

Goals and Objectives of Texas A&M University Clinical Program Training Model

The doctoral program in clinical psychology at Texas A&M University adheres to a scientist-practitioner model of training emphasizing interlocking skills in science and practice as the foundation for generating the knowledge base and applications to practice that psychology requires in order to continue to develop and contribute to human welfare.

The clinical psychology program at Texas A&M University is founded on the belief that clinical activities and the research base of psychology can and should be mutually reinforcing. Our program provides students with an integrated series of classroom, practicum, and research experiences that foster development of a strong scientist-practitioner identification.

The specific goals and objectives of the doctoral clinical psychology program at Texas A&M follow from this educational philosophy and are listed below.

Goal 1. Students will gain a broad-based foundation of knowledge and conceptual skills necessary for psychological research and practice.

Objective 1A. Students will successfully complete courses in the core areas of the ***biological, cognitive, and social bases of behavior.***

Objective 1B. Students will successfully complete coursework that includes the ***history and systems*** of thought that have shaped the discipline of psychology.

Objective 1C. Students will successfully complete a sequence of courses in ***research methodology and techniques of data analysis.***

Objective 1D. Students will successfully complete a graduate course in ***dysfunctional behavior/psychopathology*** and related issues in ***diagnosis.***

Objective 1E. Students will successfully complete coursework in ***developmental psychology.***

Objective 1F. Students will continue to demonstrate and add to their foundation of knowledge and conceptual skills following completion of the program through ***lifelong learning.***

Goal 2. Students will be prepared in multiple approaches to assessment and treatment that are theory-based and research-supported.

Objective 2A. Students will successfully complete a sequence of courses in ***clinical intervention*** that provide training in evidence-based approaches to ***treatment, supervision and consultation, and evaluation of treatment efficacy*** and will demonstrate related competencies in their clinical work.

Competencies Linked to Objective 2A:

Knowledge regarding psychotherapy theory, research and practice.
Knowledge regarding specific empirically supported treatment methods.
Ability to link concepts of therapeutic process and change to intervention strategies and tactics.
Ability to form a working alliance.
Ability to deal with conflict and negotiate differences.
Ability to understand and maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
Ability to formulate and conceptualize cases
Ability to implement intervention skills covering a wide range of developmental, preventive and “remedial” interventions.
Ability to plan and evaluate treatments.
Ability to apply specific empirically supported treatment methods.
Knowledge of literature on supervision.
Knowledge of methods and issues related to evaluating professional work, including delivering formative and summative feedback.
Ability to effectively relate to other professionals in accordance with their unique patient care roles.
Ability to implement a systematic approach to data collection in a consultative role.

Objective 2B. Students will successfully complete a sequence of courses in *psychological measurement and assessment* that provide training in research-supported assessment and diagnosis procedures, and will demonstrate related competencies in their clinical work.

Competencies Linked to Objective 2B:

Knowledge of scientific, theoretical, empirical and contextual bases of psychological assessment.
Knowledge of test construction, validity, score reliability, and related assessment psychometrics.
Knowledge of psychometric issues and bases of assessment methods.
Knowledge of issues related to integration of different data sources.
Ability to select and implement multiple methods of assessment to inform clinical decision making, and to plan and evaluate interventions.
Ability to formulate and apply diagnoses and to understand the strengths and limitations of current diagnostic approaches.

Objective 2C. Students will complete 12 semester hrs. in *program-based practica* in the Psychology Department Clinic, which provides training in multiple approaches to clinical assessment and interventions. During the practica, students will demonstrate competencies in clinical assessment, case conceptualization, and developing and implementing intervention plans consistent with client needs and goals. Students will demonstrate competencies related to ethical practice, sensitivity to issues of diversity, and practical skills related to effective clinical practice.

Competencies Linked to Objective 2C (see also Objectives 4A – Ethics; and 5A – Diversity)

Knowledge of ethical/professional codes, standards and guidelines; knowledge of statutes, rules, regulations and case law relevant to the practice of psychology.

Ability to recognize and analyze ethical and legal issues across the range of professional activities in the practicum setting.

Demonstrates commitment to ethical practice in clinical activities.

Knowledge about the nature and impact of diversity in different clinical situations.

Ability to work effectively with diverse others in assessment, treatment and consultation.

Timeliness in completing professional tasks (e.g., evaluations, notes, reports).

Demonstrates an organized, disciplined approach to writing and maintaining notes and records.

Ability to seek and use resources that support healthy functioning when experiencing personal distress, particularly as it relates to clinical work.

Objective 2D. Students will successfully complete a one-year APA-accredited predoctoral clinical psychology internship program.

Objective 2E. Following completion of the program, students will continue to implement or evaluate approaches to assessment and treatment that are theory-based and research supported.

Competencies Linked to Objective 2E:

1. Use of evidence-based clinical assessment and intervention techniques.

Goal 3. Students will develop the ability to conduct and evaluate methodologically sound research of potential benefit to the conceptualization, assessment, or treatment of emotional or behavioral disorders or the promotion of psychological well-being.

Objective 3A. Students will successfully complete a sequence of courses in **research methodology and techniques of data analysis** and will demonstrate related competencies in their research.

Competencies Linked to Objective 3A:

Knowledge of qualitative, quasi-experimental, assessment, interventional, and experimental research designs, and knowledge of epidemiology.

Selects appropriate study design to address specific psychological questions (e.g., qualitative, quasi-experimental, assessment, interventional, and experimental research designs, mixed methods, and epidemiology).

Uses appropriate data analysis and data presentation methods.

Objective 3B. Across the curriculum, students will regularly read and critique published literature, developing the ability to evaluate the validity and implications of research findings.

Competencies Linked to Objective 3B:

- Development of breadth of theoretical and conceptual foundational knowledge relevant to psychological research.
- Asks innovative and important research questions informed by systematic reviews of the literature and relevant theoretical/conceptual models.
- Development of critical thinking skills to evaluate research findings.
- Displays appropriate levels of objectivity, skepticism, and tolerance of ambiguity.

Objective 3C. Students will successfully conceptualize, implement, and evaluate an empirical study comprising the first-year research project.

Objective 3D. Students will successfully conceptualize, implement, and evaluate their own empirical study comprising the master's thesis research project.

Objective 3E. Students will complete and successfully defend a dissertation on a topic of relevance to the field of clinical psychology that will demonstrate the ability to conduct research independently.

Competencies Linked to Objectives 3C, 3D, and 3E:

- Conducts systematic literature reviews that are relevant to psychological research projects.
- Synthesizes this knowledge base to develop theory driven research projects.
- Demonstrates expertise in at least one psychological research domain and is able to apply this expertise in an independent research project.
- Uses conceptual models to specify constructs for research projects and to develop or identify reliable and valid measures of constructs.
- Works collaboratively with mentor and others in research laboratory.
- Development of skills and habits for effective implementation of research projects (completes IRB application, recruits participants, provides informed consent/debriefing, uses standardized research protocols to ensure reproducibility, manages data, implements quality assurance checks to assure reliability and validity of data).
- Knows how to collect primary data through questionnaire, qualitative, observational, cognitive-behavioral, or physiological methods.
- Uses appropriate data analysis and data presentation methods.
- Knowledge and application of research ethics relevant to psychological research (i.e., APA Ethical Guidelines).
- Ensures the ethical and responsible conduct of research in the design, implementation, and dissemination of psychological research (e.g., quality assurance checks on data, adherence to protocol, confidentiality, appropriate data storage, responsible communication with media)
- Oral communication of research findings (e.g., presents findings in professional talk, speaks in an informal and creative manner about a particular literature).
- Written communication of research findings (e.g., presents findings in a professional abstract, poster, proposal, or manuscript).
- Successfully defends thesis and dissertation to relevant research advisory committees.
- Publishes research findings in appropriate outlets to further career.
- Acquires knowledge of the grant writing and review process.

Goal 4. Students will be provided ethical training relevant to research and applied aspects of the profession. Students will display ethical sensitivity and develop a firm basis for ethical decision making.

Objective 4A. Students will successfully complete an introductory course in clinical skills targeting ***professional standards and ethics*** and issues in clinical intervention.

Objective 4B. Students will successfully complete course components in assessment, clinical intervention, and research design devoted to ethical and legal principles.

Objective 4C. Students will participate in discussion of ethical and legal issues in their program-based practica, and will demonstrate ethical sensitivity in their research and applied activities.

Goal 5. Students will display sensitivity and adaptability in their applications of assessment and treatment approaches to diverse populations.

Objective 5A. Students will successfully complete coursework components addressing issues of ***cultural and individual diversity*** (e.g., gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, culture).

Objective 5B. Students will demonstrate competence in assessment and treatment applications to diverse clients in their practica settings.