



University  
of Houston  
Clear Lake

# University of Houston – Clear Lake

**CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY MASTER'S PROGRAM STUDENT  
HANDBOOK**

*April 2016*

## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON – CLEAR LAKE

### DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL HEALTH AND APPLIED SCIENCES

#### CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY MASTER’S PROGRAM

The Clinical Psychology Master’s program will result in the acquisition of expert knowledge, clinical skills related to interviewing and assessment, therapeutic skills in empirically supported interventions, and personal development. For most students, this program is challenging and exhilarating, and students will be both responsible for learning in the classroom and continually searching for knowledge outside of the coursework.

This handbook is designed to facilitate students’ progress through the program. It is a mixture of official policies and recommendations for making student’s life easier. The manual supplements (but does not replace) other important published material that appears in the *Graduate Catalog* and the *Policies and Procedures Manual of the Psychology Clinic*.

The policies and recommendations contained in this handbook and the *Policies and Procedures Manual of the Psychology Clinic* are modified periodically and students must abide by the current policies and procedures and not those in effect upon admission. We urge students to familiarize themselves with all current degree requirements, as well as revisions of those policies. The University, the Department, and professional organizations reserve the right to make periodic changes to policies and to clarify or improve program procedures. Please review these documents throughout your academic career to ensure compliance.

Further, the Clinical Psychology program is administered and coordinated by a program committee of Clinical Psychology faculty members. The faculty members are responsible for the admission and evaluation of students and the development of curriculum. The Clinical Psychology Program Director supervises the program on a day-to-day basis; other administrators (Department Chair of CHAS and the Dean of the School of Human Sciences and Humanities) are responsible for the program. Students in the program must meet all general requirements of HSH and the university.

#### **Purpose and Goals of the Program**

The purpose of the clinical psychology training program is the development of competent practitioners. There are three components to the training: 1) provision of sound theoretical and empirically derived knowledge, 2) carefully supervised clinical experience, and 3) learning which enhances and develops each student's self-awareness and personal maturity. Ideally at least some part of the student's training takes place in an interdisciplinary environment where the student is

exposed to professionals from a number of specialty areas, as well as to relevant social issues such as cultural and minority concerns.

The program emphasizes traditional scientist-practitioner skills such as practical clinical skills in assessment and treatment, and scholarly skills in understanding and analyzing research that contributes to the field of psychology. The following are part of the training students receive in the program:

***Practical Clinical Skills***

1. Learn assessment techniques using multimodal and multi-method approaches
2. Learn empirically-based diagnostic techniques and procedures
3. Write professional evaluations, treatment plans, progress notes, and other reports
4. Develop and implement treatment programs
5. Develop and deliver case presentations
6. Select treatments on the basis of empirically determined treatments of choice
7. Develop skills in implementing standardized treatments
8. Demonstrate sensitivity to the issues of cultural and individual diversity
9. Demonstrate knowledge of and correct use of the APA Ethical Guidelines for clinical practice

***General Scholarly and Research Skills***

10. Develop critical analysis of assessment and treatment research literature
11. Demonstrate understanding and application of the philosophical underpinnings of psychology
12. Demonstrate knowledge of research in clinical assessment and treatment
13. Demonstrate knowledge of treatment outcome research
14. Optional opportunity to design, conduct, analyze, and disseminate research that contributes to the field of psychology

***Student Opportunities Essential to Meet Program Goals***

15. Practice assessment and treatment skills in a highly supervised environment through an onsite clinic
16. Work with and be supervised by faculty members, who have expertise in a variety of assessment and treatment modalities
17. Use state-of-the-art equipment and technology used in the field today
18. Participate in a collegial atmosphere that is accepting of diverse opinions and prepares students to analyze the current literature critically

**Policies for All Students**

All students are subject to the policies stated in the Academic Policies of the catalog. Additional policies and procedures for students in the program are

presented in this handbook. The University uses only the UHCL e-mail accounts to communicate with enrolled students. Students should activate their e-mail account, use it to communicate with their department and other administrative units, and check it regularly for important information.

### ***Registration and Degree Audit***

Students are responsible for correctly registering for courses and paying all tuition and fees by the official university registration and payment deadlines. All students should verify the accuracy of their enrollment before the end of the “add period” and should check their online account to verify that they are registered for the classes that they think they are. Classes “fill-up” very quickly, so please register as soon as their registration time opens.

All students are responsible for reviewing their own transcripts and degree audits regularly to ensure that they are correct and that they are on track to meet all their requirements.

### ***Withdrawal***

Students are responsible for all courses in which they remain officially enrolled once the drop period has ended. Instructors do not have the authority to withdraw students from classes. Withdrawals are only permitted for non-academic reasons; no withdrawals can be approved for academic reasons. When submitting a withdrawal request, students must provide verifiable, third-party documentation for the reason for the withdrawal.

### ***Grade Appeals***

Grade appeals should be made to the department or program following the process specified in the catalog. If they are resolved within the department or program, that unit is the final level of appeal. The departmental decision may be appealed to the dean only on the basis of procedural irregularity. The decision of the dean is not subject to review or further appeal.

### ***Formal Complaints***

Formal complaints should be made in writing to the associate dean.

### ***Accommodations for Students with Disabilities***

Students with documented disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services to open a file and learn more about accommodations that may be available to them.

## ***Academic Load***

Graduate students can enroll in up to 12 credits of course work each semester. Requests for enrollment in more than 12 credits can be submitted to the program director for approval.

## ***Overview of the Curriculum***

The master's program is usually a full-time program that is designed to be completed in two years and a summer semester. The curriculum is designed to meet or exceed state guidelines for licensing, as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC).

Students can be enrolled part-time; however, students will be responsible for following the suggested sequencing of classes. Many of the classes are only offered once a year, and thus, students will need to be aware of when to take these courses to continue consistent enrollment in the program. Further, some students will come in with courses completed, especially if they have been a UHCL General Psychology Master's student. For these students, it is imperative and the responsibility of the student to assure proper sequencing of courses to be consistently enrolled in the program. It should be noted that even though some students enter with credits, there is a high likelihood that it will still take two years to graduate.

***State Licensing:*** Once you complete the program, you will have fulfilled all the educational requirements for LPC licensure in the state of Texas. However, if a student takes a class that is not on the approved list of courses, there is no guarantee, even if we approve a course substitution, that the course will be accepted by the board. After graduating the program, students typically need to accumulate additional supervised clinical hours to become licensed. Specific guidelines for licensing psychologists in Texas can be found at: <http://www.tsbep.texas.gov>. Note that licensure requirements are regulated by each state and students should review the requirements where they expect to practice.

***Accreditation.*** The program is not accredited by APA, since APA does not accredit Master's Programs. Further, we are not accredited by CACREP, since this accreditation only accredits counseling programs. We belong to and adhere to the standards of Council of Applied Master's Programs in Psychology (CAMPP).

***Curriculum.*** The program builds on training received in psychology Bachelor's programs. The program will include coursework related to specialized assessment and treatment strategies. The program will build on students' broad knowledge of the empirical, theoretical, and philosophical underpinnings of the profession. The program includes coursework, practicum and internship. The

student develops a Candidate Plan of Study with his/her advisor that will meet all requirements of the program. The requirements and suggested sequences of courses for the program are contained in the university catalog and the Professional Psychology Brochure.

Overall, the program consists of 63 hours, including only one elective class (3 credit hours). Students may take anything for these elective hours; however, if they are planning on getting their LPC in Texas, students must complete *Career Counseling* as this elective class.

Further, completing a thesis is an option in this program. If the student wants to complete a thesis, they may use this elective as one of the two classes they need to take for thesis credit. However, as stated above, the student will need to take *Career Counseling*, if the student wants an LPC. Steps for completing a thesis are addressed later in the handbook.

### *Practicum*

Practica experiences begin in the first year of the program. Students participate in a full two-semester practicum experience, seeing clients and conducting assessments at our on-site community clinic.

Only students in the clinical psychology program may enroll in *Clinical Practicum*. The course is a two-semester sequence intended as a bridge between theoretical course work and internship. The prerequisites to practicum are PSYC 5731 *Basic Psychotherapy Skills*, and PSYC 6531 *Psychopathology*. Students need to **complete** these classes in order to enroll in *Clinical Practicum*.

Further, students do not always get to “choose” when they will take practicum. Given the limited number of slots per semester, students will report their preference of when to start practicum. However, the faculty members will have the final decision regarding when a student begins practicum.

Practicum is held in the Psychological Services training clinic. The practicum instructor assigns clients to be seen in practicum; the instructor supervises the assessment and/or therapy (in consultation with the Director of Psychological Services as needed). Each student will work with at least one client in the practicum class and will observe sessions done by others. The practicum instructor will give each student feedback. Students will complete intakes and progress notes as directed by their practicum supervisor. Registration fees for practicum include a fee for malpractice insurance.

Students will be responsible for maintaining all paperwork on clients, scheduling appointments, identifying treatment goals, securing payment, and obtaining

supervision. Group supervision will be provided on a regular basis. Supervising faculty members will conduct evaluations of students' clinical work.

If a student's performance is not enough to pass practicum or if the instructor does not believe the student is prepared enough to go on internship, the student will be asked to repeat practicum. If the student repeats practicum more than once, they will be dismissed from the program.

### *Internship*

Clinical internship is open only to students admitted to clinical psychology and is designed to be completed after accumulating two semesters experience of *Clinical Practicum* and *Professional Practice, Law and Ethics* as prerequisites. In rare instances, a student may petition to begin internship after completing one semester of practicum. Such a petition would need to be reviewed by faculty, and the onus would be on the student to demonstrate exceptional readiness and competence in clinical skills, an appropriate need, and overall good standing in all aspects the program.

Overall, students are expected to view the internship in a professional manner which includes striving to achieve the best possible performance rather than simply working for a grade. In staff relations, the student must be able to extend him/herself to establish rapport and to assimilate rapidly into an ongoing clinical agency or practice. It is with this approach in mind that the student will most benefit from the internship and gain acceptance into the mental health community.

The program's Internship Coordinator (a faculty member assigned to coordinate internship placement) maintains a list of internship sites with histories of satisfying the program's standards for internships. The Coordinator will make suggestions for placement based on student background, interest, personal style, and career goals; in addition, the Coordinator will discuss with the student any new potential internship sites of which the student may be aware. A student will not initiate discussion of internship placement with an agency without first consulting with and receiving approval from the Internship Coordinator.

The university must be concerned with the student's well-being, the interests of the agency and its clients, and the interests of the university itself. Therefore, *the university and program faculty specifically reserve the right to deny to a particular student the option of a specific internship placement, or of doing any internship.* Acceptance into the Clinical Psychology program or approval of a Candidate Plan of Studies which includes the internship does not constitute a guarantee that the university will in fact, arrange such an internship. Should the clinical

psychology faculty recommend such a denial, the student may appeal the decision to university administration.

The program also reserves the right to terminate an internship placement if an intern seriously violates standards of professional practice and ethics, demonstrates other serious problems, or if requested by the internship site. In cases where an internship placement is terminated prematurely, the Internship Coordinator will consult with the student and with other clinical faculty members to determine a course of action. Such action could include placing the student at another site to meet the internship requirement, additional course work or training, and/or other stipulations appropriate to the circumstances. An intern who is removed from an internship placement, but who is dissatisfied with the decisions of the Internship Coordinator may appeal for a review by appropriate university administration.

On internship, the program expects a minimum of one hour per week of individual supervision. Internship supervisors in the clinical psychology program must ordinarily possess at least a master's-level certification/licensure in a recognized mental health field. The supervisor-supervisee relationship is critical. Supervisors need to be skilled in supervision to establish the essential quality of trust, freedom to learn, honest evaluation, appropriate modeling, and mutually effective feedback. Assignment of clinical cases needs to be meaningful and offer as much breadth as feasible and appropriate for the supervisee. Supervisors typically have direct knowledge of the student's actual work through observations or recordings.

Under ordinary circumstances, the Coordinator will visit each intern and supervisor on-site each semester to lend support and monitor progress and quality. The Internship Coordinator will not usually directly supervise student cases, not being an employee of the internship site. Additionally, students meet periodically on campus with the Coordinator to facilitate the internship experience and identify any potential problems that may be at risk of developing between the intern, the site and the supervisor.

Internship requires the student to complete 500 clock hours of on-site work ordinarily for two consecutive semesters, usually two to three days per week. One-semester internships are usually not approved. Internship can, however, encompass a full academic year. The semester requirements are intended to ensure sufficient experience and skill development; exposure to a variety of clients, tasks, and problems; time to benefit from errors and practice; time for supervisory relationships to develop and become productive; and time to become involved with and knowledgeable about the placement agency as an organization.

Because it is the program's intent that the master's internship be a learning experience in a new situation, students may not treat current employment as an internship nor are internships usually allowed at a site in which the student is employed.

Planning for *Clinical Internship* should begin during the first semester of *Clinical Practicum* and involves conferring with the Internship Coordinator about the details of the proposed internship and the process of placement. Typically the student will interview at the internship site in the semester prior to starting the internship and must be accepted by the site before the internship placement is finalized.

The student must register for the appropriate internship course (PSYC 6636) each semester of the internship. Registration in the program includes a fee for malpractice insurance. Also, registration in a university training course is required for licensure exemption under Texas mental health licensing laws.

The site supervisor will recommend the grade for internship based on the student's development and performance, as documented in a written evaluation by the supervisor. However, the university Internship Coordinator assigns the official course grade. The Internship Coordinator will ask each intern to complete an Internship Evaluation each semester regarding the quality of experience offered the student.

Toward the end of the internship, the student will prepare an Internship Report. The Internship Coordinator will inform the final-semester intern about the contents and format of the report. The student's final draft must be submitted to the Internship Coordinator prior to the end of the final internship semester. Further editing or changes may be required at the discretion of the Coordinator.

### **The University and Program**

The University is located in Houston, Texas, but is housed in the Clear Lake area of Houston, which is a 45-minute drive to downtown Houston and Galveston. The University includes five schools and a diverse student population of nearly 9,000 students. UHCL is Hispanic Serving Institution, as designated by the U.S. Department of Education.

The Clinical Psychology Program is part of the Clinical Health and Applied Sciences Department, which is a part of the School of Human Sciences and Humanities. There are approximately four full-time faculty members who will serve as core faculty in this program. Further, there are 12 other psychology faculty members in the Psychology Department who contribute to student experiences in the program.

The clinical program also helps maintain a Psychology Clinic located on campus. The clinic has six individual therapy rooms, a family therapy room, a student office, and two meeting rooms. Psychological services are provided to the Clear Lake community, as well as the greater Houston area. This Psychology Clinic provides an excellent training opportunity for beginning therapists to be supervised by licensed psychologists as well as provide low cost services for individuals with mental health needs.

### **Registration**

Students will need to register for courses each semester. Most courses will be open for only a specific number of students. Thus, students are encouraged to check with the Financial Aid Office and the Director of the program to determine any possible consequences of repeating courses.

It should be noted a student may only repeat graduate courses once, which is a program requirement not the University requirement. Failure to pass a course with two attempts will result in dismissal from the program. Students must be continuously enrolled in at least one credit for each semester until graduation from the program.

A student may only skip registration for one semester with the requested, explicit approval of the clinical faculty and under extenuating circumstances. But, upon failing to complete at least one course for two long semesters in sequence, a student is assumed to have withdrawn and must petition the program committee to continue in the program. Students are also expected to notify their advisor and the Program Director of any interruptions in their studies. A student whose studies are interrupted for longer than one long semester will require faculty approval to continue in the program.

### **Advisors:**

Each student will be assigned an advisor, and students may go to their advisor at any time for issues related to the program or plan of study. However, all faculty members serve as mentors, training and guiding the student in developing their professional competencies. Unlike doctoral programs, students are not formally matched with a faculty research mentor when they begin. However, if students are interested in research, they should find a research mentor that will help them through their research development. This research mentor would also be responsible for thesis development and completion, if the student is interested in completing a thesis.

### **Transfer Credits and Waivers of Requirements**

In most cases, students may NOT transfer credits from another university. Sometimes, students are able to replace a class they have previously taken from other Master's programs. However, students still need complete 63 hours in the

Clinical Psychology program. If a student has been taking courses in the General Psychology Master's program, some of the classes are also required in the Clinical Psychology program. Those classes will count in the Clinical Program. These classes include Human Growth and Development, Biological Basis of Behavior, Learning, Career Counseling, and Research Methods and Statistics I & II. There are also some therapy electives that may be similar across programs.

### **Annual Evaluation of Students**

At each year of the program, formal evaluations are conducted. Students are rated "good," "needs improvement," and "unable to judge" in several domains. All faculty members are involved in the evaluation of students. These evaluations will be based on the student's progress and performance in the program. In these evaluations, clinical students are evaluated on personal, professional, and academic skills. Further, there is an overall rating for the year using these domains, and students are rated as "excellent," "fair," and "unsatisfactory."

Once the evaluations are completed, the student will receive the formal evaluations. If the student would like to address any concerns related to the evaluation, the student may meet with the Director of Clinical Training. If a student receives an unsatisfactory on an annual evaluation, she/he will be required to meet with the faculty. A remediation plan will be developed that the student will need to follow. If the remediation plan is not followed or if the student receives two scores of unsatisfactory while in the program, the student will be dismissed from the program.

### ***Expectations of Behavior***

In general, students are expected to behave in a professional and responsible manner, which is much of the basis for the annual evaluation of each student. Students are expected to be responsible in every manner, including attending all classes, completing all assignments and turning them in "on-time," responding to feedback, treating other students and faculty in the program with respect, engaging in ethical behavior, and being prepared (i.e. reading outside of class). If student do engage in these behaviors, there is chance that they will

1. Fail classes (all classes have preparation and attendance policies)
2. Receive an unsatisfactory on their annual evaluations
3. Be asked to voluntarily withdraw or be dismissed

Further, the progress of students completing their internal practicum will be reviewed during both semesters that they are enrolled in the internal practicum. Serious concerns regarding clinical competence will result in a remediation plan. Such concerns among the clinical faculty could lead to immediate removal of clinical cases, a possible leave of absence to address the concerns, and/or immediate termination.

The following two ethical principles from the American Psychological Association Ethical Principles of Psychologists (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.html>) guide evaluations of the students. **Principle A: Beneficence and Nonmaleficence**, requires psychologists to balance the welfare and rights of patients, clients, supervisees, and students. This includes concern for harm that may derive from impaired or incompetent students. **Principle B: Fidelity and Responsibility**, expresses concern for the community and society in which psychologists work. This includes the responsibility to ensure adequate interpersonal and professional skills in all graduates.

Interpersonal skills and intrapersonal characteristics are considered essential to functioning as a therapist; therefore, deficiencies in these areas will result in a required remediation plan. When a student's behavior or performance raises concerns about the student's ability to perform satisfactorily as a therapist, a remediation plan will be developed, and if that remediation plan is not followed or the student continues to present problem behavior, the student will be dismissed from the program. Students must adhere to the laws and regulations relating to the practice of psychology. Given that students work in clinical settings, they will be held to the same ethical and professional standards of conduct within professional psychology environments.

Faculty members and students share a responsibility to take action if they believe that a person's personal problems may be harmful to patients, clients, colleagues, or other citizens. The appropriate action would be to bring the concern to the attention of the person believed to be impaired. If that does not result in a corrective response and a perceived risk remains, it would be appropriate to consult with faculty member or the Director of Clinical Training.

If there is sufficient evidence supporting a student's impairment in program responsibilities due to an emotional, neuropsychological, or substance abuse condition, the faculty may (a) recommend that the student take a leave of absence until the student is no longer impaired, (b) recommend that the student discontinue the program, or (c) formally dismiss the student from the program.

Remediation of deficiencies includes, but is not limited to repeating coursework, repeating practicum or internship experiences, increasing supervision, or taking a leave of absence. Failure to benefit from remediation may be followed by counseling toward voluntary withdrawal from the program or formal termination. Any student who, in the judgment of the clinical faculty lacks the competencies necessary for effective service delivery and/or progress through the program will be advised orally and in writing as to the necessary remediation required.

### **Recognizing and Remediating Personal Difficulties**

We understand that students may experience difficulties during their time in the program. Unfortunately, the potential range of problems is vast, and may include illness, problems with romantic relationships and family members, financial pressures, confusion about career choices, personality conflicts, and others.

Such difficulties may lead to the erosion of the student's professional performance. When students experience stressors that adversely affect them, we hope that they feel comfortable approaching any faculty member to discuss their concerns. Students will be encouraged to set some limits on the extent of detail they want this faculty member to share with colleagues, but do not be so restrictive that the faculty member cannot serve effectively as the student's advocate.

There are certain types of activities create special difficulties for students. The most blatant difficulties stem from activities that are clearly unethical. Students will be expected to abide by the ethical standards of the profession.

A second blatant stance involves dishonesty. Professionals operate by making and honoring commitments; they understand their reputations are priceless in keeping their standing in the community. A good reputation is painstakingly built but can be quickly ruined; dishonesty will ruin one's reputation quickly and thoroughly.

Avoidance is a third pattern that creates special problems. People tend to avoid onerous or difficult life tasks. Such avoidance is very expensive psychologically. Avoidance also feeds on itself, breeding further avoidance. This difficulty often manifests itself in failure to complete research objectives in a timely way. Its negative effects are magnified if students remain away from campus or avoid contact. Faculty will encourage your learning and involvement, but it is the student's responsibility to get your work done in a timely way.

A final area of special concern is when students manifest **patterns** of poor judgment or interpersonal problems. In this scenario, no single problem in and of itself constitutes a blatant violation of ethics or blatant disregard of others, but a student accumulates a history of engaging in troublesome peculiar responses in a wide variety of situations. Individuals who manifest such behavioral patterns usually are unable to recognize their existence, and often do not view them as problems. Lack of recognition about how one generally affects others can create problematic interpersonal relationships with faculty and peers; problems that are not easy to address directly.

During all evaluations, whenever an area of concern is serious in nature the student will be required to develop an action plan of remediation, in conjunction with the student's faculty advisor. This plan should clearly outline behavioral goals and specific steps necessary to meet these goals as well as a timeline for implementation. The action plan should be completed within a month after your feedback meeting. Your advisor will place a copy of the plan in your personnel record. **It is the student's responsibility to keep the advisor informed of how he/she are progressing with any remedial interventions and to negotiate alterations in the plan.** Any such changes should be mutually agreed upon in writing, as an amendment to the original plan.

## **Reasons for Termination from the Program**

The University and the Psychology Department expect conduct of all students that is consistent with all relevant University and professional policies and rules, including the University Student Conduct Code and the American Psychological Association Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. Single episode violations or patterns of recurring behavior could result in termination as determined by the Clinical Psychology Faculty Members and/or by the Administration of Human Sciences and Humanities.

The conditions under which a student may be terminated from the program include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Having a cumulative GPA of less than 3.00
- 2) Obtaining less than a B- grade in any course, after taking the course for the second time. It should be noted that withdrawing from classes on regular basis is not a way to avoid "failing" a course. Thus, students will NOT be able to withdraw from a class more than once.
- 3) Engaging in unethical, unprofessional, threatening, criminal behavior (plagiarism, cheating, violation of APA ethical guidelines, or University policies or governmental law, including harassment) or consistent inability or unwillingness to carry out academic, practicum, or internship responsibilities. These activities include, but are not limited to, refusing to work with a particular group of clients, missing classes, departmental activities or client appointments, failing to complete clinical paperwork or class assignments, failing to attend mandatory meetings, or failing to complete mandatory requirements.
- 5) Displaying problems that affect the student's functioning in the program, including performance or behaviors that demonstrate poor interpersonal skills and an inability to effectively communicate with others or form an appropriate therapeutic relationship with clients; lack of insight into negative consequences of one's own behavior; frequent blame of others or external factors for failures or difficulties; and inability to tolerate different points of view, constructive feedback or supervision.
- 6) Failing to make timely and satisfactory progress on program requirements responsibilities, and activities.
- 7) Demonstrating conduct that is a violation of the University Student Conduct Code (such a violation will also result in a referral to the office for Student Conduct and Community Standards for campus disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the University as well as possible action by the Doctoral Training Committee). Conduct violations by a student off-campus in university related activities (e.g., external practicum, internship, etc.) will be handled the same as if the violation occurred on-campus.

8) Failing to respond to a remediation plan or failure to make adequate progress while under remediation.

Although it is expected that initial attempts to resolve issues will occur between the faculty members and student, a formal remediation plan will specifically outline requirements for successful completion. Inability to resolve and complete the remediation plan satisfactorily will be followed by counseling toward voluntary withdrawal from the program or formal termination. Students who are dismissed from or leave the program are not eligible to reapply or return.

Remediation plans are separate from academic or university probation. Students receiving academic or university probation will have this indicated on their applications for internship. Successfully completed remediation plans are not listed as probation for these purposes. Students suspended from the program for any reason will have this noted on their internship applications.

### **Master's Thesis**

As stated above, completing a thesis is optional. It is a time-consuming, challenging process that is meant to be for students with strong interest in conducting independent research. Each thesis or project must be approved by the person's research mentor before it is officially begun.

To complete the thesis, a student should start the process immediately upon starting the program. To start the process, students should have an idea of the research area they wish to pursue. However, students need to complete a thesis in a related area to their faculty research advisor. Thus, picking a topic is often a collaborative effort between student and research advisor. Once settled on a thesis topic, students should ask their thesis advisor for suggestions as to who else might serve on the thesis committee. The thesis committee consists of the advisor and one other faculty member in the department.

#### *Writing the proposal*

Students must write a thesis proposal, which should be completed by the summer of the first year. The first step is to write a draft of the proposal, which includes an introduction, method section (participants, procedures, research design, and measures), references, and appendices (including all measures used in the study). Students submit a draft of the proposal to the thesis advisor for comments and revision. Students typically have several revisions based on ongoing input from the thesis advisor before a draft is considered acceptable. It is the sole judgment of the thesis advisor to determine whether a proposal is adequate, ethical, and feasible. Given the wide array of faculty member responsibilities, committee members may need up to three weeks to review each draft. Also, students should be aware that faculty are not on 12-month appointments and therefore may require additional time when not officially working for the department. Students should negotiate their proposed timeline with their faculty mentor prior to initiating the proposal document, in order to clarify expectation regarding document reviews.

Once the advisor agrees that the proposal is in good form and ready to be submitted to the thesis committee, the student distributes the proposal to the other committee member. The thesis proposal is typically not to be distributed to the committee until after the advisor approves it. The other committee member may take 2-3 weeks to review the proposal before stating if it is ready to be formally proposed or if further revisions are needed. After the proposal has been approved, the student will need to follow procedures defined by HSH in order to formally register for thesis hours (see below). The thesis is not complete until the full committee has approved the document, and other HSH and library requirements have been met.

#### *Human subjects review*

**All master's research involving human subjects must have approval from the UHCL Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects.** This institutional review board (IRB) is a committee comprised of faculty within our college. Students submit proposals to this committee only when the research using human subjects poses no more than "minimal risk." Minimal risk is defined as "the risks of harm anticipated by the proposed research are not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests." This definition acknowledges that most people's daily lives include challenges and stresses. Any research that may involve more than this level of minimal risk or any study involving an intervention must be approved by the University's Human Subjects Review Committee.

### **STUDENTS MAY NOT BEGIN TO COLLECT DATA UNTIL THEY HAVE OBTAINED IRB APPROVAL.**

#### *Academic credit for the thesis*

Students may register for thesis credits, after they have obtained approval of their thesis proposal. Students must register for a minimum of six master's thesis credits. Students will receive a letter grade change for the thesis once their final draft has been approved by all committee members, the Associate Dean of HSH, and the Dean of HSH. The grade will remain IP, incomplete in progress, until the successful completion. Further, it should be noted that the library has to approve the format of the thesis. The student must look into these guidelines. Also, note that a student must be registered for thesis hours in the semester in which they submit their thesis for approval. It is usually best to plan on the project and the institutional procedural process (e.g., obtaining signatures, etc.) taking longer than you initially expect.

#### *Completion of the thesis*

Once data is collected and the manuscript is being constructed, it should be noted that progress by the student needs to continue until the thesis is complete. Further, the student need to respond to feedback in a timely and appropriate

manner. If the student is negligent about timely and appropriate action to address feedback, the advisor is not responsible for continued mentoring of the thesis. In fact, a faculty member can refuse to continue to supervise a thesis.

**Please note:** Theses are due to the Associate Dean's office approximately 1 month prior the last day of the semester. Students will need to plan accordingly to make this absolute deadline. Although a student's committee will try to be helpful within reason, it is not appropriate or fair to expect committee members to significantly speed up turnaround times just so a student can make a deadline.

### **Yearly Information Needed From Students**

It is imperative that students inform the Director of Clinical Training and Clinic Director of their address and telephone number. We must be able to find you in case of a problem or emergency. You will also need to inform the Clinic Director and case supervisor as to how she or he can contact you if you are going on an extended vacation.

Before graduation, students need to answer a set of questions, including:

1. Current contact number
2. Internship placement
3. Any scientific contribution, while in the program
4. Any teaching contribution to the program

### **Policy Regarding Web Pages, Facebook, and Blogs**

It has become increasingly popular for people to have personal web pages and/or to communicate over the web via blogs. The purpose of this policy is to provide some guidelines about any public representation of our students or the program over the web. Although this policy applies to individuals' web pages and/or blogs, nothing here is intended to limit it to only these public presentations.

Students need to seriously consider what they put on their social media pages and posts. First, if students identify themselves as a UHCL clinical psychology student, it is important to thoughtfully decide what to post, since it matters how the program and students are represented. Increasingly, universities, internship sites, and even clients are seeking out information about people on the web. There are now numerous anecdotes of well-qualified students not getting jobs or Ph.D. offers because someone viewed something that was considered to be inappropriate or objectionable on students' social media. It is in students' best interest to seriously consider how material that is public may be viewed by future employers, internship sites, or clients.

If we become aware of any social media that identifies a student as a clinical psychology student and this social media is considered by the Clinical

Psychology faculty members as unethical, illegal, or in violation of any relevant UHCL, APA, or Texas licensing policy, the student will at the least be asked to modify or remove the problem material. Depending on the nature of the content, the student could receive other disciplinary action commensurate with the violation. If the student refuses, steps will be taken to deal with student misconduct and/or unethical behavior including possible termination from the program.

### **General Policies and Procedures Not Covered Elsewhere**

The American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (provided during orientation) guide our policies and practices in the UHCL Clinical Psychology program. Students should familiarize themselves with this code of ethics and use it as a guide in their professional and educational practices. The following are areas that often raise ethical dilemmas for students:

#### *Relationships between Teaching Assistants and Students*

When students serve as a teaching assistant, they are in a position of authority with the students in the class. Teaching Assistants are governed by the same standards of conduct in the performance of their academic responsibilities as are members of the faculty. For purposes of emphasis, the university considers it inappropriate conduct for a teaching assistant or assistant lecturer to have a dating, intimate, sexual, or financial relationship with one of his/her students. If there is any risk of entering into such a dual relationship, it is the teaching assistant's responsibility to notify the instructor of record immediately and take action to remedy the situation.

#### *Relationships between Graduate Students and Faculty*

We aim for collegial, mutually respectful relationships between faculty and students in the clinical psychology program. This applies among faculty and students. Maintaining this ambiance requires a high level of professionalism and integrity on the part of everyone. In collaborative research: (a) faculty and student should discuss ownership of data and authorship on presentations/publications early enough in the process so that each is aware of his/her role; and (b) faculty and students should publicly acknowledge one another's contributions at conferences, in written work, etc. Guidelines about authorship and authorship order are addressed further in the APA Ethical Standards.

A dual relationship between a faculty member and student exists when the individuals fill roles beyond what is typical in faculty-student relationships and/or the relationship is exclusionary from other faculty-student relationships (see Ethical Standard 3.05 Multiple Relationships). Examples of dual relationships include, but are not limited to, romantic/sexual involvement,

financial partnerships, long-time personal friendships, and family relations. The effects of the dual relationship are not limited to the two individuals involved but potentially affect many persons in the program. Ideally, dual relationships should be avoided. In the event that a dual relationship arises, however, it is important that these relationships become known to others in the program rather than be kept a secret. Psychotherapeutic relations between faculty and student must be avoided altogether.

The Ethical Principles of Psychologists explicitly state that, "Psychologists do not engage in sexual relationships with students or supervisees in training over whom the psychologist has evaluative or direct authority, because such relationships are so likely to impair judgment or be exploitative" (Ethical Standard 3.08 Exploitative Relationships). Should an intimate or multiple role relationship with a faculty member exist, the guidelines are as follows: a faculty member involved in a dual relationship should not be: (a) instructing or supervising that student, (b) participating in the research or clinical guidance of the student, or (c) participating in the evaluation process of the student.

Depending upon the nature of the dual relationship, these guidelines may also be applied even if the dual relationship is terminated. The current ethical guidelines indicate that even if a faculty member does not have evaluative authority over a student, personal or intimate relationships are inappropriate and unethical.