

Masters of Science in Clinical Psychology



San José State
UNIVERSITY

Program Information Packet

Department of Psychology
One Washington Square
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(408) 924-5600
psych.sjsu.edu/grad/clinical

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Dear Prospective Student,

Thank you for your interest in the MS Degree Program in Clinical and Counseling Psychology at San Jose State University. This program is designed to provide students with both theoretical and practical training in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of a wide variety of individual and family mental health problems. The MS program allows students to meet the educational requirements for California State licensure as a Marriage, Family and Therapist (MFT). Our greatest strengths as a program lie with both the quality of education we provide and the focused supervised training provided in our on-campus clinic, the Psychological Services Center. This intensive on-campus experience provides therapists-in-training with an excellent foundation of clinical skills before entering their practicum placements (internships) in the community. We are an evidence based practice program that places a strong emphasis on both case conceptualization skills and utilizing the empirical literature to best assist clients.

Graduates of our program may find employment in community mental health agencies, private or public service agencies, and independent practice. We work with numerous agencies that provide excellent fieldwork and internship experiences for our students. The pre-degree fieldwork experience focuses on giving students assessment and intervention skills with individuals, couples, and families. These agencies often do not offer any financial compensation to the intern.

Currently we are only accepting students into a full-time track of study. The full-time track takes two years to complete all of the degree requirements and will proceed as it has in the past. This full-time track requires students to enroll in an average of 4 courses per semester, and these courses are taken in a set sequence. The advantage to the full-time track lies with the ability to finish the program in two years. We do allow students who are in the full-time track to petition to go part-time if they cannot continue in the full-time due to a change in life circumstances. If students go part-time, they will be required to take a minimum of 2 courses per semester. The sequence of courses for the part-time track will be determined in part by prerequisites for other courses. Applicants must petition to do this, and the petition must be approved by the Clinical faculty.

It is important to know that, in addition to the educational requirements for licensure, one must also have completed 3,000 hours of acceptable supervised experience and pass the written and oral licensing examinations administered by the [Board of Behavioral Science](#) Examiners. The entire process from entry into graduate school to licensure takes a minimum of three and one-half years if one proceeds with graduate training and internship on a full-time basis. San Jose State University's MS in Clinical Psychology is an accredited program by the Board of Behavioral Sciences.

There are two applications for admission to the Clinical Psychology Program:

- (1) There is the **University application** that is filled out on-line. You can download this from by going to the SJSU Graduate Studies web site. A link for that can be found on the SJSU MS Clinical web page; and
- (2) the **Department application** available from the Psychology Department Office (Dudley Moorehead Hall 157) or online at <http://www.sjsu.edu/psych/GraduatePrograms/clinicalpsych/index.htm>

There is only one admission cycle for the MS Clinical Program each year. All materials (written application materials, letter of recommendations, transcripts) must be submitted no later than January 15th to the Department of Psychology for Fall admission of that year. We do NOT accept late applications.

We require a bachelor degree in psychology, or you may complete a minimum of 30 semester units (45 quarter units) in psychology coursework. **A minimum GPA of 3.0 in Psychology courses and 3.0 for the last 2 years** (60 semester units; 90 quarter units) **of undergraduate coursework** is required for admission.

This program is small, cohesive, supportive, and we think, provides the best Masters level training in clinical psychology in the state of California. The program will provide graduates with all of the required courses as part of the application for a clinical internship, including a course in psychopharmacology.

On a final note, please understand that all MS Clinical programs are unique. Our program is academically demanding as well as clinically demanding. Applicants can chose their own theoretical perspective, but because

of our explicit focus on assessment and the evaluation of clinical science, students are exposed heavily to cognitive behavioral interventions in the beginning of their training. Please consider this when thinking about which graduate program is best for your training.

You are encouraged to review the attached material and information provided on the website. If, *after reviewing this*, you have further questions regarding our graduate degree programs, please contact the Director of Clinical Training using the information provided below.

Sincerely,

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MASTERS OF SCIENCE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM AT SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

OVERVIEW

This 50-unit Master of Science program is designed for students who are pursuing an MS degree, and who do NOT plan to proceed to a Ph.D. program. The MS program is designed to provide students with adequate theoretical and practical training to prepare them to work in a variety of counseling and mental health settings. The training in the MS in Clinical program emphasizes a scientific understanding of psychopathology. The program centers on a required core of academic coursework that meets the education requirements for the California Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) license. This license requires 3,000 hours of acceptable supervised clinical experience by the California State MFT licensing board. The MS in Clinical Psychology prepares students for positions in mental health clinics, hospitals, and residential treatment centers, or as assistants to doctorate-level clinical psychologists. It also allows students to prepare for careers as counselors in such areas as community college counseling, vocational counseling, rehabilitation counseling, substance abuse counseling, gerontological counseling, or grief counseling. This program is ideal for students whose ultimate goal is to work as marriage and family therapists working in hospital, community mental health, and independent practice settings. The MS in Clinical Psychology degree also prepares students for careers as consultants to schools and other agencies on matters relating to family dynamics and individual functioning.

The MS Clinical Psychology program at SJSU has a focus on the use and evaluation of assessment data throughout psychological interventions. We also emphasize the importance of using sound psychological theory in combination with the empirical literature on supported clinical interventions. This focus adheres to the applied or practitioner component of a scientist-practitioner or clinical science model of training.

This program is intended to be a “terminal” Masters program in that it does NOT prepare you for further graduate work focusing on clinical research. Our intention is that this will be your final (or “terminal”) degree. If you are planning to pursue a Ph.D. or a Psy.D. degree, you should consider applying to a more research-oriented graduate program. Be sure to check out the MA in Experimental Psychology program here at SJSU where you can take some clinical coursework. While you will receive no training to conduct psychotherapy in that program, it will prepare you to be more competitive when applying to Ph.D. programs.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of this program is to train Masters level psychotherapists for work in a variety of clinical settings including hospitals, schools, community colleges, public agencies, and private practice. The diversity of settings and populations in which our graduates work requires that our students be flexible and open to differing clinical and cultural perspectives. Faculty in the program represent a variety of theoretical, clinical, and research interests, including Family Therapy, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Behavior Therapy, Psychodynamic, Existential, Cross-cultural, Feminist Therapy, Community Psychology, and the biopsychosocial model inherent in Behavioral Medicine/Health psychology.

As a faculty we value diversity in thinking and encourage our students to sample ideas from many different points of view. While we do not require conformity to any one approach, we do require that whatever approach our students take be supported by a high standard of professional ethics and an established body of professional literature, including empirical and clinical research. Graduates of this program should demonstrate a basic familiarity with the major approaches to assessment, diagnosis and treatment, a respect for cultural diversity, and accountability for service delivery. We expect that our graduates have the ability to read and critically evaluate the literature in the field, and we require that our graduates have achieved a basic level of proficiency within at least one psychotherapeutic approach. In short, our ideal graduate is broadly educated, critically minded, and has the ability to ethically apply theory to practice in a diverse and changing community.

ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

Applications are accepted for the Fall semester only. To be eligible for consideration for the program, the candidate should file a separate application to the Psychology Department by January 15th. This application is obtained on-line. **Students must also submit a University application at the same time as they apply to the Psychology Department.** The University application is available on-line. Links for these applications are on the SJSU MS Clinical Program homepage.

The candidate must meet the following minimum admissions requirements:

- A. Meet all University graduate admissions requirements.
- B. Have a baccalaureate degree (BA or BS) in Psychology **OR** any baccalaureate degree (BA or BS) **and** a minimum of 30 semester units (45 quarter units) in Psychology.
- C. Have taken the **REQUIRED** six courses in psychology from the list provided below. These are to be included in the minimum 30 semester units (10 semester courses).
- D. Have a minimum GPA of **3.0** in all **Psychology** coursework **AND** a minimum of **3.0** the last 2 years of academic work attempted (60 semester or 90 quarter units).
- E. Provide evidence of a minimum of **100 hours AND one year** of paid or volunteer applied clinical experience working with persons in a counseling/helping capacity (e.g., volunteer in home for emotionally disturbed children, juvenile hall, suicide and crisis telephone hotline).
- F. Provide three letters of recommendation One reference **MUST** be from a former clinical supervisor. Additional references may come from former instructors and from supervisors of previous work in volunteer placements in the clinical field.

We do not require the GRE for admission to the MS Clinical Program at SJSU.

REQUIRED UNDERGRADUATE COURSES IN PSYCHOLOGY

In addition to having a basic undergraduate background (at least 30 semester units or 45 quarter units) in the core areas of Psychology (i.e., research methods, statistics, introduction to psychological measurement, learning, etc.), the applicant is also expected to demonstrate knowledge in areas such as counseling, personality theory, abnormal psychology, and theories of counseling. It is required that the courses listed below or their equivalents will have been completed prior to entrance into the MS Program. The goal is to be sure that your courses meet the content requirements of these prerequisites. We want to be sure you come in to a masters program with a strong background in these courses.

It is **required** that the applicant has completed the following courses or their equivalents as suitable background for admission to graduate-level work. This coursework **MUST** include the following six classes:

1. General or Introduction to Psychology (SJSU code PSYC 1)
2. Elementary Statistics (SJSU code STAT 95)
3. Introduction to Research Methods (SJSU code PSYC 18 or PSYC 120)
4. Psychobiology or equivalent (SJSU code PSYC 30)

Each of the above four (1-4) may be taken at the community college or university level and may be lower division courses

5. upper division course in Abnormal Psychology (SJSU code PSYC 110)
6. upper division course in Theory and Methods of Counseling (SJSU code PSYC 165)

Each of the above two (5-6) **MUST** be taken at the University level and **MUST** be **upper division courses**.

Course equivalents for the required courses

We understand that many universities call these courses by different names. The following course appear to be called by different names at different universities

Theory and Methods of Counseling. A variety of courses cover this material, but the course needs to have specialized in this topic. For example, at some universities an Introduction to Clinical Psychology course will cover theories and methods of counseling. However, simply taking Abnormal Psychology or Personality Theory courses will not meet this requirement. (Note that SJSU students must take PSYC 165, and that PSYC 160 does not cover this requirement.)

The course is described in the catalog as:

Major theories of behavioral change, with emphasis on counseling of persons with problems in occupational, social, family and individual adjustment

If the course you have taken meet this course description, it likely count towards fulfilling the prerequisite. Be sure to check your college catalog. You may show a copy of your course syllabus and your course catalog description to the program director to determine that one or both meet the requirement.

Students who have already graduated and are seeking to take undergraduate courses that are prerequisites for admission to a graduate program may fulfill those requirements by taking courses at any community college or university. Typically, lower division courses may be taken at the community college level, and upper division course work is completed at a university. There are two primary options for taking courses at San Jose State University:

All courses must be completed by the time a student is ready to enter the program in the Fall. **PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT AN APPLICATION UNLESS YOU CAN COMPLETE ALL REQUIRED COURSES PRIOR TO ADMISSION.**

You may take courses in the Spring or Summer terms following your application submission, but you must be able to demonstrate that you will be able to complete these courses by the time you begin in the Fall. Typically not more than 3 required courses would be completed after the application is submitted.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED UNDERGRADUATE COURSES IN PSYCHOLOGY

The following are **highly recommended courses**. They are not required for admission to the program, but they provide the student with a more full background for the MS program.

Psychology Tests and Measurements or Psychometrics (SJSU code PSYC 117)
Child Psychology (SJSU code PSYC 102)
Group Dynamics (SJSU code PSYC 125)
Clinical Psychology (SJSU code PSYC 160)
Psychology of Personality (SJSU code PSYC 139)

APPLIED CLINICAL EXPERIENCE PREREQUISITE

You *MUST* have at least 100 hours of applied clinical experience before you apply to the program. You need at least *100 hours* of clinical experience for *at least one year*. This means you have volunteered for or have been paid for at least 2 hours of service each week for a year. Your experience must be with one agency for one year. Summer internships that only last for 3 months do not fulfill our prerequisite requirement. This will allow your supervisor to write a letter evaluating your skills.

You may apply to the program before you have completed the whole year. However, if you have not completed the full year when you apply, you must show how that one year of experience can be completed by the time the Fall semester begins.

Your volunteer or paid clinical experience must be with clinical populations in a mental health setting. This does not mean you are providing psychotherapy; it does mean that you are working around populations with psychological distress or psychopathology. Examples of these types of positions include working for a crisis call center, a domestic violence shelter, a rape crisis center, working with disturbed children or adolescents, and so on. You must be doing this work after having been trained AND WHILE a mental health professional supervises you. Note that we require at least one letter of recommendation from a clinical supervisor.

Teaching and mentoring does not count for this prerequisite one year of experience, though we all agree this is a good thing to do and will provide you with valuable experience. The experience must be delivering some type of mental health service that you have been trained to do and supervised while doing.

ACCEPTANCE INTO THE PROGRAM

Students who meet the above minimum requirements are selected on the basis of materials submitted with the Psychology Department application. Final acceptance into the program requires an interview. This interview takes place on the campus, except in exceptional cases (e.g. residence in another state or in a foreign country). Not all applicants meeting the minimum requirements are selected because of the limited number of spaces available in the program. This is a highly competitive program. Successful applicants typically exceed the minimum requirements by a considerable amount.

Letters of acceptance into the program will always be contingent upon the applicant completing all undergraduate course prerequisites and the one year of clinical experience requirement before the start of the Fall semester for which they are seeking admission. Course prerequisites are fulfilled (1) by having the course appear on a student transcript, or (2) by having a professor who teaches the course at SJSU write a letter certifying that, in their opinion, the student has requisite knowledge to pass that course.

International (foreign) students and U.S. citizens with international coursework have specific deadline dates, which they must meet as determined by the Graduate Studies Office. These dates may be different from the Psychology Departments deadlines. It is the applicant's responsibility to check with the Graduate Studies Office for information about these deadlines and relevant admissions procedures.

MS IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY GRADUATE CURRICULUM

There is no single theoretical orientation that binds the MS program. Faculty in the program represent a variety of theoretical, clinical, and research interests, including Family Therapy, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Behavior Therapy, Psychodynamic, Existential, Cross-cultural, Feminist Therapy, Community Psychology, and the biopsychosocial model inherent in Behavioral Medicine/Health psychology. As a faculty we value diversity in thinking and encourage our students to sample ideas from many different points of view.

Students in our program take PSYC 258 (Methods of Psychotherapy/Counseling Procedures) in the Fall semester of their first year in the full-time track and the Fall semester of the second year in the part-time track. This course teaches specific theories and approaches to providing clinical services. All of the courses in the program deal with providing psychotherapy to a variety of clients in different settings.

Students begin to see clients in the Psychological Services Center, the on-campus clinic, in the Spring semester of their first year in the full-time track and the Spring semester of the second year in the part-time track. Graduate students see one to two clients (individual, couples, premarital cases) while receiving focused group supervision with two to three clinicians and one supervisor. In addition, graduate students receive live (in-vivo) supervision by the clinic supervisor and peers in the clinic. This experience is regarded by graduates as one of the most valuable and enjoyable aspects of the MS Clinical Program at SJSU.

This on-campus experience is not designed to have the students accrue many pre-degree clinical hours towards licensure. In the on-campus practicum course, students have a rare opportunity to receive focused supervision and training. Students gain the overwhelming majority of their required pre-degree clinical hours following this on-campus experience in their fieldwork community placement, facilitated by the program.

The student must complete satisfactorily a total of 48 semester units in this program and must also demonstrate the practical skills and emotional maturity required for professional practice.

Graduate Curriculum

PSYC 203	Clinical Assessment	3 units
PSYC 208	Family Assessment and Intervention Techniques	3 units
PSYC 209	Seminar in the Modern Family	3 units
PSYC 210	Advanced Adult Psychopathology	3 units
PSYC 211	Advanced Child Psychopathology	3 units
PSYC 222	Gender and Ethnic Issues in Counseling and Psychotherapy	3 units
PSYC 223 A, B	Clinical Psychology Theory	6 units
PSYC 224 A, B	Clinical Psychology Practicum	6 units
PSYC 228	Professional Ethics for Psychologists	3 units
PSYC 232	Brain, Drugs, and Behavior (Psychopharmacology)	3 units
PSYC 243	Fieldwork	5 units
PSYC 258	Methods of Psychotherapy/Counseling Procedures	3 units
PSYC 291	Methods and Design for Applied Research	3 units
PSYC 295	Current Issues (Substance Abuse, Human Sexuality, Issues across the Lifespan)	3 units

FULL-TIME STUDY

Currently we are only accepting students into the full-time track. The full-time track takes two years to complete all of the degree requirements and will proceed as it has in the past. This full-time track requires students to enroll in an average of 4 courses per semester, and these courses are taken in a set sequence. The advantage to the full-time track lies with the ability to finish the program in two years. We do allow students who are in the full-time track to petition to go part-time if they cannot continue in the full-time due to a change in life circumstances. If students go part-time, they will be required to take a minimum of 2 courses per semester. The sequence of courses for the part-time track will be determined in part by prerequisites for other courses. Applicants must petition to do this, and the petition must be approved by the Clinical faculty.

Each student will complete a fieldwork placement, designed to provide the student with the minimum pre-degree practicum hours required for licensure. (Post-degree hours for licensure are acquired after the completion of the program requirements.) Once admitted to one of the tracks, students are encouraged to complete the tracks they were admitted to, particularly the full-time track. This is largely due to the fact that the MS program must maintain a minimum number of students in courses each semester. A student may petition to enter another track, but this will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Changing tracks is not automatic.

A Note on the Required Graduate Fieldwork Placement (pre-degree internship). Please note that the graduate curriculum includes all of the coursework required for licensure. Students are required to complete additional fieldwork hours (a minimum of 150 face-to-face client contact hours) by the MFT licensing board while they are students in a graduate program. The latest news from the BBS is that this will likely increase to 500 pre-degree contact hours.

Fieldwork placements bring an additional 16-20 hours of work into this schedule. Fieldwork placements are somewhat flexible, but they are not typically offered only in the evenings. Please consider this factor as you decide which track (part- or fulltime) is best for you.

Required Sequence of Courses for Full-time Track

First Year		
Fall Semester		
Course #	Description	Units
PSYC 203	Clinical Assessment	3 units
PSYC 210	Advanced Adult Psychopathology	3 units
PSYC 258	Methods of Psychotherapy/Counseling Procedures	3 units
PSYC 222	Ethnic and Gender Issues in Counseling and Psychotherapy	3 units
		Total: 12 units
Spring Semester		
PSYC 211	Advanced Child Psychopathology	3 units
PSYC 232	Brain, Drugs, and Behavior (Psychopharmacology)	3 units
PSYC 291	Methods & Design for Applied Research	3 units
PSYC 223A	Clinical Psychology Theory	3 units
PSYC 224A	Clinical Psychology Practicum	3 units
		Total: 14 units
Second Year		
Fall Semester		
PSYC 208	Family Assessment and Interventions	3 units
PSYC 223B	Clinical Psychology Theory	3 units
PSYC 224B	Clinical Psychology Practicum	3 units
PSYC 228	Professional Ethics for Psychologists	3 units
PSYC 243	Field Work	2 units
		Total: 13 units
Spring Semester		
PSYC 209	Seminar in the Modern Family	3 units
PSYC 295	Current Issues (substance abuse, human sexuality, lifespan)	3 units
PSYC 243	Field Work	3 units
		Total: 9 units

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

Advancement to candidacy for the Masters degree will occur upon completion of Psychology 223A & 224A, a satisfactory yearly evaluation by faculty, and the successful completion of the first comprehensive examination. At that time, the student must file a written, approved program of study to the MS Director of Clinical Training, who forwards it to the Graduate Studies Office. The student's final written Approved Program must total 48 units, 60% of which must be letter-graded courses. Acceptance of the approved Program by the University Graduate Studies Office results in the student's advancement to candidacy for the Master's degree. There is no thesis research project in the MS Clinical program.

The MS Clinical Psychology Program Committee will evaluate the student's academic and professional effectiveness in the program each year. The student will be provided with feedback regarding the Committee's deliberations. At any point in the program, unsatisfactory performance may result in special requirements being set for the student or in the student being dismissed from the program. These actions will be taken by vote of the Committee and will be based upon the student performance in the following areas:

- A. Academic progress in course work,
- B. Clinical effectiveness in Psychology 258 and Psychology 223A/224A,
- C. Professional and personal growth, emotional maturity, and ethical behavior.

It should be noted that students are expected to conduct themselves ethically in and outside of the academic setting as is broadly defined by the American Psychological Association and California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT).

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

All students will be required to satisfactorily complete two comprehensive examinations covering the required core courses. The first of these exams is provided at the end of the first year in the full-time track and towards the end of the second year for the part-time track. This first exam (1) covers course material in a multiple choice format and (2) applies knowledge of case conceptualization, diagnosing, and treatment planning to case vignettes.

The second exam is completed during the second semester of the second year for the full-time track (and the third or fourth year in the part-time track). The second comprehensive exam is based on an extensive case conceptualization paper and oral presentation and defense of a client the student has treated during the course of their training at SJSU.

The purposes of the comprehensive examination process are (1) to identify and ameliorate core deficiencies in student knowledge and application of clinical skills; and (2) to allow students to evidence applied knowledge in a variety of ways that simulate licensing examination conditions. These are cumulative examinations, and each student's performance is expected and required to meet minimal competency.

Students who fail either comprehensive examination are normally granted one additional opportunity to pass during a re-test condition. Failure to pass comprehensive examinations by the second attempt will result in dismissal from the graduate program.

WRITING SKILLS REQUIREMENTS

Writing in English is an essential aspect of graduate training in clinical psychology. These skills are used daily by professionals in the field. It is essential that applicants and students in the program possess adequate proficiency in graduate level writing. For those students not yet comfortable with their skills in written (or spoken) English, we strongly encourage you to take additional coursework in writing prior to beginning your training here in the MS Clinical Program. The writing demands on graduate students are intense, and we want all of our students to have a successful experience in the program.

All graduate students are required by the University to demonstrate writing skills. This requirement may be satisfied in the Psychology Department by:

- A. Satisfactory completion of the CSU baccalaureate graduation requirement of competency in written English; or
- B. Satisfactory completion as a Graduate student of the San Jose State University undergraduate upper division writing requirement by passing the writing workshop waiver examination or completing satisfactorily a 100W writing class.
- C. Satisfactory completion of graduate courses with intensive writing requirements AND satisfactory completion of the written comprehensive examinations.

REVIEW

Pursuant to University policy and requirements set forth by the Board of Behavioral Sciences (the California MFT licensing board), this program will be reviewed regularly. It is important that the student keep abreast of changes and current requirements through the Director of Clinical Training.