

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY Ph.D. PROGRAM
ACCREDITATION REPORT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Action Requested: Receive the accreditation report for the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Iowa.

Executive Summary: The Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program (1) underwent a self-study that addressed the standards and criteria defined by the accrediting body; and (2) had an on-site visit by peer evaluators. The program was accredited for the maximum seven-year period through 2017. This accreditation report addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to provide “educational excellence and impact.”

Background:

- ◇ **Description of Program.** The primary emphasis of the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program is on training scientists. However, clinical skills are essential for graduate students who hope to engage in research on clinical populations. A rigorous scientific approach that includes blending academic preparation, research training, and clinical practice is considered the best model to train this group of doctoral students. The program recognizes that first-hand clinical experience and clinical competence are important for clinical research; therefore, it closely integrates practicum experience with coursework and supervised research. Advanced students can gain additional clinical experience through a variety of facilities in the area. Students who wish to have the designation ‘clinical psychology’ on their official doctoral degree transcript must satisfactorily complete a one-year internship at an approved site. The internship follows completion of all coursework and most, if not all, of the dissertation project.
- ◇ **Purpose of Accreditation.** An accredited educational program is recognized by its peers as having met state and national standards for its development and evaluation.
- ◇ **Accrediting Agency.** The accrediting body is the American Psychological Association (APA) Commission on Accreditation (CoA).
- ◇ **Review Process.** The self-study prepared by the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program contained the responses to the domains/standards required by the accrediting body – eligibility; program philosophy, objectives, and curriculum plan; program resources; cultural and individual differences and diversity; student-faculty relations; program self-assessment and quality enhancement; public disclosure; and relationship with accrediting body.
- ◇ **On-Site Team Report.** In April 2010, the visiting team determined that the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program met the requirements for accredited status.
- ◇ **Sample Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.** The following are strengths identified by the Visiting Team.
 - ⇒ “The program engages in actions that indicate respect for and understanding of cultural and individual diversity.
 - ⇒ The program has a curriculum, including practicum, which is clearly integrated, sequential, cumulative, and graded in complexity.

- ⇒ The program's four goals and objectives are consistent with the program's philosophy and training model, the substantive area of professional psychology that is represented and an understanding of legal, ethical, and quality assurance principles.
 - ⇒ The program had an identifiable core faculty that are distinguished and leading clinical scientists who regularly contribute to the bodies of scientific knowledge in their respective areas. They function as outstanding role models of clinical scientists for students with interests in research careers and act as fine role models for the integration of science and practice for students who choose service-delivery careers.”
- ◇ Sample Weaknesses Identified by the Visiting Team. The following are weaknesses identified by the Visiting Team.
- ⇒ “There did not appear to be sufficient coverage in the curriculum in the content area of consultation and supervision consistent with Domain B.3(c) of the *Guidelines and Principles for Accreditation*.
 - ⇒ The program relies heavily on course grades and practicum evaluation ratings as outcome measures while students are in the program and, while this is an acceptable means of outcomes assessment, for some of the courses, it is not clear which objectives the grades are tied to. The program needs to work on aligning competencies and assessment measures to clearly demonstrate how the goals and objectives are measured with associated competencies by using the assessment mechanisms created by the program.
 - ⇒ The data on program graduates presented by the program do not appear to provide information speaking to the empirical/scientific bases of practice aspects of Goal 2 or Goal 4d (‘Engage in activities reflective of their scientific orientation to clinical practice’).
 - ⇒ The program's public disclosure information is not consistent with the requirements of Implementing Regulation C-20, specifically internship and attrition information.”
- ◇ Accreditation Status. In August 2010, the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association awarded re-accreditation to the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program. In order to keep the Commission informed of the program's commitment to the ongoing self-study process, the program was asked to address the following issues in a narrative response by September 1, 2011. (Program responses are in italics.)
- ⇒ “Discuss how the program measures student competence in Competency 4B in the absence of a minimum threshold.”
- After much discussion, the Clinical Area Training Committee (CATC) concluded that the program could not set a degree requirement (e.g., publications) in which the outcome would be outside the direct control of the faculty (i.e., in the hands of the editorial process). Additionally there was considerable discussion that setting a minimum threshold standard would be contrary to the high expectations held for the research productivity of graduate students. Therefore, the CATC proposed adding additional public disclosure (i.e., website information) of the program's clear expectation for students to contribute to the research literature during their graduate training.*

Virtually all students in the clinical program publish research before they commence their dissertation. The 30 currently enrolled students have authored or co-authored 122 different referred journal articles or book chapters. In addition, these students authored or co-authored 158 research presentations at regional, national, or international meetings of professional societies. The September letter will indicate that the faculty believes that the success of the students underscores the fact that the program effectively trains students in requisite skills of reporting their research and the students understand and embrace that goal of the program. The narrative response will challenge the notion that setting a minimal threshold standard was an appropriate suggestion.

- ⇒ “Discuss how the program has endeavored to align Goals 2 and 4d with corresponding outcome data on program graduates to clearly demonstrate that a student has achieved a program goal or objective.”

In Spring 2011, the program initiated an annual survey of the students who complete the Ph.D. The survey will request an updated vita, a narrative description of their current activities, whether their work is evidence-based, and whether their training was influential in their current service efforts. Of the 42 Ph.D.s awarded in the last decade, 76.2% continued to make significant clinical-research contributions (i.e., published research) in their post-Ph.D. careers. When those providing evidence-based services and research contributions are combined, 83.3% of recent Ph.D.s can be classified as having been a successful outcome of the program’s model of training.

- ⇒ “Update the public disclosure information (specifically internship and attrition information) and provide documentation that the program is in compliance with Implementing Regulation C-20.”

The department was in the process of revising its web page, including those aspects that relate to graduate training and graduate student recruitment. The revisions incorporated the new requirements of APA and the program was in full compliance by the date required by the Commission.

The program was asked to address the following issue in a narrative response by September 1, 2011 for formal review by the Commission:

- ⇒ “Discuss how broad and general training in consultation and supervision is provided to students. Provide current syllabi for any courses referenced.”

The Clinical Area Training Committee (CATC) added a Supervision and Consultation Practicum in which all advanced graduate students in the clinical program will be required to enroll. This practicum will provide senior graduate students an opportunity to supervise beginning graduate students in basic psychological assessments, and to work in concert with faculty using different supervisory models. The practicum will also include a seminar conducted by Professor Marchman, with the seminar integrated with supervisory and consultation experiences that reflect different models and approaches. The program initiated the practicum in Spring 2011 and it was very well-received by the senior graduate students and the beginning graduate students. The September letter will detail the experiences of the students, the structure of the practicum, and the syllabus of the associated seminar.