

Master's Program in Clinical Psychology

Program Philosophy, Goals, and Competencies

The Institute adopts a modified version of the Practitioner-Scholar model for the education and training of students that is based upon guidelines developed by the National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology (NCSPP). The Department has identified nine core goals embodying the competencies that are the foundation of the M.S. Program curriculum and that are further advanced for those who seek doctoral studies at the IPS.

1. Competency in building relationships. This competency includes the ability to form therapeutic relationships with children and adults, utilizing a variety of therapeutic formats including individual, couple, family, and group therapy.
2. Competency in assessment. This competency includes the ability to conduct intake interviews, administer and score a variety of commonly used cognitive assessment instruments, and utilize basic and specialized screening instruments for the purposes of understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the client, diagnosis, treatment planning, and assessing therapeutic progress.
3. Competency in therapeutic intervention. This competency includes the development of foundational therapeutic skills for working with children and adults in a variety of therapeutic formats, including individual, couple, family, and group therapy for the purposes of promoting, restoring, sustaining, and/or enhancing positive functioning and a sense of well-being in clients.
4. Competency in research and evaluation. This competency includes the demonstration of knowledge in the area of psychological measurement.
5. Competency in professional roles. This competency includes the development of knowledge and skill sets that allow students to function in the roles available to masters level clinicians.
6. Knowledge of basic psychological science content areas. This competency includes the development of knowledge in areas such as history and systems of psychology, personality theory, developmental psychology, and psychopathology.
7. Knowledge and competency in applying ethical and legal principles. This competency includes the development of knowledge of ethical and legal principles for the practice of psychology. The scope of training includes both general ethical guidelines as well as specialized ethical guidelines for specific therapeutic formats (e.g., couple therapy and group therapy), and specific clinical populations (e.g., children). This competency is integrally linked with the Institute's mission of the development of an approach to psychology that is consistent with a Catholic view of the human person because the broader application of philosophical and theological ethical principles is included. Students will develop the ability to utilize sound ethical decision making in the application of principles in their clinical work and professional roles and activities.
8. Knowledge and competency in working with clients from diverse individual, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Respect for diversity is not a competency that stands alone but is manifested in other competencies such as building therapeutic relationships, psychological assessment, therapeutic interventions, applying ethical guidelines and principles, and in fulfilling professional. This competency is integrally linked with the Institute's mission of the development of an approach to psychology that is consistent with a Catholic view of the human person because it touches on fundamental Christian beliefs about the intrinsic dignity, uniqueness, and goodness of each person, human freedom, personal vocation, and conscience.
9. Knowledge and competency in understanding and practicing psychology from an integrated Catholic perspective. This competency includes the development of a understanding of an anthropology or view of the person consistent with the Catholic faith perspective and its implications for the science and practice of psychology. This competency is also not a stand-alone competency, but is one that is formed throughout the curriculum and integrated with the other competencies.

Students seeking to enroll in this program should be aware that they will be expected to demonstrate an ability to understand and express complex theological, philosophical, and psychological ideas. In addition students are expected to demonstrate the maturity, sensitivity, and professionalism necessary to function effectively in clinical settings.

Curriculum

The M.S. Program in Clinical Psychology requires [65 credit hours](#) and a non-credit course in library and information use and research. Students must also complete a comprehensive examination prior to graduation. In addition to completing all coursework and passing the M.S. comprehensive exams, students must also successfully complete any clinical skill remediation plans (see section Clinical "At-Risk"/Termination/Due Process Policy). There are no electives in the program.

Degree Requirements

To earn the Master of Science (M.S.) in Clinical Psychology degree, students must complete 65 credit hours as outlined in the [curriculum](#) for the Master of Science (M.S.) Program in Clinical Psychology, with a cumulative GPA of 3.0, and satisfactorily complete the M.S. comprehensive examination. Full-time students can complete all required courses in two academic years and two summers.

M.S. Clinical students admitted to the Psy.D. Program are permitted to substitute up to 12 hours of upper level coursework in order to meet the degree requirements for the conferral of the M.S. Clinical Degree.

M.S. Comprehensive Examination

The successful completion of the comprehensive examination process is required prior to graduation. The M.S. comprehensive examination consists of two components: Clinical Skill Probes and the Written Comprehensive Exam.

Clinical Skill Probes: For courses that involve learning and demonstration of clinical skills, students will receive ratings on attainment of specific aspects of clinical practice and skills in addition to regular course grades. An example of the rating form is available in the Clinical Training Handbook. The clinical courses at the master's level include PSY 516, PSY 608, PSY 609, PSY 610, and PSY 611.

Written Comprehensive Exam: This examination is given once per year to students who have completed a minimum of 48 hours of coursework, and focuses on the ability to synthesize learning from across the curriculum. These "synthesis" questions are designed to cover either basic psychology, with implications for integration with the Catholic view of the person, or clinical psychology, with implications for integration with the Catholic view of the person.

The student's responses are independently rated by two faculty members familiar with the content area of the question, and given marks of Pass with Distinction, Pass, or Fail in each of the three areas (general psychology, clinical psychology, or integration) as appropriate to the question. Should the two faculty raters disagree, a third faculty member will independently score the question to determine the final rating. Students are given feedback regarding whether they pass with distinction, pass, or fail, in each area. Failure of any part of the comprehensive examination necessitates retaking that part of the exam. The student must retake that part within the next year.

Enrollment Status

Full-Time Status

Full-time students are students admitted to the M.S. Program in Clinical Psychology and are enrolled for a minimum of nine credit hours during the current semester.

Part-Time Status

Part-time students are students admitted to the M.S. Program in Clinical Psychology and enrolled for eight or fewer credit hours during the current semester.

Admission Requirements

Please refer to the [Admission Section](#) of the website for application materials required, interview information, deadlines, etc.

Admission to the Master of Science (M.S.) Program in Clinical Psychology requires that a student submit a completed application and have completed a baccalaureate degree from a regionally-accredited academic institution with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

In considering applications to the M.S. Program in Clinical Psychology, the faculty Admission Committee considers the following factors: cumulative undergraduate GPA (and graduate GPA if applicable); GRE scores; letters of recommendation; essay answers on the application; interview responses, clinical suitability, and TOEFL or IELTS scores (where applicable).

IPS recommends, but does not require, that applicants complete a minimum of 18 credit hours of coursework in basic psychology content areas (e.g., abnormal, developmental, experimental, physiological, and social psychology, statistics, tests and measures, learning and motivation, or personality theory) prior to entering the program. However, applicants with little or no previous coursework in psychology will be considered for admission. If admitted, such applicants will be required to take additional coursework offered by the Institute during the first year of their program to make up for these deficiencies.

For information on transferring credits to IPS, please refer to the Admission or Academic Policies section under "Criteria for Transfer of Credit."