

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY DOCTORAL PROGRAM ACCREDITATION REPORT**  
**AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

**Action Requested:** Receive the accreditation report from the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program in the Department of Psychology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Iowa.

**Executive Summary:** The Department of Psychology offers the Clinical Psychology Program that underwent the accreditation process. The Program (1) underwent a self-study that addressed the standards defined by the accrediting body; and (2) had an on-site visit by peer evaluators. In December 2011, the Department of Psychology was informed that the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program was accredited for the maximum period of 10 years. All of the required standards were met and no further reports were required to be submitted. This report addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to provide “educational excellence and impact” as well as Goal #8 – “Iowa’s public universities and special schools shall be increasingly efficient and productive.”

**Background:**

◇ Description of Program.

- ⇒ The **Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program**, ranked a Top 20 program by *U.S. News and World Report*, is a clinical science program that emphasizes a scientific approach to the understanding of psychological disorders and the influence of psychological factors on human relationships and health.
  - ☑ The *research* training component is designed for students who are primarily interested in helping to advance scientific understanding of clinical phenomena and acquiring the research skills necessary to do so. Faculty members and students have active research collaborations with colleagues from many departments in the College of Medicine, including otolaryngology, psychiatry, and free radical biology, as well as from the Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center, and a number of departments in the College of Public Health and the Veterans’ Affairs Medical Center.
  - ☑ The *clinical* training component recognizes that first-hand clinical experience and clinical competence are important for clinical research. Therefore, the program closely integrates practicum experience in the Carl E. Seashore Psychology Clinic with course work and supervised research experience. Advanced students have opportunities to gain additional clinical experience through placement in a variety of facilities in the Iowa City area. Students who wish to have the designation “clinical psychology” on their transcript must complete a one-year internship at an approved site after completing all coursework.
  - ☑ The Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program is also by the American Psychological Association (APA). The program has held APA accreditation since 1948; the department plans to continue APA accreditation, at least through the remainder of the accreditation period. The Program is also a charter member of the Academy for Psychological Clinical Science.

- ◇ Purpose of Accreditation. An accredited educational program is recognized by its peers as having met national standards for its development and evaluation. To employers, graduate schools, and licensure, certification, and registration boards, graduation from an accredited program signifies adequate preparation for entry into the profession. In fact, many of these groups require graduation from an accredited program as a minimum qualification. Therefore, accreditation is also critical for recruitment of new students.
- ◇ Accrediting Agency. The accrediting body is the Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS). This new accreditation opportunity will most accurately represent the aspirations and focus of the clinical program. Without PCSAS accreditation, the Program is likely to be at a disadvantage in recruiting the best research-oriented graduate students. To be eligible for PCSAS accreditation, an applicant program must demonstrate a strong commitment to high-quality science-centered education and training in clinical psychology, with an emphasis on integrating research and application.
- ◇ Review Process. The self-study prepared by the program contained the responses to the five general areas required by the accrediting body – conceptual foundations; design, operation, and resources; quality of the science; quality improvement; and outcomes. The full text of the accreditation process review standards and criteria is available at <http://pcsas.org/review/php>.
- ◇ On-Site Team Report. In September 2011, the visiting team identified strengths of the program. The team also noted that all of the standards had been met and that no required changes were identified. Suggestions were made for program enhancement or improvement; however, these do not require an institutional response or constitute an accreditation or compliance requirement.
- ◇ Sample Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.
  - ⇒ “The University of Iowa’s program constitutes a remarkably effective integration of research and clinical practice, yielding a very high rate of clinical scientists.
  - ⇒ The Seashore Clinic provides an ideal format for faculty to model their clinical scientist role.
  - ⇒ The immense University of Iowa Medical School offers a superb range of clinical training experiences in the Departments of Psychiatry, Neurology, Obstetrics/Gynecology, and Pediatrics.
  - ⇒ The clinic director provides an excellent model of the full time practitioner whose work is guided by evidence-based interventions.
  - ⇒ This model program has an impressive record of training students who have gone on to prominent careers and made significant contributions to the field.
  - ⇒ The program also has instilled strong scientific, ethical, and professional values in its students; armed the students with cutting-edge knowledge, skills, and methods; and continued to support and mentor its graduates once they leave the program.
  - ⇒ Faculty are outstanding, productive, and skilled researchers and have active labs and impressive publication records.”

- ◇ Suggestions Identified by the Visiting Team. (Institutional responses are in italics.)
  - ⇒ “The program might develop a handbook specifically for the clinical science graduate students.”
  - ⇒ “The program has experienced significant personnel changes in recent years, but made little mention of these departures in the application. The program’s continued excellence depends on the eminence of its faculty, so the program should attend to such challenges and the opportunities they present.” *The program will clearly need to replace highly productive faculty who have left the program through retirement and resignations. Those replacements are, of course, conditional on a number of factors, including the financial resources within the College and the Department.*
  
- ◇ Accreditation Status. In December 2011, the Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System awarded accreditation to the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Iowa for the maximum period of ten years to 2021 without reporting requirements. The site team described the program as an “exemplary clinical science program, richly deserving of PCSAS accreditation.”