

Oregon State University

Clinical Science Doctoral Program FAQs

Why did you make this document?

To be as helpful as possible! We realize that applying to graduate school is stressful and at times confusing. We also know that not every applicant has the same access to information and mentorship. Because of that, we want to be as transparent as possible about the application process and our program. We hope that this document helps with that.

Does the program offer a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology?

Students interested in clinical psychology complete the Psychology Ph.D. and select the transcript-visible Clinical Science Option, hereafter referred to as the clinical science doctoral program.

Can I get licensed as a psychologist if I complete the clinical science doctoral program?

Yes! The program will offer opportunities for you to obtain all of the pre-doctoral training and clinical hours that you need to apply for a clinical internship and a license in psychology. Licensure requirements vary by state, so be sure to check [the APA](#) website for more information.

Does OSU have a M.S./M.A. psychology program?

OSU does not have an option to earn a master's degree on its own. Students admitted to the Psychology Ph.D. program earn a Master of Science in Psychology on their way to the Ph.D.

Is the clinical program APA accredited? What is the timeline for the clinical program?

The Clinical Psychology PhD is a new offering at Oregon State University, and therefore is not yet accredited. There are many steps involved in becoming accredited, and the process begins by admitting students. Students must be admitted to and active in the program in order for the program to be accredited on contingency, and full accreditation cannot be granted until after students have graduated from the program.

We will begin accepting applications for the Clinical Psychology program in Fall 2023 to start in Fall 2024. We expect that all students who enter the program in Fall 2024 will be eligible for licensure and will have graduated from an APA accredited program.

Does OSU offer tuition waivers?

The School of Psychological Science does not have our own process for granting fee waivers. OSU's graduate school has information about fee waivers [here](#).

Oregon State University follows a “clinical science” model. What is this?

The clinical science approach is built with two primary goals: (1) A focus on science-driven exploration of knowledge. Our pursuit of new clinical insights follows scientific methods; and (2) complete integration of science and practical application. Science and real-world application should be unified rather than separated. In our clinical science educational programs, we strive for seamless merging of our training in science for both research and clinical application. Research guides every facet of clinical work, while hands-on clinical experience consistently feeds back into research. These tenets are the essence of our program.

What kinds of careers do you think Oregon State’s clinical science doctoral program will prepare its graduates to pursue?

We will support our graduates in pursuing the careers they are most passionate about and which will be most fulfilling for them. That may include careers in clinical practice, research, teaching, public health or policy, clinic leadership and administration, and industry. A particular strength of our faculty is our experience in diverse realms of practice. We have faculty who have worked in academic medicine, Veterans Administration hospitals, and schools, who provide services through their own private practice, who work and consult in industry, and of course who are in academia. Regardless of which career path students pursue, we expect all graduates to be well-trained in evidence-based clinical practice, equipped to generate, consume, and disseminate research findings, and informed regarding systems of mental health care, and committed to better reaching underserved populations.

How do I apply to Oregon State’s clinical science doctoral program and what materials do I need?

The application and further details on required materials when applying can be found [here](#) and [here](#). In brief, you will complete the application, arrange to have three letters of recommendation sent, and submit your personal statement, curriculum vitae (“CV”), and official transcripts from all post-high school or post-GED educational institutes you have attended.

Is the GRE required? What about the Psychology GRE?

GRE scores are not required.

How can I write a strong personal statement?

Writing a strong personal statement for a clinical psychology graduate program is crucial, as it's your chance to present yourself beyond things like grades and scores. Some broad tips:

1. Follow Guidelines: Follow the prompt guidelines

2. Understand the Purpose: The personal statement serves to show why you're a good fit for a program and mentor(s) and how the program and mentor(s) align with your professional aspirations.
3. Start with a Strong Introduction: Capture the reader's attention. Some applicants start with a brief personal anecdote that led them to psychology or a question that they're passionate about answering.
4. Highlight Relevant Experience:
 - Research Experience: Describe your involvement in research projects, your roles, any methodologies you've become familiar with, and the relevance of this research to clinical psychology.
 - Clinical Experience: Discuss any internships, practicum experiences, or work that has provided you with exposure to clinical populations or therapeutic techniques.
 - Teaching or Leadership Roles: Mention any roles that demonstrate skills relevant to graduate school, such as mentoring, teaching, or leadership.
5. Address Your Fit with the Program and Mentor(s): Describe how the program's curriculum, training opportunities, faculty research, and overall philosophy align with your career and research goals.
6. Discuss Long-Term Goals: Explain what you envision for your future in clinical psychology. This might include your desired balance of research vs. clinical work, populations you want to work with, or broader questions you hope to answer in the field.
7. Address things you worry may be perceived as a shortcoming: If there are aspects of your application that might raise questions (e.g., a low GPA during one semester), briefly address them by providing context. It is also okay to ask a recommender to address this in their letter.
8. Show Personal Qualities: Highlight attributes like resilience, determination, empathy, and other qualities that are crucial for a career in clinical psychology. Use examples to show these qualities rather than just stating them.
9. Conclude Strongly: Summarize your main points and reiterate your enthusiasm for the field of clinical psychology and the specific program.
10. Proofread and Edit: Grammar, spelling, and clarity are crucial. Have multiple people review your statement, ideally someone familiar with graduate admissions in clinical psychology.
11. Get Feedback: Ask mentors, advisors, peers, or professionals in the field to review your statement and provide feedback.
12. Try to Tailor Your Statement: Emphasize the fit with the specific program and mentor.

How can I draft a strong CV?

The goal of a CV is to clearly communicate all of the fantastic experience you have that may be relevant to your success as a graduate student in our program and as a future psychologist.

How do I know if I am a strong fit for the program and a faculty member's lab? What does "fit" mean?

In the context of applying to graduate school, "fit" typically refers to how well a student's interests, goals, and values align with a specific program, department, faculty, and overall university environment. It encompasses several dimensions. Here are some things that are considered:

1. Research Fit: This is about how well a prospective student's research interests align with those of the faculty and the ongoing research projects in the department. For instance, if a student is interested in studying anxiety, they'd ideally apply to a program with a faculty member who is doing research in that area.
2. Mentor Fit: Beyond just the broader research fit, it's important that students align well with potential advisors. This involves both research alignment and compatibility in mentorship styles and expectations.
3. Cultural and Environmental Fit: This pertains to the overall culture of the department or school and whether a student feels they'd thrive in that environment. Factors can include departmental values, availability of resources, and more.
4. Location and Lifestyle Fit: For many students, the geographic location and surrounding community can be a significant factor. Considerations may include proximity to family, weather/climate, urban vs. rural settings, cultural supports, access to hobbies, and local amenities.
5. Financial Fit: This involves considering the costs of living, costs of attending, the availability of financial support, assistantships, fellowships, and other financial factors.

A strong fit can enhance a student's chances of success, satisfaction, and overall well-being during their time in graduate school. As such, many admissions committees consider fit when reviewing applications, and students are often advised to apply to programs where they feel a strong alignment across these various dimensions. Only you can evaluate the aspects of fit described in 3, 4, and 5. That is, the admissions committee does not consider these aspects of fit when evaluating your application.

Should I email faculty members before applying to tell them I'm interested in applying to their lab?

You will communicate these interests within your application. It is not necessary to email faculty members, and your application will be given full consideration regardless of whether you do so. Some applicants contact specific faculty members to confirm they are available to mentor new students (if this is not already listed on the program or faculty member's website), that they are continuing the line of research that drew the applicant's interest, or to ask specific questions regarding aspect of "fit" described above.

Is it helpful if I list multiple mentors of interest or should I list just one on my application?

We recommend listing as potential mentors only faculty members with whom you envision a strong research match (i.e., your research interests align closely with theirs). Most applicants list between one and three potential mentors. Listing too many can appear as though the applicant does not have a clear direction. On balance, it is not advantageous to list multiple potential mentors if the applicant is only interested in mentoring from one faculty member.

My undergraduate GPA is low. Will this remove me from consideration?

No. Although GPA is one indicator, the admissions committee uses a holistic approach based on all available materials in the application. Holistic admissions is based on the idea that there are multiple pathways to success.

I want to be a therapist or pursue a clinical career. Will mentioning this in my application or interview hurt my chances of getting into the program?

No! Our program values the contributions that therapists make, and a core part of our mission is to train future clinical providers to be experts in evaluating and using evidence-based assessment, prevention, and treatment approaches.

Will your interviews be held in-person this cycle?

We plan to hold virtual interviews this cycle. Applying to graduate school is expensive enough without the added financial burden of visiting campuses for interviews. That said, we do plan to invite students who are offered admission to visit Oregon State in-person if they choose to do so (this is optional). We know that it can be helpful to see the area and campus to make sure it is a good fit for you school and life wise. And we love to show off beautiful Oregon!

Where else can I find information and guidance for my application process?

Overall Guides on Deciding to Apply and Applying to Graduate School in Clinical Psychology

- [Mitch's Uncensored Advice for Applying to Graduate School in Clinical Psychology](#), a guide written by Dr. Mitch Prinstein, UNC Chapel Hill.
- [Your Application Year](#), a guide provided by the Building Roads to Inclusion and Diversity in Graduate Education (BRIDGE) Psychology Network
- [Getting Into Psych Grad School](#), a guide provided by the Council of University Directors in Clinical Psychology.
- [Open Access Tips/Materials for Clinical Psych PhD Applicants](#), a collection of tips provided by Mallory Dobias, B.S.
- [So You Want to Go to Clinical Psych Grad School? ...Or Something?](#) Slides from Dr. Jessica Schleider made for Stony Brook University

Resources for Drafting a Strong CV

- [Association for Psychological Science advice on drafting a strong CV](#)

Resources for Drafting a Strong Personal Statement

- [Annotated Personal Statement Examples](#)

More info on choosing a PhD supervisor

- [Demystifying the Graduate School Application Process](#)