2013-2014 Assessment Report
Program: Clinical Psychology, PhD

College of Liberal Arts

Psychology

Clinical Psychology, PhD

- Expected Outcome 1 -- Assessment and Intervention skills:

Commensurate with their level of training, graduate students in the clinical psychology PhD program will demonstrate an understanding of and ability to competently apply theory-based and empirically-supported approaches to assessment and intervention in a culturally sensitive manner.

  - Ax Method I: Annual Evaluations

    Ax Method Description: At the beginning of each fall semester, all core clinical faculty members meet to discuss the progress of each student. Information is collected from a variety of sources, including: competency-based applied-focus course performance, competency-based supervised practicum evaluations (2nd year and beyond), a student activity form/dossier outlining clinical activities, and if relevant, feedback from non-clinical faculty members. Information from practicum settings (versus courses) is emphasized, using a practicum-specific professional competency benchmark evaluation form. A discussion ensues, considering the aggregation of all available information. Using a multi-component annual evaluation form, students are then rated on a 4-point scale, both on specific questions within and an overall rating for the general domain of “Clinical Skill Development” -- 0 = unacceptable for a student at this level of training (well below expected proficiency); 1 = below expectations for a student at this level of training (below expected proficiency); 2 = meets expectations for a student at this level of training (proficient); 3 = exceeds expectations for a student at this level of training (highly proficient)).

The program began implementing the above procedure for the 2012-2013 academic year. Two cohorts are not included in this analysis:
(1) First year students, since they are not involved in practicum experiences (n = 8);
(2) Advanced students who had applied for and secured an APA-approved internship (n = 9). Students submit their application through the Association of Psychology Internship and Postdoctoral Centers (APPIC), are reviewed extensively by several internship programs, and then enter into a national Match system. No common measure of evaluation is used by APPIC or the internship programs. Our Match rate for the nine applicants was 100% for the nine students, which is well above the national average of 80%.
Authorization to apply for internship is based on the program’s assessment of the student’s readiness for this capstone clinical training experience:

1. No current incomplete grades;
2. Completion of all courses on the Doctoral Plan of Study, except for Research and Dissertation credits;
3. Completion of the General Doctoral Examination (i.e., pass the written and oral portion) by the end of the spring semester prior to the fall internship application
4. Conduct an acceptable case presentation during a Clinical Brown Bag
5. Successfully defend dissertation proposal by September 15 (applies to cohorts entering since 2010-2011).
6. Emotional stability and maturity to handle the challenges of training.
7. Theoretical/academic foundation necessary for effective clinical work.
8. Skills necessary for translating theory into integrated practice.
9. Awareness of, and practice according to, current ethical guidelines for psychologists.
10. Capacity to participate in supervision constructively and ability to modify behavior in response to feedback.

- **Findings:** The data presented below is based on thirteen (n = 13) students who were evaluated using the program’s annual evaluation form.

**Overall Rating: Mean (SD) = 2.31 (0.6); Median = 2 [1 student below expected level]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean (SD); Median</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.31 (0.6); 2</td>
<td>Demonstrates understanding of contemporary concepts within the field and empirically-grounded theories of psychopathology</td>
<td>1 student below expected level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.23 (0.4); 2</td>
<td>Demonstrates proficiency in the critical application and adaptive use of diagnostic schemas, including DSM-IV-TR</td>
<td>1 student below expected level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 (0.6); 2</td>
<td>Demonstrate understanding of the psychometric basis of assessment and is able to select appropriate instruments for specific cases</td>
<td>1 student below expected level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.31 (0.6); 2</td>
<td>Demonstrates proficiency administering and interpreting range of assessment instruments that assess symptomatology/personality and cognitive and academic functioning</td>
<td>1 student below expected level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.38 (0.7); 2</td>
<td>Demonstrates proficiency in generating comprehensive written assessment report that integrates information derived from multiple methods and multiple sources. Able to adapt form of report to the needs to specific practicum sites.</td>
<td>1 student below expected level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.23 (0.6); 2</td>
<td>Demonstrates understanding of the empirical and applied intervention literature.</td>
<td>1 student below expected level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.38 (0.7); 2</td>
<td>Demonstrates ability to think critically about psychological interventions and apply them effectively and ethically to specific cases</td>
<td>1 student below expected level</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.38 (0.7); 2</td>
<td>Demonstrates proficiency in developing appropriate case conceptualizations, clinical interpretations, and treatment plans; proficient in implementing intervention strategies, consistent with both the needs/characteristics of the client and the clinical/empirical literature</td>
<td>1 student below expected level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.46 (0.5); 2</td>
<td>Demonstrates appropriate knowledge of and sensitivity to individual differences and diversity, and its relevance to the ethical/legal conduct of psychotherapy</td>
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</table>

- **How did you use findings for improvement?**

  For several years, the program has described its procedures for addressing student academic and professional difficulties. However, we have recently developed a more formalized process to document the collaborative development of an individualized remediation plan. This has been helpful to document individualized areas of need and the process by which these training goals will be met.

  All but one student were considered to meet training expectations (rating of “2”), with more advanced students receiving higher ratings, as would be expected of a sequential and cumulative training approach. However, the “lower” ratings prompted the program to address these areas more specifically in courses covering this content (e.g., PSYC 8330, 8370, 8910) and through direct individual and group clinical supervision (e.g., PSYC 8910 and assigned practicum placements). These areas are also receiving more attention during the General Doctoral Examination process (written and oral), for which a scoring rubric is currently being developed.

- **Expected Outcome II -- Research competence:**

  Graduate students in the clinical psychology PhD program will engage in the production of original research, contribute to the professional literature, and demonstrate competence in research methodology and critical thinking.

  - **Ax Method I: Annual Evaluations**

    Ax Method Description: At the beginning of each fall semester, all core clinical faculty members meet to discuss the progress of each student. Information is collected from a variety of sources, including: competency-based research-focused course performance, a student activity form/dossier outlining research accomplishments, and if relevant, feedback from non-clinical faculty members (e.g., research committee members; collaborators). A discussion ensues, considering the
aggregation of all available information. Students are then rated on a 4-point scale, both on specific questions within and an overall rating for the general domain of “Research/Scholarship performance” -- (0 = unacceptable for a student at this level of training (well below expected proficiency); 1 = below expectations for a student at this level of training (below expected proficiency); 2 = meets expectations for a student at this level of training (proficient); 3 = exceeds expectations for a student at this level of training (highly proficient)).

The program began implementing the above procedure for the 2012-2013 academic year. Advanced students who had applied for and secured an APA-approved internship (n = 9) were not evaluated using this procedure. However, we will do so beginning fall 2014.

- **Findings:** The data presented below is based on twenty-one (n = 21) students who were evaluated using the program’s annual evaluation form.

### Overall Rating: Mean (SD) = 2.33 (0.5); Median = 2 [0 students below expected level]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean (SD); Median</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.42 (0.5); 2</td>
<td>Critically evaluates primary scientific literature and conducts informed data analyses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.29 (0.5); 2</td>
<td>Evaluates assessment instruments relevant to clinical psychology and to track-specific area of research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.38 (0.5); 2</td>
<td>Conducting thesis/dissertation ethically and appropriately (design, data analysis, understanding, writing, project management)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.30 (0.5); 2</td>
<td>Presents research findings at professional meetings or is pursuing publication in peer-reviewed journals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.24 (0.4); 2</td>
<td>Demonstrates appropriate knowledge of and sensitivity to individual differences and diversity, and its relevance to research in clinical psychology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **How did you use findings for improvement?**

No student was rated below a “2.” More advanced students received higher ratings, as would be expected of a sequential and cumulative training approach that exposes students to more research opportunities as they advance through the program. However, the “lower” ratings prompted the program to address these areas more specifically in courses covering this content (e.g., PSYC 7250, 8370) and through direct research supervision. These areas are also receiving more attention during the General Doctoral Examination process, for which a scoring rubric is currently being developed.
Ax Method II: Presentations and Publications

Ax Method Description: As part of the required annual report to the American Psychological Association, the program conducts a Qualtrics-based survey of all enrolled clinical psychology graduate students. This survey includes questions pertaining to research productivity:

1) Number of conference presentations given (as first or co-author) during the academic year.
2) Number of refereed journal papers accepted (as first or co-author) during the academic year;

- Findings:

Constituting 100% of the enrolled students, forty (n = 40) respondents provided the following data:

1) Conference presentations given (as first or co-author) during the academic year.
   a. Number of students giving at least one presentation: 28 out of 40 (70%)
   b. Average number of presentations given per presenter: 2 (range = 1 to 6)

2) Refereed journal papers accepted (as first or co-author) during the academic year:
   a. Number of students publishing at least one article: 11 out of 33 (33%)
   b. Average number of publications per author: 1.7 (range = 1 to 4)

- How did you use findings for improvement?

Even though before receiving their PhD, all clinical students present their research in at least one professional venue or publish one paper, we continue to explore ways to increase the reported percentages. This has involved incorporating exercises/assignments in core coursework that lead to such products, providing targeted research mentorship, and making funding available to students for research-related travel. These reported percentages reflect an encouraging increase in research dissemination from the previous year.

Expected Outcome III -- Broad understanding and expertise:

Graduates of the clinical psychology PhD program will have a broad and detailed knowledge base and a sufficiently refined skillset.

Ax Method I: Licensure rate

Ax Method Description: As part of the required annual report to the American Psychological Association, the program conducts a Qualtrics-based survey of clinical psychology alumni who graduated between 2003-2004 and 2010-2011 (this time frame is specified by APA and allows for completion of postdoctoral training hours, which is often required for licensure). Each state licenses the applicant, following
verification of degree completion and passing of a national (Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology; EPPP) and state-specific exam. Licensure is pursued by those wishing to work in independent practice or who offer any type of patient care. Not all graduates pursue this professional path (e.g., academic/research positions).

According to the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB, 2011), which is the organization that oversees state licensing boards and the use of EPPP for licensure, 32 graduates from our program took the EPPP between August 2006 and July 2011.

- **Findings:**
  
  - Of the 55 graduates from 2003-2004 to 2010-2011 (100% response rate), 45 (82%) have become licensed psychologist.
  
  - Of the 29 graduates from our program who took the EPPP between August 2007 and July 2012, 96.6% passed the exam. The national pass rate of designated and accredited doctoral programs (N=20,078 exams) was 76.4%.

- **How did you use findings for improvement?**

  The rate of 82% becoming licensed psychologists is considered to be quite appropriate for a doctoral program that prepares graduates for a variety of professional activities in clinical psychology. This rate is quite consistent with other clinical psychology PhD programs that espouse the scientist-practitioner training model.

  The pass rate reported by ASPPB for our program is well above the national average. Content-specific areas for increased focus are discussed with Assessment Method II. That said, we believe that an increased focus on developing individualized remediation plans stemming from our detailed student annual evaluation will assist in addressing areas in need of attention.

  - **Ax Method II: Licensing exam content area performance**

    Ax Method Description: According to the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB, 2012), 29 graduates from our program took the EPPP between August 2007 and July 2012. The average percent correct by content area is listed below:

<pre><code>| EPPP Content Area     | National Results | Auburn's Results |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Biological Bases      | 68.9%            | 70.1%           |
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>National Percentage</th>
<th>Program Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive-Affective Bases</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; Cultural Bases</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
<td>75.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth &amp; Lifespan Development</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and Diagnosis</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment/Intervention</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical/Legal/Professional Issues</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **How did you use findings for improvement?**

Although our program’s scores are above the national percentages for each content area, two areas are lower than desired – biological bases and growth/lifespan development. These are two broad and general areas that have been historically lower than the others. Regarding Growth/Lifespan Development, our department has been fortunate to use resources through COUN for this area, since we currently do not have a faculty member available to teach this course. Available sections of this COUN course (7330) have been formatted for non-doctoral level students. Recent discussions with the program director have resulted in different sections and instructors being available that are mutually considered to meet the needs of our doctoral students. In addition, our department continues to strive to hire a faculty member with this area of expertise. Furthermore, developmental aspects have received more focus on our General Doctoral Examination.

Regarding Biological Bases, this content area has historically been most difficult for our students. We intend to explore the content of the EPPP more carefully and discuss our findings with the instructor of our PSYC 7150 (Biological Psychology), which is taken by all clinical students.

- **Ax Method III: Postdoctoral training or employment**

Ax Method Description: As part of the required annual report to the American Psychological Association, the program conducts a Qualtrics-based survey of clinical psychology alumni who completed their degree within the past seven years. Postdoctoral and/or employment status is determined via self-report.

- Findings: Of the 42 alumni between academic years 2006-2007 through 2012-2013 (100% response rate), 95% are currently employed/involved in postdoctoral training in an area related to clinical psychology.

- **How did you use findings for improvement?**
No program-level adjustment seems necessary at this time. Based on specific information regarding place of employment, the 5% of alumni not currently employed are due to personal /family/medical reasons, rather than inability to secure employment.