professional Issues: Ethics, Conduct, and Law
PSYD 718 Statistics
PSYD 815 Diagnostic Practicum & Seminar I

Winter

PSYD 709 Social Psychology
PSYD 723 Research Methods
PSYD 805 Family and Couples Therapy
PSYD 816 Diagnostic Practicum & Seminar II

Summer

PSYD 809 Cognitive Behavioral Theory and Therapy
PSYD 703 History and Systems
Research Elective- choose 1 of 2
Practicum (Continues)

Year 3

Fall

PSYD 741 Assessment and Treatment of Diverse Populations
PSYD 849 CRP Proposal Development (2)
PSYD 705 Biological Bases of Behavior
PSYD 817 Psychotherapy Practicum & Seminar I

Winter

PSYD 707 Cognitive and Affective Processes
PSYD 806 Psychoanalytic Theory and Therapy
PSYD 856 Clinical Research Project (1)**
PSYD 818 Psychotherapy Practicum & Seminar II

Summer

PSYD 761 Clinical Psychopharmacology
PSYD 856 CRP
Practicum (continues)

Year 4

Fall

PSYD 853 Advanced Clinical Psychology Practicum I (1.5)
Diversity Elective
Elective

Winter

PSYD 854 Advanced Clinical Psychology Practicum II (1.5)
PSYD 735 Clinical Supervision (1.5)
PSYD 755 Consultation in Diverse Settings (1.5)
Advanced Intervention Elective

Summer

Elective (1.5)

Year 5

Fall, Winter, Summer

PSYD 880 Internship