

# **Clinical Psychology MA Program Handbook for Graduate Students**

## **2019-2020 Edition**

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Students indicate their understanding and acceptance of the contents of this Handbook when accepting an offer of admission to the Program.

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## Section I: Setting for Clinical Psychology MA Program

### **Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences**

The MA Program in Clinical Psychology is one of only a few programs in the United States based in an academic medical center. The program takes advantage of its placement within the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Feinberg School of Medicine by offering a breadth of clinically-relevant and translational research opportunities, spanning molecular to social models of disease, and epidemiologic to clinical and neuroimaging methodologies.

### **The Feinberg School of Medicine and the Graduate School**

The Clinical Psychology MA Program is supported by both Feinberg School of Medicine (FSM) and The Graduate School (TGS) at Northwestern University. Northwestern University was founded in 1851, followed by the Feinberg School of Medicine in 1859, as a private educational institution dedicated to serve the Northwest Territory of the United States (i.e., Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and parts of Minnesota). Northwestern University and the Feinberg School of Medicine have both become nationally and internationally recognized for the quality of their educational programs. Northwestern University is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and is consistently ranked by U.S. News & World Report as among the best in the country (10<sup>th</sup> among Tier 1 National universities; 19<sup>th</sup> medical school). The Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences is ranked in the top third for NIH research funding in the nation. Approximately 20,000 students are enrolled in the University's 12 schools and colleges, including over 2,800 students enrolled in MA Programs. The primary mission of Northwestern University and the Feinberg School of Medicine is to educate and train the next generation of researchers, clinicians, and teachers. Students in the Clinical Psychology MA Program are expected to know and abide by the regulations and standards set forth by the Graduate School, as outlined on the Graduate School's website (<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu>).

## Section II: Program Structure and Policies

### Administrative Structure

The education and research training of all MA students is the responsibility of the Graduate Programs in Clinical Psychology, which is located under the Division of Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. The MA Program in Clinical Psychology is headed by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and Associate Director, with guidance from the Chief of the Division of Psychology and the Chair of the Department of Psychiatry. The DGS maintains an advisory body, the Education and Clinical Training Committee (ETC), which meets monthly during the academic year. The ETC evaluates and makes ongoing changes to the Program's overarching philosophy, objectives and competencies, curriculum, research training, and admissions, as well as evaluations of briefings of departmental, university, regional, and national events affecting the Program. The ETC formally evaluates student progress at 7 months, and then again at the end of the program, and is the body to which students may appeal a decision by the DGS or one of the Program's committees. The ETC is composed of core and associated faculty members in the MA and PhD Programs in Clinical Psychology. There are also two PhD and one MA student representatives included in the ETC.

Additional ad hoc committees are appointed at the discretion of the DGS, with consultation from the ETC, to address concerns, make recommendations, or design programmatic improvements to the MA and PhD Programs. For example, starting in 2017, the ETC formed the MA Quality Improvement subcommittee which is responsible for evaluating and improving the quality of the MA Program and is chaired by the Program's Associate Director.

### Program Faculty

Both core, affiliated, and other faculty members of the Program come from diverse training backgrounds that complement the available emphases of the Program. For a complete and current list of faculty in the Department, please visit our website: <https://www.psychiatry.northwestern.edu/faculty/index.html>.

## **Graduate Faculty Status**

Completion of the Capstone Project requires a committee composed of two faculty with Graduate Faculty Status. In nearly all situations, the student's primary research mentor will serve as the first faculty member, and the DGS will serve as the second faculty member on the Capstone Project committee. Graduate Faculty Status is automatic for faculty members who hold tenure or are tenure eligible. Because most faculty members in academic medical centers are neither tenured nor tenure eligible, some core and nearly all affiliated/other faculty members in the Program must be actively nominated for Graduate Faculty Status, which are limited to 4-year terms. Students can search for faculty with Graduate Faculty Status by using the faculty lookup function for Committee Chairs in the TGS Forms section of the Graduate Student Tracking System (see [GSTS](#) section). Most of students' primary research mentors will have Graduate Faculty Status; if not, students can work with the DGS to find a faculty member with Graduate Faculty Status to assist with evaluation of the Capstone Project.

## **Administrative Staff**

In addition to the administrative, clerical, and technical support available within the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, the Program has an Administrative Assistant that devotes at least 60% time to the Program (the remaining 40% is devoted to the Division of Psychology's Internship Program). For administrative questions related to policies and procedures specifically with the Graduate School, students can contact their student representative in Student Services (<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-student-services/>).

## **Financial Support**

Current information on tuition can be found at tuition and fees page on The Graduate School's website (<http://www.northwestern.edu/sfs/tuition/graduate/the-graduate-school.html>). All students admitted to the Clinical Psychology MA Program receive a Graduate Scholarship that provides a 45% tuition remission for each of the five quarters of the program. The Graduate Scholarship is provided in acknowledgement for MA students' time devoted to the Research Lab Experience. Additional information on financial aid is provided through the Evanston Graduate Financial Aid Office

(<https://www.northwestern.edu/evanston-graduate-financial-aid/>) and through the financial aid pages of The Graduate School's website (<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/funding/>).

## Travel Grants

All students in the Program qualify for a limited number of travel grants to present research via posters or symposia/talks at regional, national, or international academic conferences. Travel awards cover the following conference-specific expenses:

- Conference registration fees
- Transportation to/from meeting
- Economical lodging and food
- Ground transportation while attending the conference

Students are eligible to apply for travel grants from the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and from TGS. Travel grants provided by the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences are at least \$200 per year application, with additional amounts provided when funds are available. Trainees are eligible to receive the travel awards as long as they are registered in the program. A single award may be used for multiple conferences and students may apply for multiple awards, if funds are available. The number of Departmental grants available per year varies depending on the availability of funding, and is awarded by the DGS after receipt of the student's travel award application (see Google Drive, "APPLICATION\_FOR\_TRAINEE\_TRAVEL\_FUNDS.docx"), on a first-come, first-serve basis. Because travel grants are funded through philanthropic donations, there is no guarantee that Departmental travel awards will be available for every student. Consequently, applications for Departmental travel awards should be submitted to the department immediately after notification that the presentation has been accepted.

## International Travel Resources and Requirements

International travel resources may be accessed at <https://www.northwestern.edu/global-safety-security/index.html>. If you are a student traveling overseas for any Northwestern-related reason, you **must** register with the GSSO so that they can help you to manage the travel as safely and securely as possible. Pay particular attention to:

1. Graduate Student Travel Policies, which can help you determine risk levels for the areas you are traveling
2. Obtain cheap (and required) international health insurance, which includes political/security/weather protection
3. How to obtain travel immunizations

## **Instructional Policies**

Together with the Graduate School, the Program emphasizes requirements of scholarship that are expected of all graduate-level programs at Northwestern and that are consistent with top-ranked clinical psychology graduate programs in the United States and Canada. Formal courses and seminars are planned and organized to suit the needs and interests of each MA student while maintaining the Program's commitment to the core mission of the MA program. Courses are organized to provide a core curriculum in the science of psychology, with emphases on sophisticated clinical research. Faculty members are expected to comply with the responsibilities outlined in Northwestern University's Faculty Handbook (<http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/faculty-resources/faculty-handbook.html>).

The Program has moved towards a competency-based educational model. Within this model, students are expected to obtain a high level of competence across research and professional domains, with specific objectives identified within each domain, and specific knowledge, skill, and attitude competencies identified within each objective. Within courses, instructors are expected to clearly outline the specific competencies that derive from the goals and objectives of the course. Students are expected to work towards mastery of these course specific competencies, as evidenced through course assignments (e.g., quizzes, reports, papers, exams, observations, performance-based evaluations). Based on existing rubrics for each assignment in the course, instructors grade each assignment to determine if the student's performance meets minimal competency, generally defined as 87% or greater. Assignment grades that fall below 87% on any metric are considered below basic competence and instructors will provide students with additional instruction or assistance to bring their knowledge or skill to a minimally acceptable level of competence.

For research, competence is assessed developmentally, with mentors or supervisors rating students using standard rating forms that compare the student's performance to expected competencies for their level of training and education.

If a student is unable to bring their performance up to par for any specific competency (or in broader domains), or if a pattern of performance at this level is identified, individual remediation plans are developed with specific and actionable milestones identified (See the “[Student Remediation, Probation and Dismissal](#)” section of the Handbook).

## **Student Rights**

Consistent with Northwestern’s Policy Statement on Student Rights and Responsibilities (Northwestern University Student Handbook, (<http://www.northwestern.edu/student-conduct/about-us/student-handbook>), the Clinical Psychology MA Program recognizes and abides to the rights and responsibilities of students. Our goal is to create an environment imbued with courtesy and respect. The Program also recognizes and values cultural and individual diversity, and upholds the rights of individuals to be free of prejudice or discrimination with respect to program access and completion that are irrelevant to success in graduate training or the profession of psychology.

## **Confidentiality Policies**

It is expected that all faculty, students, and staff will keep discussions of student selection strictly confidential. Only chairs of such meetings will disclose the recommendations and conclusions of discussions; comments of individual participants will not be identified. It is assumed that all evaluations will be conducted in a thoughtful and professional manner. Any violation of this policy can be cause for disciplinary action, including termination as a member of the Program’s faculty. Graduate students have access to their Program files upon request. Such files contain records of their academic and research progress in the program. Students may not review any letters of recommendation that accompanied their initial applications if, as applicants, they waived their right of review.



## **Student Evaluation, Feedback, and Advisement**

Students receive evaluations and feedback in multiple ways. In their coursework, students are evaluated by and provided feedback from instructors through assignments and examinations. Instructors also provide feedback informally through classroom discussions and individually, as needed. Any specific *assignment* or *examination* that does not meet a minimum or basic level of competency (i.e., 87%) will need to be improved by the student so that it meets the basic level of competency indicated for that specific assignment or examination, and ultimately for that course. Students that are unable to bring their competency to a basic level with their instructor will be referred to the MA Program administration for development of an Individual Remediation Plan (see the section “[Student Remediation, Probation and Dismissal](#)” in this Handbook).

Primary and secondary research mentors, whom are composed of faculty within a student’s lab(s), also provide evaluation, feedback, and advisement through weekly or biweekly group meetings, as well as individual meetings with students. Within the first month of entering the Program, students will meet with their primary research mentor to collaboratively complete an *Individual Development Plan* (IDP). The IDP details concrete goals for development of research skills and products, as well as necessary steps to achieve these goals. Mentors and students meet 2 additional times to review and modify the IDP as needed, at approximately 6 months and one year into the program. Primary research mentors also provide annual formal evaluations using the *Research Mentor Competency Evaluation Form*, which are completed at 7 months and 15 months after starting the program. The DGS and Associate Director also act as a secondary advisors to all students. Feedback will be provided to MA students throughout the 15-month program. Formal evaluation and feedback is conducted at the mid-point of the program with the DGS (January or February), and before graduation with the full faculty of the ETC (August). The DGS aggregates all evaluations provided throughout the year and provides formal feedback of students’ educational and research progress via individual meetings at the mid-point in January/February, and if necessary, in July/August. Additional meetings are scheduled, when necessary, to address any concerns that develop throughout the MA students’ residency in the program.

## Student Remediation, Probation and Dismissal

Based on the aforementioned evaluation processes, if a concern is raised with a student, the DGS has the option of developing an informal or program-level remediation plan. The informal or program-level remediation plan is developed in collaboration with the DGS, the student, and any necessary faculty. The remediation plan details the specific identified concerns of the student, targets of remediation, and a detailed plan for remediation, including behavioral indices of improvement. Ideally, the student and DGS agree to the informal or program-level remediation plan; however, if necessary, the DGS can implement an informal or program-level remediation plan without the student's agreement. If the student is able to complete the informal or program-level remediation plan successfully, as agreed upon by the student and the DGS, the informal remediation plan will be removed from the student's file, and no additional action will be taken. A digital copy will be kept in the DGS's personal files for purposes of accreditation or administrative review. If the student does not successfully complete the remediation plan within the agreed-upon timeframe specified in the remediation plan, the DGS has the option to establish a *formal* remediation plan that would include involvement of TGS and other faculty as needed for increased accountability and oversight. Should these procedures ultimately fail in behavioral improvement, escalating the concerns either through a Faculty Challenge or Probation procedures through TGS is the next step.

A student's inability to thrive in the Program at a professional and/or productive level may be due to medical or mental health issues of a personal nature. A student is never under any obligation to disclose these personal issues to the Program, its faculty, or TGS. The Program holds all students to the same expectation of graduate-level trainees, regardless of personal matters. If these matters interfere with a student's ability to function properly in advancement in the Program, the student will be encouraged to seek assistance and/or the treatment necessary for her or him to maintain the minimum standard of performance set forth by the Program. Reasonable accommodations will also be provided at the discretion of the DGS and/or the ETC. At any time during the student's tenure in the Program, she or he is eligible to request a Leave of Absence as outlined by TGS policy (<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/leaves-of-absence.html>). Initiating a Leave of Absence is entirely at the student's discretion and will not be at the behest of the Program. Should a student decide to take a Leave of Absence, the DGS and other faculty if necessary, will develop a plan for reintegrating the student back into the Program after the leave is over.

Probationary status is reserved for students with difficulties sufficiently serious to raise the possibility of eventual dismissal. Probation can occur for clinical and nonclinical reasons, such as failure to meet academic deadlines, research incompetence, and ethical and professional shortcomings. The normal or expected developmental difficulties associated with being in graduate school do not ordinarily warrant probationary status. The problems that may warrant probation and even dismissal include but are not limited to failure to correct identified deficits in meeting administrative requirements (attendance, completing assignments/tasks), failure to respond to supervision, and other difficulties interfering with either academic or research functioning.

The DGS will work with any student placed on probation to develop a remedial plan. The research mentor and/or instructor(s) will collaborate in this process as appropriate. During the ensuing 6 months, the student will meet with the appropriate instructor(s), DGS, and/or mentor to discuss progress on the plan. At the end of 6 months from the development of the remedial plan, the student on probation will receive substantive, written feedback on the extent to which the corrective actions in the remedial plan have or have not been successful in addressing the issue or concern of a grievance.

Although probationary status shall usually be resolved favorably by the end of the academic year, it can, if necessary, be extended into the fifth quarter until remediated. No student on probation can graduate.

Whatever the source of the recommendation to dismiss a student from the program, the ETC will make the decision after soliciting and hearing an array of evidence and faculty opinion on all relevant aspects of the student's performance. No proxy votes will be permitted. Balloting will not be secret; however, the details of the voting other than the outcome will remain confidential information. In all cases the ETC's decision to dismiss a student may be appealed to the Chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. See the section on grievance procedures for more information.

## **Grievance Procedures**

Grievance procedures can be initiated in the following four types of situations:

1. A student may seek redress for actions taken by any member of the faculty or staff of the Clinical Psychology MA Program, the Division of Psychology, or the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.
2. A student may challenge actions or decisions taken by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS).
3. The DGS or a member of the faculty may initiate action against a student.
4. A qualified student with a disability may initiate a complaint if the student believes any University employee has discriminated against him or her because of a disability.

These situations are described below in detail:

1. *Redress for Action*

A student may seek redress for actions taken by any member of the faculty or staff of the Clinical Psychology MA Program, Division of Psychology, or Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences by formally presenting a concern to the DGS. The DGS will review the area of concern, gather information, and render a decision and recommendation. If the student wishes to appeal the decision and recommendation of the DGS, he or she may request that a Review Panel be convened, as described below.

2. *Student Challenge*

If a student wishes to formally challenge any action taken by the DGS, the student must, within five (5) workdays of receipt of the DGS's decision, inform the DGS, in writing, of such a challenge. When a challenge is made, the student must provide the DGS with information supporting the student's position or concern. Within three (3) workdays of receipt of this notification, the DGS will implement Review Panel procedures as described below.

3. *Faculty Challenge*

If a faculty member has a specific student concern that is not resolved informally through consultation and intervention by the DGS, or an informal remediation plan, the faculty member may seek resolution of the conflict by written request to the DGS for a review of the student's behavior. Within three (3) working days of receipt of the faculty member's challenge, the DGS will consult with the ETC and a Review Panel will be convened, as discussed below.

#### 4. *Discrimination due to a Disability*

If a student believes any University employee has discriminated against him or her because of a disability, he or she has the right to seek a review of such concerns. For this type of grievance, the Program will use Northwestern University's *Informal Complaint and Formal Grievance Procedures* for qualified students with a disability (i.e., a student who has provided documentation of disability and is registered with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities). The Grievance Procedure for this type of grievance can be found on the "Grievance Procedure" webpage of Northwestern's Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (<http://www.northwestern.edu/accessiblenu/>).

#### *Review Panel and Process*

When needed, a Review Panel will be convened to address the following:

1. An appeal of a decision and recommendation in response to a Redress for Action
2. A Student Challenge
3. A Faculty Challenge

The Review Panel will consist of three (3) core faculty members of the Clinical Psychology MA Program who are selected by the DGS. If the review panel is convened to challenge an action taken by the DGS, the Chief of the Division of Psychology will select the three core faculty members of the Clinical Psychology MA Program for the Review Panel. Faculty members who are party to the dispute will recuse themselves from deliberations and will not receive any communications associated with ongoing deliberations.

Within five (5) workdays of convening the Review Panel, a hearing will be conducted in which the challenge is heard and relevant material presented. Within three (3) workdays of the completion of the review, the Review Panel will submit a written report to the DGS, including any recommendations for further action. Recommendations made by the Review Panel will be made by majority vote.

The student has the right to hear the challenge and all relevant material that is presented to the Review Panel. The student has the right to dispute or explain the challenge and/or any relevant material presented to the Review Panel.

As the Review Panel represents the ETC, the vote and recommendations of this panel will stand as the final decision of the ETC. The Review Panel will prepare a summary letter regarding its decision that will be provided to the student and to the DGS. Within three (3) workdays of receipt of the recommendation, the DGS will either accept or reject the Review Panel's recommendations. If the DGS rejects the panel's recommendations, due to an incomplete or inadequate evaluation of the dispute, the DGS may refer the matter back to the Review Panel for further deliberation and revised recommendations. If referred back to the Review Panel, the panel will report back to the DGS within five (5) workdays of the receipt of the DGS's request of further deliberation with a final decision and recommendations. After the final decision of the Panel is rendered, the DGS will inform the student and, if necessary, the Graduate School of the decisions made. If the student disputes the final decision, the student has the right to contact the chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences to make a final appeal.

All information and records (including electronic records) pertaining to a formal complaint or grievance against the program and/or individuals in the program will be maintained by the DGS in perpetuity. These records may be reviewed by the student, the DGS, the ETC, the administration of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, the administration of the Feinberg School of Medicine, or official representatives of the American Psychological Association's Commission on Accreditation.

## **Psychotherapy for Students**

During her or his enrollment in graduate school, a student may wish to enter psychotherapy. The Program encourages this practice either for the student's personal growth or to enhance his or her understanding of the psychotherapeutic process. The DGS maintains a list of contributed service faculty members who have agreed to see Clinical Psychology graduate students at reduced fees (see *Psychotherapy Services Brochure* in the Program's Google Drive). The Program maintains strict standards as to which faculty members a student may see for individual psychotherapy. This is to ensure that psychotherapeutic and teaching/supervisory relationships between students and faculty do not overlap or otherwise involve potentially incompatible roles.

Students may also elect to obtain a referral to a psychotherapist through Northwestern's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) or through their personal insurance. CAPS offers a range of services to support undergraduate and graduate students (see: <http://www.northwestern.edu/counseling>). CAPS provides short-term psychotherapy for adjustment-related and mild-to-moderate mood/affective concerns. If the clinical need is beyond their scope of service, they will refer out to a community clinician or agency. Interested students should contact the CAPS directly and arrange for an initial interview to make the referral. Student copayments for the CAPS service are relatively inexpensive. Please note, however, that if you take advantage of services at CAPS, you will no longer be eligible for training opportunities at CAPS, such as their internship program.

## **Professionalism and Etiquette**

In our academic medical setting, students will invariably find themselves in multiple settings interacting with a variety of clinicians, scientists, and staff, or learning in lectures, seminars, small groups and classroom settings. In these situations, students not only act for themselves but are also representatives of the Program. As such, general the following guidelines on conduct and etiquette are recommended:

- Appropriate dress – wear clothes that are appropriate for the setting (e.g., lab, class, etc.), but strive to look professional. Avoid extreme styles as well as torn, ragged or sloppy attire.
- Arrive on time – when possible avoid being late to class, supervision, and other meetings. It respects everyone's time and encourages productivity. Being punctual gets noticed!
- Address faculty and staff appropriately – initiate interactions with their preferred title (e.g., Dr.) until directed otherwise. Different cultures with regard to title may exist depending on the setting. When in the presence of patients always address physicians/psychologists as “Doctor.”
- Be prepared – for class and meetings, this includes completing assigned readings, and having data/results finalized in slides or other format for mentors to review.
- Cell phone – mute or turn off, particularly for class, but also during lab meetings. If expecting an urgent call/text, have it on silent and excuse yourself from the room to take it (do *not* text throughout).
- Laptops/tablets – if using to take notes, do not use to browse the Internet or text/instant message, stay focused on the present meeting

- Be respectful in your interactions – especially during heated exchanges, avoid inflammatory statements, generalizations, accusatory language or belittling. Maintain a professional demeanor and remove yourself should the situation escalate or fail to resolve.
- Avoid small chat or side discussions – especially during lectures, presentations, or meetings.

## **Social Media Policy**

### *Introduction*

Applicants to the program, as well as current students, are personally responsible for the content they publish on blogs, wikis, social networks, forum boards, or any other form of user-generated media. It is important to remember that all content contributed on online platforms becomes immediately searchable and is immediately shared. This content may leave the contributing individual's control forever and may be traced back to the individual even after long periods of time have passed.

For both applicants and current students, information posted on social networking sites may be considered and evaluated as to how it reflects your professionalism. Professionalism is considered a core competency of psychology and the Program. It consists of (a) Professional Values and Attitudes, (b) Individual and Cultural Diversity, (c) Ethical Legal Standards and Policy, and (d) Reflective Practice, Self-Assessment, and Self-Care.

This policy defines public information as anything that can be collected by a basic Internet search using an engine such as Google; this includes search results for social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, among others. It does not provide the Program with permission to perform an in-depth investigation of an individual's Internet history. You will never be asked to disclose your password as a condition of either interviewing or enrollment.

Public information obtained via the Internet may be used by faculty to evaluate applicants and current students on behavior that might be indicative of competence problems, poor professionalism, or poor interpersonal judgment. This evaluation may result in adverse actions. This practice is consistent with the role played by educational programs as gatekeepers to the profession. Examples of troubling behavior include acts of discrimination such as racism or sexism, illegal behavior, or behavior that suggests a lack of professional judgment relevant to the professional practice of counseling.



## *Reasonable Right to Privacy*

Principle E of the Ethical Code for Psychologists (2002) states in part that: Psychologists respect the dignity and worth of all people, and the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination. Psychologists are aware that special safeguards may be necessary to protect the rights and welfare of persons or communities whose vulnerabilities impair autonomous decision-making. Psychologists are aware of and respect cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status and consider these factors when working with members of such groups.

Consistent with this, faculty members are respectful of individuals' reasonable right to privacy, even on a medium as inherently public as the Internet. It is the responsibility of applicants and current students, however, to decide what information about themselves they want shared with the general public. Program faculty will therefore not circumvent established privacy settings in an attempt to "dig" for information that individuals are making a reasonable attempt to keep private.

## *Evaluation Criteria*

An applicant will never be evaluated based on their race, sex, religion, or any other protected class listed in United States antidiscrimination laws.

When problematic behavior is identified, it shall be reviewed and discussed using the following criteria (adapted in part from Lamb, Cochran, & Jackson, 1991; Fouad et al., 2009): What are the actual behaviors that are of concern, and how are those behaviors related to the goals of the Program? How and in what settings have these behaviors been manifested? How serious is this behavior on the continuum of ethical and professional behavior? What is the explanation for the behavior?

While each case is different and requires individual assessment, the following factors may indicate that the problem is more serious: The individual does not acknowledge, understand or address the problematic behavior when it is identified; the problematic behavior is not merely a reflection of a skill deficit that can be rectified by training; the behavior has the potential for ethical or legal ramifications if

not addressed; the behavior negatively affects the public image of the Northwestern University and/or the Program.

## *Evaluation Process*

Evaluation will occur at the program level and adhere to the evaluation criteria listed in the following subsection. A single faculty member will never be responsible for evaluating or reaching a decision on an applicant or student by themselves. The process will occur first in a group discussion with the DGS to assess the extent and severity of the information brought forward, and so that individual faculty member might both share their evaluations and perceptions. If further review is required, the situation will be formally presented before the ETC for further consideration. Final determination of action will then be settled upon by the ETC.

If/when information has been obtained, it will be reviewed for any implications it has for academic clinical psychology, as well as any signs that it might reflect interpersonal challenges to developing the deportment and competence necessary for becoming a psychologist.

Applicants as well as current students will be contacted so as to provide an explanation for the obtained information. The DGS shall promptly offer to discuss the information with the individual. The purpose of this discussion is to permit the student to contextualize and explain the information uncovered. From this determination, options will be developed; these options include but are not limited to denial of an interview or of entry to the program, remedial training, or other interventions to address professionalism.

## **Emergency Contact Information & Missing Student Policy**

It is the student's responsibility to maintain current contact information, including for emergencies, with the Program. Ideally emergency contacts would include a local individual (e.g., spouse, roommate, or friend) as well as family member (e.g., parent, grandparent, etc.). Information should include at a minimum:

- Student address/phone number/alternate phone/email/alternate email
- Emergency name/relationship to student/address/phone number/alternate phone/email

This information is kept confidential within the Program, and not disclosed to any other party, including faculty without prior consent.

If the DGS is unable to locate a student after reasonable attempts, including use of the emergency contact, and there is concern that the student is missing, University Police will be notified, consistent with Northwestern University's Missing Student Policy: <https://www.northwestern.edu/up/how-to-report/missing-students.html>

## **Maintaining Records and Completing TGS Forms: Graduate Student Tracking System**

The Graduate Student Tracking System (GSTS) is a web-based academic monitoring system as well as a central record repository for all information and documentation related to your residency in the MA program in Clinical Psychology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. GSTS is also the central repository for all TGS forms, including the Application for Degree and the Master's Degree Completion forms (see <https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/documents/academics/tgsformsstudentquickguide.pdf> for guidance on using GSTS to complete forms). The GSTS serves as our student record file system and replaced the use of CAESAR for online TGS forms in 2019. Students and MA Program Administration are responsible for managing the GSTS, as specified in the GSTS Instructions, found in the Google Drive. Students are expected to keep the information in the GSTS current, and to review the GSTS for accuracy every quarter. Students can access the GSTS here: <https://gsts.northwestern.edu/site/login>

## **Academic Integrity**

As a training program committed to intellectual pursuits, the MA Program upholds standards of academic and personal integrity. The expectation is students are open and honest in their dealings with, and in representing themselves and their work, to others across all settings.

### *Plagiarism*

Deliberate plagiarism, or copying and representing others work as your own without proper credit, is not tolerated. More challenging are situations where unintentional, or accidental, plagiarism occurs in the context of developing research papers, grant applications, or writing assignments. This usually is the result of failing to cite sources completely and correctly, or inappropriately quoting, paraphrasing or

summarizing. Certain situations put individuals at increased risk for accidental plagiarism, such as time pressures (e.g., procrastination, overscheduled, poor time management), a demand for perfection, and/or skill deficits (e.g., unfamiliarity with material). It is the responsibility of the student to be informed on proper techniques for quoting and paraphrasing material, as well as what constitutes original work versus “boilerplate” language. University courses, such as Taking Responsibility for Responsible Conduct of Research provide opportunities for students to become informed on these issues.

The program strongly adheres to the policies and procedures for academic honesty as outlined by TGS (<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/academic-integrity.html>). In brief, allegations of dishonesty are required to be reported by faculty to TGS, which then initiates a formal process that includes a case review, hearing, and possible sanctions depending on the outcome (see TGS website for more details). Allegations of academic dishonesty on grant applications and scientific papers is potentially considered research misconduct and will be investigated by the Office for Research Integrity.

## Section III: Degree Requirements

Students must successfully complete the following minimum requirements to obtain a Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology from Northwestern University:

1. 17 credits of graduate coursework (equivalent to 68 quarter hours) at Northwestern University
2. Grades of at least a B for all courses
3. Completion of all required coursework
4. Successful completion of the Capstone Project
5. Successful completion of the Research Lab Experience

Students should consult The Graduate School (TGS) webpage, “Master’s Degree Requirements” (<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/masters-degree-requirements.html>) for information and requirements concerning degree granting, course registration, grading, official leaves, and residency.

All MA students will be informed of their standing in the program in a written communication from the DGS at the mid-point of the academic year. If progress is not satisfactory, students will be made aware of the problem and provided with both an opportunity to respond and, if appropriate, explicit instructions regarding how to remediate.

As indicated on the program’s public website (<https://www.psychiatry.northwestern.edu/education/clinical-psychology-ma/index.html>), the Program is designed for five quarters (15-months). Completion of the minimal requirements for the program prior to the fifth quarter in the program will not allow for “early graduation” from the MA program; there is no option for “early graduation” in the MA program. Students who complete the requirements before the end of the fifth quarter are encouraged to move beyond the minimal requirements of the program and to take advantage of additional course and research opportunities. The DGS is available to assist students with identifying additional enrichment opportunities if the minimal requirements are achieved before the end of the fifth quarter.

## Section IV: Course of Study

The MA Program is designed to provide a foundation in academic clinical psychology at the graduate level, while also allowing students to gain educational and research exposure to major areas of study within clinical psychology.

Research Training is organized into the following Research Emphases:

- Behavioral Medicine
- Neuropsychology & Behavioral Neuroscience
- Policy
- Psychopathology & Treatment

Although the MA program does not provide formal clinical training or any direct exposure to clinical populations or clinical practica, MA students are encouraged to take coursework in any or all of the following Clinical Emphases:

- Adult Clinical Psychology
- Behavioral Medicine/Health Psychology (*Major Area of Study*)
- Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology (*Major Area of Study*)
- Clinical Neuropsychology (*Major Area of Study*)

The MA in Clinical Psychology is designed to be completed in five quarters (Summer I, Fall, Winter, Spring Summer II). This 15-month program is timed to facilitate students' applications to doctoral programs in clinical psychology or related fields. All students must complete 15 months; even if all degree requirements are met prior to 15 months, the Program does not allow for early graduation. Instead, the student may work with the DGS and lab mentor to identify additional courses, research projects, or teaching opportunities to maximize his or her experience within the program.

The curriculum for the MA Program is integrated into the Clinical Psychology PhD Program in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. The MA program requires at least 17 units for graduation. Students are required to take the Research Core, including Research Methods/Statistics (3 units), Advanced Research Methodology (1

unit), and Scientific and Professional Ethics in Psychology (1 unit). In addition to these required courses, students are expected to select between five to eight elective courses across the Fall, Winter, Spring, and/or Summer II quarters. Elective courses can include courses at the Foundational, Bases of Behavior, or Clinical level, as well as courses in one or more of the emphases or Major Areas of Study. MA students have the freedom to take any courses in the PhD program as long as they meet the prerequisites for the courses. Finally, in addition to the graded courses, students are expected to register for at least one research unit for every quarter as part of their Research Lab Experience. The Research Core and Elective courses can be reviewed in detail on the PhD Program Curriculum page (<https://www.psychiatry.northwestern.edu/education/clinical-psychology-phd/curriculum/index.html>) under "Courses". Please note that not all courses are offered every year, and therefore specific courses may not be available during a student's residency in the MA Program.

In addition to the Research Core and Elective courses, all MA students participate in the weekly Professional Development Seminar for the first four quarters of the MA Program. The Professional Development Seminar orients students to the MA program, introduces students to various mentors and labs across Northwestern, explores career options in academic clinical psychology, refines interests in academic clinical psychology, and prepares students for the next steps in their careers (e.g., developing applications for PhD programs; preparing for interviews).

## Section V: Progress in the MA Program in Clinical Psychology

### Orientation

To acquaint incoming students with current students, faculty, and personnel, a full-day orientation program, conducted by the DGS, is held shortly before the start of the first summer quarter. Copies of the Orientation presentation are available on the Program's Google Drive.

### Curriculum

#### *Mission and Aims*

The MA program is designed to provide a foundation in academic clinical psychology at the graduate level, while also allowing students to gain educational and research exposure to emphases and major areas of study within clinical psychology.

The aims of the MA Program in Clinical Psychology are to:

1. Develop foundational competencies in research design, analytics, and ethics within academic clinical psychology.
2. Explore major areas of study within academic clinical psychology.
3. Understand educational and career opportunities within academic clinical psychology.

#### *Curriculum Outline*

The program requires a minimum of 17 credits, including at least 5 research credits. The following courses are routinely made available to students. Additional courses, including Special Topics, may also be made available to students.

Courses are categorized as *Discipline-Specific Knowledge Category 1*, *Discipline-Specific Knowledge Category 2*, *Profession-Wide Competencies*, and *Elective and Emphasis-Specific*. Required courses are noted below. Please note that not all courses will be available during a student's residency.

#### Courses for Discipline-Specific Knowledge Category 1:

- History and Systems of Psychology (1 credit)
- Basic Content Areas in Scientific Psychology:



- Behavioral Neuroscience (1 credit)
- Advanced Social Psychology (1 credit)
- Life-Span Developmental Psychology (1 credit)

## Courses for Discipline-Specific Knowledge Category 2:

- Cognitive Psychology (1 credit; Advanced Integrative course with affective and biological content)
- **Research Methods I, II, II (aka, Statistics; 3 credits; REQUIRED)**
- **Advanced Research Design (1 credit; REQUIRED)**
- Grant Writing Seminar (1 credit, pass/fail)

## Courses for Profession-Wide Competencies:

- **Scientific and Professional Ethics in Psychology (1 credit; REQUIRED)**
- Diversity in Psychological Science and Practice (1 credit)
- Psychological Assessment I, II, III (3 credits)
- Introduction to Psychotherapy (1 credit)
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (1 credit)

## Elective and Emphasis-Specific Courses (all 1 credit, unless indicated):

- Advanced Psychotherapy (*Psychopathology & Treatment*)
- Behavioral Neuroanatomy (*Neuropsychology & Behavioral Neuroscience*)
- Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy (*Clinical Child & Adolescent*)
- Child Psychological Assessment (*Clinical Child & Adolescent*)
- Child Psychopathology (*Clinical Child & Adolescent*)
- Cognitive and Behavioral Treatments for Depression (*Psychopathology & Treatment*; 0.5 credit)
- Cognitive Models of Psychopathology and Psychotherapy (*Psychopathology & Treatment*)
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (*Psychopathology & Treatment*)
- Forensic Neuropsychology & Psychology (*Neuropsychology & Behavioral Neuroscience*)
- Health Psychology (*Behavioral Medicine*)
- Introduction to Clinical Neuropsychology (*Neuropsychology & Behavioral Neuroscience*)
- Marital and Sex Therapy (*Psychopathology & Treatment*)

- Mental Health Policy (*Policy*)
- Motivation and Self-Control in Health Behavior (*Behavioral Medicine*)
- Neuropsychological Assessment (*Neuropsychology & Behavioral Neuroscience*)
- Principles of Neuroimaging (*Neuropsychology & Behavioral Neuroscience*)
- Primary Care & Rehabilitation Psychology (*Behavioral Medicine*)
- Psychodynamic Traditions (*Psychopathology & Treatment*)
- Psychopharmacology (*Psychopathology & Treatment*)
- Seminar Series (0.25 credits):
  - Cognitive Psychology
  - Diversity
  - Social Psychology

Please note that all of the above courses are taken alongside Clinical Psychology PhD students. MA students are also required to take the year-long Professional Development Seminar. The first quarter of the Professional Development Seminar is designed to orient students to the MA program, match students with available mentors/labs, and introduce students to career options in academic clinical psychology. The remaining three quarters of the Professional Development Seminar are designed to refine MA students' interests in academic clinical psychology and to help them prepare for the next steps in their careers (e.g., developing applications for PhD programs; preparing for interviews).

### *Course Registration and Tuition*

Students register for courses through CAESAR (<http://www.northwestern.edu/caesar/>), following all deadlines established by TGS (e.g., initial registration, adding/changing/dropping courses). Current deadlines can be obtained through the Northwestern Calendar:

<http://www.registrar.northwestern.edu/calendars/>. Students should consult with their TGS Academic Student Services representative if they need additional help with registration problems, adding/dropping, overloading courses, etc. (email: [gradservices@northwestern.edu](mailto:gradservices@northwestern.edu)).

Under the TGS tuition model, tuition is charged by quarter, not by the number of courses for which students are registered. To remain full-time, however, students must be registered for at least 3 credits per quarter and are strongly encouraged to register for 4 credits per quarter. Students can register for up to three credits of research per quarter, although they may need to contact TGS Academic Student

Services (gradservices@northwestern.edu) to register for more than one research credit. Students are charged the full tuition rate for the first eight (8) quarters of registration. Current tuition rate information can be found on TGS's website (<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/funding/cost-of-attendance.html>).

## **Course Waivers/Substitutions**

In accordance with the policy of The Graduate School, course credit is not provided for courses taken at other institutions prior to admission to the Clinical Psychology MA Program. As such, waivers are not provided.

## **Independent Study (ClinPsy 499)**

To allow in-depth research in a specific area of study, a student may register for Independent Study. As is true of all other Program courses, 499 courses require a minimum of two hours per week of contact with the faculty preceptor, an explicit syllabus, and a final product, such as a paper, exam, or annotated bibliography, that can serve as the basis of an evaluation of the student's work.

### *Procedure*

Before the quarterly registration period, the student must complete a 499 *Independent Study Permission* form (available on the Program's shared Google Drive folder). The student provides a proposed bibliography and mode of study, rationale for need of a 499 course as opposed to a regular course offering, a focus of goals for the course, and a statement of how the student's performance will be evaluated (paper, exam, etc.). The form is signed by the student's faculty adviser and the proposed instructor of the course, and then submitted to the DGS for approval. The form must be submitted at least one week prior to registration.

### *Graduating with your MA in Clinical Psychology*

Students must complete all degree requirements in order to graduate with their MA in Clinical Psychology, including competent completion of all coursework and the Capstone Project. In preparation for graduation, students must submit the *Master's Degree Completion* form and the *Application for Degree* form in GSTS (under TGS Forms) by the date dictated by TGS, entering the quarter for which

the student anticipates receiving the MA degree (Review TGS deadlines to determine by what date to submitted the application: <https://www.registrar.northwestern.edu/calendars/index.html>). The *Application for Degree* can be submitted up to two quarters in advance of graduation, even before all degree requirements are completed; however, if all degree requirements are not met by the date indicated in the *Application for Degree*, the student will have to contact TGS Student Services to change the date.

## Section VI: Research Training

The Program provides a sequence of activities toward developing proficiency in scientific inquiry. The culmination of the student's research training is the Capstone Project.

### Psychiatry Grand Rounds

The Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Northwestern University sponsors a weekly Grand Rounds seminar during the academic year Wednesdays 11:00am to 12:30pm for the second, third, and fourth Wednesdays of the month. Grand Rounds provides an excellent opportunity for graduate students to observe research or scholarly presentations in company of other members from our large and diverse department. Presentations are given by prominent local and visiting speakers from across the country, and students often have an opportunity to meet with these speakers at a trainee lunch held after the presentation. Psychiatry Grand Rounds is an important opportunity for shared professional experience, and students are expected to attend regularly.

### Friday Digest

Friday Digest is a monthly "brown bag" series designed to provide a relaxed and collegial environment (enhanced by a complimentary lunch) to support the dissemination and development of research ideas and products in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Presenters are typically senior trainees or junior faculty (although senior faculty members are also invited) from labs within the Department presenting on research works in progress. Additionally, the Digest series has also been a venue for advanced clinical psychology graduate students to present their current research, whether as

practice for conference talks or defense of their Master's Thesis/Dissertation Prospectus. Students are strongly encouraged to attend. The final Friday Digest session, held in July, involves an MA student data blitz, where each of the Clinical Psychology Master's students briefly present their research.

## Capstone Project

MA students are required to complete a Capstone Project before graduating with the MA. The Capstone Project is the culmination of the research apprenticeship provided by the research mentor(s), and provides an opportunity to evaluate a student's research competencies. The student and research mentor(s) will collaborate to develop a proposal for the Capstone Project by the end of the Summer I quarter. The proposed Capstone Project proposal should be sent to the DGS program for approval via email. Once approved, the Capstone Project will be guided by the student's research mentor(s), and ultimately approved by the mentor(s) and DGS using a standardized competency rating form. Examples of Capstone Projects include:

1. Substantial participation (i.e., authorship level) on one or more empirical studies submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.
2. First author submission of one or more peer-reviewed poster/oral presentations at regional, national, or international conferences.
3. A comprehensive review paper that is submitted to and graded by the research mentor.
4. A grant proposal (e.g., F31 style) that is submitted to and graded by the research mentor.

Capstone Projects that include substantial participation on one or more empirical studies are expected to only be at the co-author level; it is not expected, nor recommended, that students complete a first-author manuscript. Students with enough support and competencies can certainly be first authors on a manuscript; however, this should not be an *expectation* for the Capstone Project.

For Capstone Projects that include contributions to peer-reviewed manuscripts, the manuscript does not need to be submitted or accepted for publication by the end of the program. It is not realistic to expect students – or faculty – to start a project and submit a manuscript over the course of a 15-month program. Instead, it is expected that the student's major contributions to the manuscript be completed by the end of the program, but not necessarily the full manuscript. For completion of the Capstone Project, students contributing to a manuscript can submit a pre-submission of the manuscript, or request their mentor to

send the DGS an email of the citation of the manuscript with a notation that the student's major contribution to the manuscript is near complete. Students are encouraged to work with their mentors after graduation to finalize the manuscript for submission and publication.

Posters or oral submissions used for the Capstone Project can be presented at conferences after completion of the program. For completion of the Capstone Project, the student should send the abstract of the poster/presentation and a draft of the final poster or presentation slides to the DGS.

Finally, completion of the Capstone Project requires the mentor to complete the Capstone Competency Evaluation form, which can be found on the Program's Google Drive and at the end of this handbook.

## Section VII: Graduation

To graduate with your MA from Northwestern University, you must complete all of the degree requirements for the MA Program in Clinical Psychology before to the TGS deadlines. Please note that the deadlines for submitting all degree requirements are updated every year and are posted on Northwestern's academic calendar: ([https://planitpurple.northwestern.edu/calendar/academic\\_calendar](https://planitpurple.northwestern.edu/calendar/academic_calendar)).

For more information on the TGS degree completion process, please see:

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/masters-degree-requirements.html>.

Initiation and completion of the graduation process is the student's responsibility, although assistance is available from TGS' student services (<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-student-services/>) and from the DGS.

Students graduating in August are welcome to participate in Northwestern's Commencement Ceremony (<http://www.northwestern.edu/commencement/>), typically held in June. Please notify the DGS in early February if you would like to participate in the Commencement Ceremony. Students and their families are also invited and strongly encouraged to attend the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Commencement Program, which is also typically held in June.

## **Transcripts**

The official record of the student's graduate work at Northwestern University is the transcript. Thus, a student should examine their unofficial transcript on CAESAR, check it for accuracy, and contact the Registrar's office if there are any concerns. It is the student's responsibility to determine that the official Northwestern University transcript accurately reflects her or his Graduate School studies.

## Capstone Project Competency Evaluation Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_  
(optional)

Description of Capstone Project:

Please rate the Capstone Project on the following competencies using the following scale:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Agree
- 4 = Strongly Agree

### Research methodology and analysis

1. The Capstone uses empirical evidence, systematic review of existing empirical evidence, or a proposal to test specific hypotheses or explore logical or adequately reasoned research questions.	1	2	3	4
2. The Capstone has clearly formulated the goals, aims, and/or hypotheses	1	2	3	4
3. The approach of the Capstone is appropriate to examine the hypotheses or answer the research questions	1	2	3	4
4. The analyses or methods used to test the hypotheses or answer the research questions were appropriate	1	2	3	4
5. Interpretations of the results, findings, or expected findings were correct and were appropriately used to answer hypotheses or research questions.	1	2	3	4

Comments:

### Scientific Foundation of Project

6. Literature review is broad and comprehensive	1	2	3	4
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7. The Capstone integrates the latest research on the scientific foundations of human behavior (biological, social, affective, and/or cognitive) into the research question and/or hypotheses.	1 2 3 4
8. Writing is clear, concise, and scientific	1 2 3 4

Comments:

### Ethics

9. All of the relevant ethical, legal, and/or professional standards or guidelines were appropriately identified and addressed	1 2 3 4
10. Ethical implications in the design and implementation of the Capstone were identified, addressed, and discussed	1 2 3 4
11. The student sought consultation regarding complex ethical and legal dilemmas related to the Capstone, when necessary	1 2 3 4
12. All applicable ethical principles and standards were addressed in the Capstone	1 2 3 4

Comments:

Overall Comments:

Has the student passed<sup>1</sup> the Capstone Project?     Yes             No

If “No,” describe the revisions necessary for the student to pass the Capstone:

Signature of Primary Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Signature of MA Program Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

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<sup>1</sup> “Passed” is defined as 100% of competencies rated as 3 (agree) or 4 (strongly agree).