# University of Southern California

# Clinical Science

## Handbook

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Ph.D. Program in Clinical Science

**Department of Psychology**

**University of Southern California**

# **Los Angeles, CA 90089-1061**

Table of Contents

### Introduction 3

### I.a. Special Requests & Exceptions 3

1. Mission of the Clinical Psychology Program 4

III. Overview 4

IV. Curricular Requirements 5

IV.a. Additional Curricular and Training Requirements 6

V. Research Experience and Requirements 6

V.a. Clinical Science Program Research Milestones Timeline 7

V.b. First Year Project Proposal 7

V.c. Second Year Project (Master’s Research Project) 8

V.d. Qualifying Exam 8

V.e. Dissertation 11

V.f. Clinical Science Funding for Research 12

VI. Teaching Experiences and Requirements 12

VII. Clinical Experiences and Requirements 12

VII.a. Preliminary Competencies 13

VII.b. Supervision 13

VII.c. Externships 14

VII.d. Year-long Internship 15

VII.e. Alternatives to Pursuing Training in Clinical Applications of Psychology 16

VIII. Evaluation 16

IX. Mentor Model 17

IX.a. Working with More than One Advisor or a Research Advisor not in the

the Clinical Science Area 17

IX.b. Switching Advisors 17

IX.c. Troubleshooting 18

X. Professional Development 18

X.a. Professional Organizations 18

X.b. Professional Conferences and Workshops 18

X.c. Clinical Science Speakers/Colloquia/Brown Bags/Job Talks 19

X.d. USC Clinical Science Leibovitz Research Conference 19

XI. Personal Therapy 19

XI.a. Personal Problems and their Interference in Clinical Work 20

XII. Faculty Student Relations 20

XII.a. Collaborative Relationships 20

XII.b. Dual Relationships 21

XII.c. Coercion or Discrimination in Relationships 21

XII.d. Student Feedback to Professors 21

XII.e. Grievances, Settling Disputes, and Due Process 22

XIII. Graduate Students’ Relations with Undergraduates 22

XIV. Diversity 23

XV. Research Ethics 23

XVI. Academic Integrity 24

XVII. Student Representation 24

XVIII. Professional Identity and Use of Public Websites 25

XIX. Students’ Financial Support and Financial Obligations 25

XIXa. Summer Support 26

#### **I. Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to describe the philosophy and structure of the Clinical Science Program at the University of Southern California. In addition to this Handbook, the Psychology Department Handbook for Graduate Students contains all information regarding departmental and clinical area course requirements and research requirements to earn the Ph.D. in the Department of Psychology. That book should be read carefully upon entering the program and used as a reference when planning your course registration.

The material provided here supplements the departmental handbook with information about clinical requirements, integration of research, coursework and clinical work, clinical program milestones, and recommended steps to completion of the program in an effective and timely fashion. **In case of any unintended contradictions, the Psychology Department Handbook should be followed.**

A student’s requirements are based on the Departmental and Clinical Science Handbooks for that student’s year of entry. However, if requirements change during a student’s tenure in the program, that student can elect, with the faculty advisor’s approval, to follow the requirements of a later year. Copies of the handbook for recent years of admission are available on the clinical science webpage: <https://dornsife.usc.edu/psyc/clinical-documents-forms/>. Clinical Science > Documents & Forms > Clinical Handbook.

This handbook has been written so that all students are alerted to important issues and have the same basic information. It is the student’s responsibility to become familiar with the policies contained in each document and to abide by them.

A handbook cannot supplant the importance of direct communication, however. Nor can it offer all the answers to specific, individualized questions. Students are urged to explore these topics as needed with faculty advisors, the Director of Clinical Training, or the Associate Director of Clinical Training.

In addition to the information below, the clinical science program sends students and faculty a weekly newsletter with information about speakers, workshops, personal announcements and achievements. The program also provides students and faculty with up-to-date announcements about program and national meetings, upcoming professional opportunities, and funding opportunities. Newsletters are archived during the semester on the clinical science website. However, the newsletters contain time-sensitive information and it is important to read them on a weekly basis.

Other important resources include:

\*\* The Psychology Department Handbook for Doctoral Students (updated each year and sometimes called the “Blue Book”) (<https://dornsife.usc.edu/psyc/handbook-for-doctoral-students/>)

\*\* The Graduate Assistant Handbook (<http://dornsife.usc.edu/teaching-assistant-handbook/>)

\*\*The USC 2015-16 Catalogue Graduate and Professional Education

https://catalogue.usc.edu/about-catalogue/

\*\* The Psychological Services Center Manual (located in the PSC google drive; access to the drive is handled by the director of the PSC)

\*\* SCAMPUS—2015-16 Guidebook for USC Students (http://scampus.usc,edu/)

\*\* the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. Including 2010 Amendments. *American Psychologist*, 2002*,* 57, (12) 1060-1073. (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>)

\*\*The Code of Ethics of USC (2004) (<https://about.usc.edu/policies/>)

**I.a. Special Requests and Exceptions**

*If a student wishes to have an exception made to what is contained in this Clinical Area Handbook, the request needs to be addressed in a formal petition to the clinical faculty. Such requests are submitted to the DCT for discussion in a clinical faculty meeting. The petition should be discussed with, and approved by, the research advisor prior to submitting it. Exceptions to departmental requirements or procedures must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.*

**II. Mission of the Clinical Science Program**

The USC Clinical Science Program adheres to the clinical science model of training and education that was developed by the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science. Our program is a founding member of that body, whose mission is “to advance…a psychological science directed at the promotion of adaptive functioning; at the assessment, understanding, amelioration, and prevention of human problems in behavior, affect, cognition or health; and the application of knowledge in ways consistent with scientific evidence. The Academy's emphasis on the term ‘science’ underscores its commitment to empirical approaches to evaluating the validity and utility of testable hypotheses and to advancing knowledge by this method.”

By providing an education based on the integration of science and practice we endeavor to prepare our graduates to contribute to the understanding of psychological functioning and the prevention and treatment of psychological problems. We anticipate that our graduates will be active consumers of psychological knowledge but also to go further – to be on the forefront of advancing the field. We have a wide vision of what types of contributions our graduates might make. Some graduates might advance knowledge through traditional scientific means, such as journal publications, whereas others might advance knowledge by evaluating and shaping organizations and systems that provide psychological services, by developing intervention programs, by training others who provide psychological services, or by educating the public in ways that promote societal and individual well-being.

At the cornerstone of this educational model, and spanning all training components of the model, is an emphasis on critical thinking. In light of the breadth of information and rapid changes in the field of clinical psychology, graduates must be able to sift through new knowledge and applications, incorporating what they deem worthwhile into their work. The critical thinking skills they develop serve as the tools to evaluate, integrate, and generate new information.

Our curriculum at USC entails a set core of didactic courses on the theory, research, and applications of clinical psychology. There are also experiential requirements involving mentored research experiences and supervised clinical experiences. In addition to the required core curriculum, the program allows students to develop specific interests and specialty areas. The most formalized specialty areas are geropsychology and child and family psychology, which together bring a life-span developmental perspective to the program as a whole. In addition, we have added a neuropsychology specialty area. A formalized agreement also allows students simultaneously to pursue a Master’s in Public Health along with the Ph.D. in psychology.

# **III. Overview**

Students in our program should plan to spend 5 years full-time on campus as well as an additional year in a full time clinical internship.

Students who are up-to-date with research requirements and want to extend their research experiences and expertise may elect to spend more than five years on campus ***if*** (a) the additional time is advantageous to their educational program and career planning; and (b) they have discussed possibilities for additional funding with their advisor, the DCT, and possibly the Director of Graduate Studies or the Department Chair.

Students need to be aware that financial support packages offered with admission typically cover five years, and those packages are conditional upon successful progress through the program. (For more information, see Financial Aid section below).

In general, decisions about spending ***more than 5 years on campus or fewer than 5 years on campus*** should be made in consultation with the research advisor and with his or her approval. It is required, with no exceptions, that students spend at least 3 years in-residence on campus.

Students are simultaneously involved in three types of learning experiences—classroom learning, research training, and training in clinical assessment and intervention. In addition, all students obtain experience teaching, either through a paid TA position or through other means, e.g., volunteering to be a TA or through teaching fellowship programs offered by the Graduate School.

**IV. Curricular Requirements**

The Psychology Department Handbook for Graduate Students contains all information regarding departmental and clinical area course requirements, research requirements, and applied clinical requirements. That book should be read carefully upon entering the program and used as a reference when planning your course registration. A student’s requirements are based on the Handbook for that student’s year of entry, although the student can elect, with the faculty advisor’s approval, to use the requirements of a later year.

The department’s graduate program has a set of core requirements that apply to all areas of the department. Each area may add to those requirements. The course and substantive requirements of the Clinical Science Program thus encompass departmental requirements and requirements specific to the program. The following table presents departmental and clinical science requirements and ways of fulfilling them. Students will be required to show their progress toward completion of these requirements and, upon completion, to submit a Curricular requirements form with completion dates with their annual activities report to the research advisor and the Associate DCT. A worksheet for this report is attached at the end of the handbook.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Topic | General way of fulfilling |
| Techniques of Data Analysis (3 courses are required; at least 2 courses must be in the department; PSYC 504 is one of the three—see below); | Overview of Quantitative Methods in Psychology (PSYC 500); Statistics in Psychological Research (PSYC 501); Analysis of Variance and Experimental Design (PSYC 502); Regression and the General Linear Model (PSYC 503); Research Design (PSYC 504); Research Design in Developmental Psychology (PSYC 524); Multivariate Analysis of Behavioral Data (PSYC 575); Analysis of Covariance Structures (PSYC 577); Seminar in Quantitative Psychology (PSYC 621); Data Analysis (PM 511A) |
| Biological Aspects of Behavior (1 course required) | Psychophysiology (PSYC 544);  Cognitive Neuroscience (PSYC 540);  Functional Neuroanatomy and Behavior (PSYC 547) |
| Cognitive Aspects of Behavior (1 course required) | Learning and Cognition (PSYC 506) |
| Affective Aspects of Behavior (1 course required) | Psychophysiology (PSYC 544) or Cognitive Neuroscience (PSYC 540) plus Social Psychology (either PSYC 512 or 612) plus Psychopathology (PSYC 514) |
| History and Systems of Psychology (1 course required) | Historical Foundations of Psychology (PSYC 508); History and Philosophy of Psychology (PSYC 599) |
| Psychological Measurement (1 course required) | Psychological Assessment (PSYC 515) |
| Research Methodology (1 course and mentoring in lab) | Research Design (PSYC 504) |
| Individual Differences in Behavior (2 courses required) | Psychological Assessment (PSYC 515); Psychopathology (PSYC 514) |
| Human Development (2 semesters required) | Advanced Clinical Practicum in Older Adults or Child/Family (PSYC 695) |
| Dysfunctional Behavior or Psychopathology (1 course required) | Psychopathology (PSYC 514) |
| Professional Standards and Ethics | Beginning Clinical Practicum (595), Brown bag and CE series |
| Theories and Methods of Assessment and Diagnosis (2 courses requires) | Psychological Assessment (PSYC 515); Psychopathology (PSYC 514) |
| Effective Intervention (619 and 4 semesters of 695 required) | Psychological Intervention (PSYC 619); Advanced Clinical Practicum (PSYC 695) |
| Consultation & Supervision | Peer supervision in di-pracs; brown bag series; workshops; mentoring in lab; community consultation |
| Evaluating the Efficacy of Interventions (619 and 4 semesters of 695 required) | Psychological Intervention (PSYC 619); Advanced Clinical Practicum (PSYC 695) |
| Cultural and Individual Diversity | Infusion; Brown bags; Seminar in Cultural Diversity (PSYC 660) |
| Attitudes essential for life-long learning, scholarly inquiry, etc. | Infusion/completion of quals and other research requirements; mentoring in lab; departmental colloquia, job talks |

**IV.a. Additional Curricular and Training Requirements**

Several special curricular topics are met through “infusion”, which means that they are included in courses comprising the required clinical science sequence as well as through the “brown bag” clinical science professional development meetings and the day-long “clinical science invited lecture series”. On alternating years, there will be at least one ‘brown bag’ professional development meeting or a day-long invited presentation on: (a) professional standards and ethics, (b) consultation and supervision, and (c) cultural and individual diversity.

Attendance is required at the brown bags and invited lectures on these special topics, and students’ attendance will be monitored. If students have scheduling conflicts, e.g., TA responsibilities, they should discuss priorities with the research advisor or DCT.

**V. Research Experience and Requirements**

It is assumed that students will be actively involved in research throughout their graduate education. Our overriding goal is that students become competent at conceptualizing, designing, conducting, and writing scholarly articles. Toward this goal, the master’s and dissertation projects can be written up in ‘publication-ready’ format. A related goal is that students become competent at writing scholarly review papers. Thus, the requirement for the qualifying exam review paper is to demonstrate the ability to review critically a body of literature and to discuss that literature in an original and integrative fashion in a review paper.

The program is designed to foster knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with meeting the rigorous demands of a productive, scientific and professional career. We endeavor to provide a context in which all students can publish works of a sufficient quality and volume to set them on the pathway of becoming competitive for jobs in academic clinical psychology as well as in other wide-ranging clinical psychology positions that require evidence of competence in scholarship. The following steps and deadlines are provided to assist students to develop the necessary skill set for conducting independent research and simultaneously for meeting the research requirements of the Ph.D.

The minimal research requirements to complete the Ph.D. degree are listed below. We encourage students not to limit their research to the specific requirements. We also encourage students to recognize that not all research will go as planned. As is the case even for the most advanced researchers, not all research projects result in publishable products. In general, it is good to partake in research opportunities that might be available rather than focus exclusively on the master’s and dissertation projects. Exceeding the specified requirements is necessary to get a full and rich experience as a researcher as well as to initiate a pathway that opens doors to academic and/or research career tracks.

The timeline indicates deadlines but students are not prohibited from meeting milestones ahead of schedule.

**V.a. Clinical Science Program Research Milestones Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| By the end of . . . . |  |
| 1st year, 1st semester | Develop ideas for first year proposal, e.g., specific aims and hypotheses, and know what data will be used or collected |
| 1st year, 2nd semester | **April 15**: Submit research proposal  **April 30**: Defend first year proposal with 3-person committee |
| Summer before 2nd year | Start data collection and preliminary analyses for 2nd year project |
| 2nd year, 1st semester | Complete data collection, analyses for second year project and start writing up second year project |
| 2nd year, 2nd semester | **April 15**: Submit second year project to 3-person committee.  **Last day of classes**: 2nd year project must be approved by committee. |
| Summer before 3rd year | Prepare 2nd year project for publication, if publishable, and/or work on other data. |
| 3rd year, 1st semester | Work on publication and conference presentation/s; departmental poster display of 2nd year projects. Decide on qualifying exam paper and dissertation topic. Form Guidance Committee by the end of this semester. |
| 3rd year, 2nd semester | Complete all departmental coursework.Students may meet with committee members to discuss progress toward completion of quals paper and dissertation. |
| Summer before 4th year | Students will be working on their quals paper, dissertation proposal or both. |
| 4th year, 1st semester | **September 1:** Students submit their quals paper to their guidance committee. **Last day of classes:** The dissertation proposal and quals paper should be approved by the guidance committee. |
| 4th year, 2nd semester | Dissertation research. |
| 5th year, 1st semester | Dissertation research. Apply for internship |
| 5th year, 2nd semester | Dissertation research. Students going on internship should strive to complete their dissertation before the internship. |
| 6th year, 1st semester | Internship |
| 6th year, 2nd semester | Internship |

Papers need to be submitted to the committee two weeks before a scheduled meeting.

For clinical science students, ***all but the third academic year contains a committee meeting*** to review research projects, keep students on track, and set goals for the upcoming year.

Year 1 = presentation of 1st year proposal;

Year 2 = 2nd year project defense;

Year 3 = no required meeting;

Year 4 1st semester = qualifying exam meeting;

Year 5 or later = dissertation defense.

**V.b. First Year Project Proposal**

The first year is spent developing a research question and writing a proposal for the second year project. In most cases, that project also will become the student’s master’s project. The purpose of this proposal is to develop the skill sets involved in generating a testable idea and writing up the proposal in a format that is used for grant proposal submission. Thus, to learn these skills, the proposal is to be written in close collaboration with your research advisor. By April 30th, the student meets with a 3-person committee (research advisor, another member of the clinical science area, and a member of the psychology department faculty outside the clinical area) to defend that proposal. It generally is a good idea to discuss the composition of your committee with your advisor.

**V.c. Second Year Project (typically submitted as Master’s Research Project)**

As soon as the 3-person committee approves the first year proposal, the student can conduct the project. The summer following the first year is a good time to devote to that project. Typically, the second year is spent conducting, analyzing, and writing the second year project. A written version of the completed project is to be submitted to the 3-person committee by **April 15th**. The student will meet in person with his/her 3-person committee to defend the second year project during a **1-hour** meeting. The student must defend and pass the second year project **no later than the** **last day of classes (excluding study and final exam periods) of the 2nd year**. Because it can be difficult to find a time for the student and all committee members to meet, it is highly advisable that the student allow considerable lead-time to schedule this meeting (e.g., at least one month in advance). It is permissible for one committee member to attend this meeting remotely (e.g., by Skype or other comparable audio-visual technology); however, the chair of the committee and the student must be present in person. The student would be fully responsible for setting up such remote technology for the meeting.

The student has the option of submitting the second year project as a master’s research project for the purpose of earning a master’s degree from the University. One or more members of the student’s 3-person committee may decide that the second year project is sufficient for passing the second year project requirement, but that it requires additional revisions in order to be sufficient for a master’s research project. In such cases, the committee member(s) will provide the student with written revisions required for the master’s research project, and the student will make such revisions and re-submit such paper as soon as reasonably practicable. Check the graduate school guidelines for the deadlines to submit the masters thesis.

**V.d. Qualifying Exam**

The qualifying examination requires two written components and an oral exam. The written components are the “quals paper” and the dissertation proposal. The oral exam is usually associated with the dissertation proposal but an oral exam can take place for the “quals paper” as well. All components of the qualifying exam are presented to the 5-person guidance committee. Please check the current university and departmental guidelines about how to constitute this committee.

***Timeline and procedures.*** The qualifying exam paper is to be submitted to one’s guidance committee by **September 1** of the student’s fourth year. Students have the option of holding a committee meeting to review and evaluate their quals paper or to carry out the evaluation component electronically, with no committee meeting. For the latter, committee members will send the chair their comments and he or she will organize and share them with the student. Whichever option is selected, the evaluation should take place by **September 15th**. If their paper is approved, students can then schedule a 2-hour oral exam (within the next 60 days) that will focus on the dissertation proposal.

There is a relatively short time between turning in the quals paper and defending the dissertation proposal, which, according to Graduate School guidelines, is to occur 60 days following passing the written qualifying exam. Thus, the student should be developing their dissertation ideas during their 3rd year of graduate school.

The dissertation proposal should be submitted to the guidance committee at least two weeks prior to the oral exam. The dissertation proposal must be approved by the **final day of classes of one’s 7th semester**. ***Not meeting this deadline will result in the student being placed on probation.***

***Qualifying Exam Review Paper***. The quals paper is usually a comprehensive conceptual or integrative review paper on a topic of the student’s choosing. It is to be written independently as it is an evaluation of students’ conceptual and critical thinking and knowledge of clinical psychology. The student is to write the qualifying exam paper on her or his own with no one else reading or commenting on any portion of the written paper. However, the student can seek as much face-to-face input via discussion (with an advisor or other committee members or other lab members) as she or he wants. It is common practice for the student to discuss and seek feedback on: the scope of the paper, general ideas and focus of the paper, a proposed conceptual model, a time-line, a list of papers for a meta-analysis or for a theoretical review, the format of tables and figures, and so on. In addition, the student’s advisor also may provide general feedback in response to a 2-page outline of the paper. The 2-page outline also can be shared with others (e.g., other members of the guidance committee) for verbal, consultant-style feedback. The student’s advisor and others can discuss ideas but should not construct hypotheses or arguments for the paper and should not provide specific feedback regarding the text of the quals paper.

As with any good review, this paper should aim to provide a critical review and address a significant conceptual question; the paper needs to go beyond just summarizing the literature. It helps to have a specific question in mind so that the paper can be organized around answering that question, e.g., to what extent do we have empirical support for a specific method of assessment or a specific intervention? What variables moderate the relationship between X and Y, and why is this important? The paper also can propose a new model of understanding some psychological phenomenon. In general, quals papers should clarify what is known about a topic and what still remains to be known and thereby point to future directions and/or clinical implications if appropriate. The key (and the challenge) to a good review paper is to provide a critical evaluation and focused synthesis and interpretation of the findings. Another key characteristic is to have a relevant take-home message that highlights what are the significance and implications of these findings. A summary of the existing literature with minimal efforts to critically evaluate past research will be evaluated less favorably.

Writing a quals review paper is greater than taking one course. We recommend that students devote one summer (prior to the fourth year) to this project. If you work on quals during the year, it will be necessary to set aside time in your schedule to complete the qualifying exam paper, e.g., cut back a course or two for an entire academic year. When you are working on either your quals review paper or your dissertation proposal, you are to enroll in GRSC 800.

Quals papers are to be focused and to fit the format for a journal. Many journals publish review papers and it can be useful to have a journal outlet in mind when writing the paper. Some journals to look at include: *Alzheimer Disease and Associated Disorders*, *Clinical Psychology Review, Applied and Preventive Psychology, Current Directions in Psychological Science, Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, Professional Psychology: Research and Practice. Psychological Bulletin* is, of course, another excellent outlet for review papers but typically *Psych Bulletin* authors spend considerably longer than one semester writing articles for that journal.

Common questions regarding the quals paper:

1. ***How long should the paper be?*** If you are writing in journal style, please consider the length of papers for a journal. The quals manuscript ordinarily should not exceed 50 (inclusive of all text, references, and tables). If the quals review includes extensive tables or graphic material or Appendices making it considerably longer than 60 pages, this should be discussed with your advisor prior to submitting the paper. Examples of strong quals papers are available on the clinical area google drive.
2. ***Can the quals paper be on a topic that is close in subject matter to my dissertation proposal?*** This is a question to be discussed and agreed upon with your research advisor. There is nothing that precludes a quals paper from being on a topic highly related and preliminary to proposing a dissertation. Certainly a quals paper can inform the research questions of a dissertation. However the purpose of a quals paper, i.e., a well-synthesized and critical review of a substantive topic or question, is different from the purpose of the dissertation proposal, where you are setting up the importance of, theory behind, and strategy for answering the specific research questions to be investigated in the dissertation.

***Evaluation of the quals review paper***: The rating sheet that the faculty will use to evaluate the quals paper is on the clinical science website under “forms and documents”. It is strongly recommended that the student become familiar with these criteria before starting to the write the paper. The committee will review the paper and then present the evaluation as a pass or fail to the student. The student also will receive ratings from each guidance committee member alone with substantive feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. Each guidance committee member votes pass/no pass and 4 passes are needed to complete, i.e., pass, this portion of the qualifying exam. If the quals review paper is not passed, the student can resubmit a revised paper one time. A second failure, however, means that the student cannot move forward and is terminated from the department.

A student who fails the quals paper on the first submission is encouraged to use the written feedback from committee members and to seek verbal feedback. Committee members are allowed to give suggestions and feedback on how to revise the paper (as a journal editor might do) but should not offer their own scientific ideas or writing.

***Dissertation Proposal***: The format for the dissertation proposal should be discussed with the dissertation advisor and committee. Some will choose to write the dissertation proposal in the style of a NRSA individual pre-doctoral grant format but others will not. If using the NRSA format, no training plan is needed. All proposals will include the following: specific aims, background, methods, analyses, time line and references. Most proposals should also address the question of whether there are any special human subjects considerations although IRB approval does not need to be sought prior to defending the dissertation proposal.

Whereas the first year proposal is written in close collaboration with the research advisor, the dissertation proposal, as part of your qualifying exam, is to be written with more independence. It is understood, however, that the conceptualization and design of this research will be discussed with your advisor and others in your research lab. The advisor may read and comment on drafts.

An option to students is to schedule an “advisory” meeting on the dissertation proposal. Rather than consulting separately with committee members (or perhaps in addition to consulting separately with committee members or others), the student can use this meeting to get preliminary feedback on the proposal with all committee members present. It is particularly useful if the student wishes to get started collecting dissertation data and working on the dissertation, and/or if the student is submitting the proposal to be evaluated for outside funding. More generally, committee members typically have good ideas for improving dissertation proposals and often recommend useful but substantial changes. By scheduling an advisory meeting, the student can incorporate these changes into the final dissertation proposal, which can lead to a substantially improved proposal and a better dissertation overall. The advisory meeting will not lead to a pass/fail vote. Information from the advisory meeting will be recorded, signed by the advisor and student, and placed in the student’s file. It is the responsibility of the faculty committee to be very clear with the student what further work and future steps are recommended before discussing the proposal again.

The dissertation proposal defense should be scheduled for up to a 2-hour block. The student should prepare a Powerpoint presentation to present to the committee.

***Passing the Qualifying Exam:***

One pass/fail vote is taken for the qualifying review paper and one for the dissertation defense. The first pass/fail vote (on the qualifying review paper) is taken prior to the scheduling of the orals for the dissertation proposal defense. According to graduate school guidelines, if the written quals examination paper is marginal, and a committee meeting was not held, the committee can hold an oral exam on the written portion to confirm or alter its decision. However, the committee is not obliged to give an oral examination. More than one dissenting vote means that the written quals is reported to the Graduate School as a failure. A written quals paper that is not passed can be resubmitted. The student should allow adequate time for substantial revision. Developing a reasonable time-line with the advisor is recommended.

The second pass/fail vote for the qualifying exam takes place at the oral defense of the dissertation proposal. As with the qualifying review paper, more than one dissenting vote means that the oral defense of the dissertation proposal is reported to the Graduate School as a failure. For a failed oral defense, the guidance committee can decide to dismiss the student from the program or allow the student to retake the oral exam for the dissertation proposal. There must be 6-month interval between the two exams and the interval may not be longer than 12 months. If the student does not pass the dissertation defense a second time then they are dismissed from the program.

A pass on the quals paper or the dissertation proposal defense cannot be contingent on other factors. However, the committee can request changes to the dissertation proposal before the dissertation is conducted and/or completed. The ***Dissertation Proposal Approval Form*** is to be used after the oral exam on the dissertation proposal to list changes that are to be made before commencement of work on the proposed dissertation. It is the student’s responsibility to provide the committee members with a cover letter stating exactly what changes have been made and how the recommendations are being addressed. Committee members need to sign off on the revised proposal if the recommendations involve changes before work on the dissertation begins.

To complete and to “pass” the qualifying exam, both written products (qualifying review paper and dissertation proposal) as well as the oral defense of the dissertation proposal must be acceptable to at least four of the five members of the committee. The passing date is recorded as the date of the passed oral. ***Students are placed on probation if they do not pass both components of the qualifying exam by the last day of classes of their seventh semester.***

**V.e. Dissertation**

Once the dissertation proposal has been approved, the student can start to work on that project. It is strongly recommended that the student have the dissertation proposal approved before conducting the research, although it often makes sense to collect some pilot data to guide decision-making in the proposal. If the student (and advisor) want to make changes in procedures after the proposal has been approved, this is possible with the approval of all members of the committee.

It is strongly recommended that the student collect dissertation data and make as much progress as possible on the dissertation before leaving for internship. Ideally, the student actually defends the completed dissertation before leaving for internship, or at least is well into analyzing and writing up the dissertation. Students generally find it difficult to make significant progress on the dissertation during the internship year. It is worth noting that internship directors look carefully at dissertation progress in ranking applicants and many job opportunities and post-doctoral fellowships are contingent upon having completely defended and submitted the dissertation.

The dissertation may be written up as one large, multi-faceted study or 2-3 related but separate manuscripts *if the committee approves this latter approach.* One piece, for example, could be a theoretical or measurement study.

The dissertation defense is a **2-hour** meeting with all members of the guidance committee that can be comprised of 4 or 5 faculty members. The dissertation defense is an “open” meeting (i.e., anyone within the “general university community” is invited to attend) and a notice will be posted in the Psychology Department. The first hour is a formal presentation of the dissertation including time to field questions from guests. In the second hour, only the dissertation committee is present for questions and discussion. And discussion about passing or failing the dissertation defense is made without any guests present.

It is a good idea to attempt to schedule committee meetings with considerable lead-time as it often is difficult to find a time for everyone to meet. Getting schedules from committee members at least one month in advance is advised. Summers are a particularly difficult time to schedule a meeting as faculty may not be on campus. In addition, it is important to determine far in advance of scheduling if a committee member is unavailable due to a sabbatical etc. In such cases, it is the student’s responsibility (a) to identify a willing substitute whose participation is agreeable to your advisor and who is eligible (according to university guidelines) to serve as a substitute member and (b) to make sure the appropriate paperwork is completed in advance of the meeting. There are university/college rules specifying that the chair and outside member must be physically present although tele- or video-participation is possible for other committee members.

On the other hand, before deciding upon a specific date, it recommended that the project is far enough along to defend on the scheduled date. It is not advisable, for example, to schedule a master’s or dissertation defense prior to having analyses completed. The anticipated timeline for distributing the proposal should include time for 1-3 complete readings by the research advisor with revisions in between. Advisors can help make realistic estimates about a timetable to schedule a defense date. It is also recommended that the student consult with their advisor about reasonable turn-around times on the part of the advisor to aid in devising a timeline. Faculty members may have prior commitments at a given time (e.g., conference travel scheduled) that may lead to a longer than anticipated time period to provide detailed feedback.

**V.f. Clinical Science Funding for Research**

The Clinical Science Graduate Research Fund provides funding (up to $1750 for each student) to help defray the costs of conducting and presenting research. The funding can be requested all at once or in several smaller requests. $1000 can be used for general research purposes such as: purchasing software, photocopying, translating instruments, subject reimbursements, paying undergraduate research assistants, and similar costs involved in conducting research. Up to $750 can be used for travel to present research at national conferences. Reimbursable expenses include plane fare, hotel, food, conference registration and car rental. Amounts cannot exceed university per diem*. For travel funds, students also can apply to the Graduate School.* Research funding requests are reviewed on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

**Original receipts are needed to document expenses in order to be reimbursed**.

**VI. Teaching Experiences and Requirements**

It is expected that all students in the clinical science program will obtain teaching experience. Generally this will take the form of being a Teaching Assistant, which can provide experience teaching small sections, lecturing to a large class, developing teaching materials, observing master professors, planning for the complexities of grading, and dealing with student issues. A student who does not have a paid TA position can choose to be a volunteer TA or obtain some other teaching experience. Opportunities sometimes arise for more independent teaching, e.g., teaching a mini-course associated with PSYC 100, the Writing Program, summer school classes at USC or elsewhere, or, for very advanced students, part-time teaching positions at local universities and colleges. Students who are interested in such positions should discuss possible options with the research advisor, DCT and department chair. It is important to note that it is against the students’ financial agreement to receive payment for employment during the academic year that is outside their TA, RA or fellowship responsibilities unless they are given a formal exception.

Teaching assistants are evaluated by students as well as by the faculty mentor at the end of each semester. Responsible and professional performance is required to continue to receive TA positions. These evaluations are part of the written documents considered in the annual review of students.

**VII. Clinical Experiences and Requirements**

Students are to develop and hone their clinical skills in a step-wise fashion throughout their training. The required clinical sequence of coursework spans three years on-campus. The typical sequence is as follows but may vary based on course availability. During Year 1 students enroll in Interviewing (PSYC 595a) and Assessment (PSYC 515) in the fall semester; and Assessment Practicum (PSYC 595b) and Intervention (PSYC 619) during the spring semester. Students are required to enroll in 595 and complete additional assessments during the summer after their first year. During year 2 students take Psychopathology (PSYC 514) and a full academic year of the Didactic-Practicum (PSYC 695). For year 3 students enroll in another year of a different Didactic-Practicum (PSYC 695). Most students continue their clinical training during their fourth and fifth years on-campus to obtain additional skills and/or to work with specific populations. This could include taking an additional year of Didactic-Practicum if that fits with the student’s training objectives; that could be a new di-prac or revisiting a prior di-prac for supervision only. Students are also welcome to approach the Clinic Director with ideas for advanced training (e.g., consulting with local schools, group therapy, additional experience with a particular therapeutic approach, such as DBT). Students are expected to enroll in PSYC 695 or 595 during the summer if they are doing any assessment or intervention during that time, following the instructions of the Clinic Director. A year-long APA approved internship is required prior to earning the Ph.D.

The program’s model of clinical work is empirically based. We do not subscribe to one theoretical orientation but we do subscribe to careful review of our clinical work with operationally defined outcomes and regular monitoring and evaluation of those outcomes. Di-prac classes will specify evaluation methods appropriate for the problems addressed. Systems for monitoring client progress continually evolve as students and supervisors design and develop measurements to be sensitive to the needs of specific clients.

As part of students’ first three years of required practicum work (PSYC 595 and 695), students are to keep a clinical portfolio. This portfolio contains the following (all in format that removes any identifying information about the client):

1. A clinical intake report.
2. Two completed assessment reports (i.e., full testing battery, interpretation of results, diagnosis, and recommendations)
3. At least two case reports generated through the Di-Prac courses. In each diprac the report will include process and outcome data plus case conceptualizations. In one Di-Prac the case summary report includes process and outcome data and is accompanied by a 1-2 page “Theory of Change” paper. In another Di-Prac, two formal case reports are written integrating diagnosis, history, case conceptualization as well as process and outcome data. They are also presented orally at the end of each semester. The case reports are evaluated by the Di-Prac instructors and are part of the annual student review.

**VII.a. Preliminary Competencies**

As part of students’ introductory practicum classes, each student will receive and will be required to read the following documents on ethical and legal responsibilities in clinical work: APA Ethical Principles of Psychology and Code of Conduct, the California Child Abuse Reporting Law, the California Elder Abuse Reporting Law, involuntary commitment procedures, and the California Department of Consumer Affairs brochure “Professional Therapy Never Includes Sex.” Further guidelines for enacting these principles and laws in our own clinic are available in the google drive for the PSC (under Risk Management procedures, and also within the clinic manual). Students will be asked to document that they have received and read these materials by printing and signing the document at the very end of the handbook and turning into the Clinical Program Administrator by **September 15th** of their first year.

The entire California Laws and Regulations for the Practice of Psychology can be found at <http://www.psychology.ca.gov/laws_regs/>. Clicking on “2015 Laws and Regulations Booklet” downloads all the relevant statutes.

In addition, you are required to enroll in the USC Office of Compliance HIPAA Online Education Program, that can be found at the website, <http://ooc.usc.edu/hipaa-online-education-program> and turn in the certificate to the Clinic Director no later than **December 1 in students’ first semester** of the program.

**VII.b. Supervision**

**Under NO circumstance are students permitted to treat clients or engage in psychology-related, quasi-psychological or quasi-therapeutic activities on or off campus without supervision. The supervisor and clinical experience must be approved by the program BEFORE the student engages in any on or off campus clinical work.**

Students must have clinical supervisors for all clinical work they do. Students should seek clarification from the DCT, Associate DCT, or Clinic Director whenever there are questions about whether paid or volunteer activities on or off campus might be construed as clinical work.

In general, cases seen in the Didactic-Practicum are supervised by the instructors of those courses or with the approval of di-prac instructors when other supervisors do supervision on di-prac cases.

The PSC Director (sometimes with the consultation di-prac instructors) will make supervisor assignments when a student is seeing clients through the PSC. At the time a case is assigned to a therapist, the case also must be assigned to an approved supervisor. If a supervisor cannot take on another case, the student must immediately report back to the PSC Director to request another supervisor. Students may not make arrangements by themselves for supervision. However, we encourage students to discuss their training needs and to identify appropriate supervisors in collaboration with the PSC Director and the di-prac instructor. At any time, a student may have more than one supervisor; however, it is recommended that students limit their total number of supervisors and discuss with the PSC Director and with the DCT if they believe they have too many supervisors.

There often are questions about how long to work with a supervisor and how many cases to take to any one supervisor. These are good questions to review with the PSC Director, DCT, Associate DCT and faculty advisor. It is important that at least two supervisors can comment in detail on a student’s clinical work prior to internship.

Di-prac instructors will provide at least two hours of group supervision per week as part of the scheduled di-prac. In addition, the instructor will have an individual supervision session with each student at least once per month. Students may also be assigned to a supervisor outside the di-prac instructor, as described above. We expect that each student will meet with his or her supervisor (either individually or in a small group) for at least one hour each week that clients are seen. All psychotherapy supervision, by di-prac instructors or outside supervisors, will include viewing and/or listening to video or audio recordings, or directly participating with the student (e.g., co-leading a group) on a regular basis. Supervisors also need to review and sign all case notes.

Each supervisor will provide feedback on a supervisee at least once per semester. These supervisor evaluations are part of the written documents considered in the annual activities review of students.

In addition, students provide evaluation forms to the DCT and/or PSC Director regarding supervisors at least once per year. The DCT will review these forms and address any problems that may arise.

Additional information about supervision, supervision assignments, obtaining clinical cases, recordings, documentation, and evaluations are all included in the PSC Manual, with many accompanying documents in the PSC’s google drive. It is the student’s responsibility to review these materials and ask questions to PSC staff and the clinic director whenever there are points of confusion.

**VII.c. Externships**

Externships (work other than that in the Psychology Services Center) may be acceptable depending upon the student’s progress in coursework and research, as well as the student’s other sources of funding. Additional clinical experience often is sought during the 4th and 5th years. Students may secure paid or unpaid positions to do research or clinical work at facilities other than the PSC. Payment is only in lieu of a graduate assistantship—not to supplement other funding. A student who already is employed through a TA, RA or has a fellowship cannot accept another paid position.

Students will be permitted to participate in one off-campus externship for a period up to one year (subject to the approval process described in this section). Students interested in participating in more than one off- campus externship must obtain the prior written approval of their academic advisor and the DCT, and they must provide a written rationale and justification as to why the additional externship(s) would further contribute to their academic development and/or professional career plans.

Students must seek the approval of their faculty advisor and the DCT prior to engaging in any professional activities on or off campus, and must coordinate with the ADCT to make sure that we are aware of everyone who might be interested and applying to a specific externship. It is unlikely that we will recommend for externship someone who currently is on a remediation clinical plan.

Because of the Graduate School 50% “rule,” summer is an excellent time to do a paid externship. Many forms of university funding apply only to the 9-month academic year. Unpaid externships over the summer also are a good time for students to get specialized experience without interfering with responsibilities during the academic year.

Research or clinical externships could be highly beneficial to a student’s educational or career objectives. However, decisions about such position must be made in consultation with the research and/or academic advisor. The advisor’s input often is useful in determining what areas of the student’s skill might best be strengthened and where to seek externships that complement the student’s other work.

There is a form that must be completed and signed by the DCT or Associate DCT prior to beginning any non-course-related psychological work. For externships other than those well-known to our program, we will need to see the CV of the intended supervisor and evaluate the quality of training at the site. Typically, the clinic director and/or ADCT will meet with the new supervisor to evaluate the suitability of the training opportunity. Faculty review of potential supervisors is partly to protect the public and partly to protect the student.

If an externship position is obtained, it is the student’s responsibility to provide the Clinic Director with the name and address of the facility, and the name, address, and phone number of the supervisor so that that supervisor can be contacted for evaluations of the student each semester.

The terms of any externship placement – whether required or elective – are negotiated agreements of three parties: the student, the clinical program, and the placement site. As such, students may not unilaterally terminate any placement agreement. Should the student feel a need to end a placement before the agreed end date, the student must first consult with the Director of Clinical Training or the Associate Director of Clinical Training and seek written consent to resign the placement.

Furthermore, a placement, while generally not paid, must be regarded in many respects as employment. Students who are committed to be on a placement may not schedule travel or vacations that might disrupt their placement schedule without first seeking approval from their placement supervisor as well as their di-prac and other on-campus practicum supervisors, if applicable.

In order to be granted permission to do external clinical placements that exceed the requirements of the program, students must generally be in good standing and progressing in a timely fashion toward academic requirements. In addition, the faculty will consider whether any issues have been raised in the annual student review indicating that such a placement is advisable or inadvisable.

**VII.d. Year-long Internship**

A full-time pre-doctoral APA-approved clinical internship is required as part of the training for the Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. Students generally apply for the internship during the fifth or sixth year of training, depending upon the student’s specific educational program. It is our policy that students are eligible to apply for internship only after they have passed all parts of the qualifying examination (i.e., the review paper and the dissertation proposal.) As noted above, students are required to submit all parts by the end of the first semester of the 4th year. If the student fails either part of the qualifying exam, they must resubmit and pass prior to submitting internship applications.

It is assumed that students will be seeking and accepting APA-approved internships. In selecting an internship, students should consult the APPIC Directory as well as SSCP’s Directory of Research Opportunities for Clinical Psychology Interns. APPIC approved internships are an alternative if a student is worried about matching. Should a student wish to apply to a non-APA-approved internship, that decision should be discussed with the Director of Clinical Training and the research advisor.

Meeting the internship requirement is reflected in enrollment in PSYC 691A and PSYC 691B during the internship year. This requires payment of 1 unit of tuition per semester and is typically not covered by USC tuition support.

Students are to follow APPIC Policy during both the application process and the notification procedure.

**VII.e. Alternatives to Pursuing Training in Clinical Applications of Psychology**

Some students determine, during the course of their Ph.D. training, that they plan to have careers focused on conducting research and do not intend to deliver clinical services and do not want to apply for the clinical internship. For such students, not doing the clinical internship can be a logical and good career decision albeit one that could not be foreseen until starting clinical work. Other students may determine that clinical training does not fit with their temperaments. Or, sometimes, clinical supervisors and faculty will initiate discussions with the student as to her/his suitability for clinical work.

Students who choose not to do the full educational experience in clinical applications may elect to pursue a Ph.D. in psychology but *not in* *clinical psychology*. Such students may request to fulfill all requirements for the Ph.D. in one of the other areas in the Department of Psychology (quantitative, social, developmental, or brain and cognitive sciences). Such a request must be made in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies and to the pertinent Area head, and is subject to approval by faculty in the other area.

Another option is to obtain a Ph.D. in Psychology without a specialization. Students who, with the counsel of their research advisor and the DCT, come to the conclusion that completion of the year-long internship does not serve their career objectives can submit a petition (after three years in the program) to the clinical area faculty to receive a Ph.D. in Psychology without clinical specialization\*.  Pre-requisites for the petition are that the student has completed all academic course requirements (including all required PSY 595 and 695 courses) and has satisfactorily completed all research requirements in a timely fashion. A clinical area faculty would remain the student’s research advisor unless it is decided that the student’s current interests match better with another Psychology Department faculty member.

\* *Without specialization means that the student is to refrain from using the word “clinical” in any description of her/his degree from USC, e.g., on a CV or resume or in a public statement.  If a graduate pursues clinical training at a later date or secures internship hours after receiving the Ph.D., the doctorate degree from USC still would not be in clinical psychology.*

##### **VIII. Evaluation**

At the end of each academic year, the clinical faculty meets as a group to review each student’s progress. This is done for all students who have not yet completed their Ph.D. The material we examine includes an updated resume and annual activities report provided by the student, course grades, written evaluations from clinical supervisors and research advisors, and TA evaluations from students and faculty. In addition, we generally get verbal reports from all faculty members who have had contact with the student, in a class or on their guidance committee.

Following this meeting, each student receives a letter from the DCT summarizing the information obtained. The research/academic advisor receives a copy of the letter. That letter can provide a good opportunity for the advisor and student to review the student’s progress and map out goals for the upcoming year. The student also is welcome to request clarification or additional feedback from the DCT and/or to request a meeting with the advisor and DCT.

The goal of our discussion is to identify both strengths and weaknesses of the student. If a weakness seems to be interfering with the student’s progress in the program, the faculty will map out a remedial strategy (e.g., specific coursework, additional supervision, etc.) If the student appears to be struggling early on in their training (e.g., difficulties in clinical work or not meeting/passing research milestones), the letter will indicate that remedial action is needed. The problem is stated and a meeting involving the student, advisor and DCT is requested. The goal of that meeting is to develop a specific course of remediation. If the problem persists, then the faculty may take more serious actions from deriving further remediation plans with clear consequences if identified steps are not completed to dismissing the student from the program.

**IX. Mentor Model**

Students are matched with a faculty member during the admissions process, but are admitted to the program, not to a specific lab group.

When the research advisor is a core member of the clinical science faculty, that individual also is the academic advisor. That individual is available to discuss any aspect of the student’s training, including course selection and load, financial support, etc. The student is responsible for discussing all commitments related to the practice of psychology (e.g., taking on a job, accepting an assistantship, doing volunteer work, etc.) with the research/academic advisor.

If a student has a research advisor who is not a member of the clinical science faculty, the student needs to have a clinical science academic advisor. The decision of who should be that advisor sometimes is made as part of the admissions decision but could be made after the student arrives. The student should regularly meet with the clinical science academic advisor. It generally is a good idea to participate in that person’s lab meetings for at least several semesters. Both the research advisor and the academic advisor are members of all guidance committees, with the research advisor typically serving as chair and the academic advisor from the clinical area serving as a member of the second-year project or guidance committee. Both faculty are invited to participate in the annual evaluation.

Collaboration between students and their research mentors provides one of the most important contexts of learning experiences in our program. Research mentors and advisees should be in regular contact throughout the student’s time in the program; faculty and students share the responsibility to ensure that regular contact occurs. Each relationship will be unique, hopefully fit to the needs of the student and the research. We have no intention of structuring the mentor-advisee relationship to the extent that it restricts optimal collaboration. Certainly there are times when more frequent contact is needed (e.g., when generating research ideas or analyzing data) and other times when less frequent contact might suffice (e.g., when writing the quals paper). At a minimum, we anticipate that a student meets individually with his or her mentor at least three times during each semester while in residence in the program. It is highly likely that students also will have more frequent lab or research group meetings with the mentor.

**IX.a. Working with More than One Advisor or a Research Advisor not in the Clinical Science Area**

It is not uncommon for a student to find that his/her interests span more than one lab and the question arises as to whether it is possible to work in more than one lab. The general answer is “yes.” In such cases, the student has a primary research affiliation and a secondary research affiliation. Before taking on the secondary commitment, the student should consult with her/his primary research advisor to consider whether she/he is on schedule with research milestones, and how his/her research progress will be impacted by branching out into a second lab.

**IX.b. Switching Advisors**

Although most students stay in the same lab throughout their time at USC, there is no requirement to do so and there is no stigma associated with changing mentors. Students who may be interested in changing labs should feel free to approach other faculty members to discuss the available options. The student’s original research/academic advisor should be involved in these discussions early in the process.

There are a number of reasons a student may wish to switch advisors—the student may develop new interests, may find it easier to work with another faculty member, or an advisor may leave for a new position. Whatever the reason for change, it is the student’s responsibility to arrange for a new advisor.

In initiating a change, there are some guidelines to follow. The possibility of changing advisors should be discussed at about the same time with both the prospective advisor and the current advisor. Neither the prospective nor the current advisor should be uninformed or receive information about the switch from a third party. It is important to make plans to complete any ongoing projects with the current advisor so that neither the student’s work nor the advisor’s work suffers.

For changes due to an advisor’s leave/retirement, alternatives and plans should be discussed with the advisor.

Early in the process, the student should inform the DCT about the potential change and discuss with the DCT the best ways to handle the change. Or, if the DCT is the advisor involved, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) should be consulted. In general, the DCT and DGS are available for consultation about such changes at any step in the process.

**IX.c. Troubleshooting**

In the event that problems develop in the research collaboration, both the mentor and student are encouraged to discuss the difficulties together. If this discussion fails to resolve the problems, the student may speak with the Director of Clinical Training or the Associate Director of Clinical Training. That discussion will be used to figure out reasonable next steps.

##### **X. Professional Development**

Pursuing knowledge and keeping abreast of cutting edge developments in the field are continual processes. Graduate school is the time to begin engaging in professional development activities that continue throughout one’s career.

**X.a. Professional Organizations**

Students are encouraged to join professional organizations in psychology and/or in their specialty and to establish at least one membership by the end of the first year. Student membership provides the benefits of regular membership (e.g. journals, newsletters, notices of meetings, reduced registration at meetings, and access to listservs where relevant discussions occur). Examples of such organizations include: APA, APS, ABCT, GSA, SRCD, SBM, etc. Information about student memberships can be found on-line.

**X.b. Professional Conferences and Workshops**

Students are encouraged to attend professional conferences and workshops to supplement the material presented in classes, to become active members of the psychology community, to develop habitual ways of updating and refining knowledge, and to meet other professionals in the field. Attending conferences is a great way to learn about the most recent developments in specific fields of interest, as well as to expand into new interests. There are many conferences locally, as well as nationally.

Presenting research at professional conferences is an excellent way to get feedback from others in the field, to move research to completion, and to become known in broader professional circles. Several resources are available to students. The Graduate School provides funding for students who present their own research at conferences. Our department has equipment to make professional quality posters. A number of organizations, including APA, provide student travel grants to conferences or hire students to work at conferences. NRSA grants as well as faculty members’ grants also might include travel funds.

Advisors can provide information about relevant conferences and advice about writing an abstract. Students typically practice presentations or show early versions of their posters to colleagues in their lab or in the department.

Keeping a list of conferences/workshops attended may be useful in the internship application process and is a professional behavior increasingly required for licensure.

**X.c. Clinical Science Speakers/Colloquia/Brown Bags/Job Talks**

Every effort should be made to attend all clinical area and departmental colloquia and presentations. Each year there are several exceptionally interesting colloquia presented in our department. The clinical area also runs a series of presentations by our own faculty, students and alumni, as well as by esteemed visiting colleagues. These colloquia and presentations provide special learning opportunities. Plus, observing others is your best training for learning how to present your own work. It is expected that students attend all brown bags. If this is not possible, the student should inform the DCT of her/his absence.

**X.d. USC Clinical Science Leibovitz Research Conference**

The Clinical Science program sponsors its own annual research conference in which students make formal research presentations. The purpose of this meeting is to share information across labs and to prepare students for professional presentations elsewhere. It typically is scheduled toward the end of spring semester and always is one of the highlights of our year. Please be sure to mark this event in your calendar as soon as the date is announced. If there is some reason you are unable to attend, please inform the Director of Clinical Training in advance of your absence.

Each student is to present her or his research at one or more Leibovitz Conferences. Students typically present their master’s research projects but can select any piece of research conducted at USC to present. The Call for Abstracts will be announced through our weekly newsletter.

Each year we seek volunteers to review abstracts for the Leibovitz conference and to help with the conference arrangements. Volunteering to be on the review panel is useful in terms of your own learning of how to write a good abstract and, of course, is helpful to the smooth running of this conference. Previous presenters will be asked to participate on the review panel.

**XI. Personal Therapy**

A common way of dealing with personal problems and high levels of stress or sorting out reactions to seeing clients (beyond what is dealt with in supervision) is to enter into therapy as a client oneself. This is not a requirement of our program; however, we do see value in students’ decisions to experience the treatment relationship as a client if they choose to do so.

The Director of the PSC and the Associate Director of Clinical Training know clinicians in the community who are good therapy referrals. Students are also enrolled in the university health plan, which includes coverage for mental health. A list of providers who take your insurance plan can be found on your insurance website. Graduate students are also eligible to receive services at USC’s Counseling Center, although this may not be ideal if you plan to apply for externship or internship there. Your work with the clinician would be confidential to the same degree as any other client in psychotherapy. Other than providing you with a list of names, the PSC Director, Associate DCT (and other faculty) would have no involvement or contact with your therapist except in the improbable circumstance where such contact would be allowed by law and mandated by duties of care, such as if your therapist had good cause to fear for your immediate safety and felt compelled to contact someone at USC in order to locate you. Such a circumstance would be extremely unlikely, however, and you can and should seek professional care if you feel it is needed or would benefit you, and be confident that such a decision, on balance, would indeed most likely benefit your career.

**XI.a. Personal Problems and their Interference in Clinical Work**

It occasionally happens that personal problems interfere with one’s ability to function as a psychologist. The important issue, however, is how to deal with such problems. In line with Standard 1.13 of the APA Guidelines, it is the student’s responsibility to be alert for and to recognize if personal problems are interfering with effectiveness in clinical work. It is the student’s responsibility to refrain from activities if her/his performance is impaired and patients/colleagues/students may be harmed. As a trainee, a first step would be to discuss the possible impact of personal problems with a clinical supervisor and/or academic advisor. There are a variety of avenues to explore, including obtaining assistance with personal problems, suspending/postponing training in direct service, or taking a leave of absence from the program. A student can elect to refrain from clinical work for a semester or two but that decision can affect competitiveness for an internship and may require taking on higher clinical load during another year.

We (faculty and students) collectively share a responsibility to take action if we believe that a student’s personal problems may be harmful to clients. The appropriate action would be to bring concerns to the attention of the trainee whom you believe to be impaired. If that does not result in a corrective response and you still perceive a risk, it would be appropriate to consult with a member of the faculty.

If there is sufficient evidence supporting a student’s impairment due to an emotional, neuropsychological, or substance abuse condition, the faculty may recommend or require that: (a) the student take a leave of absence until the student no longer is impaired or (b) the student discontinue the program. Examples of behaviors that would elicit a recommendation for a leave from the program include irresponsible or erratic behavior with clients or more generally (e.g., being late for sessions, poor record keeping, flirtatious or belligerent behavior with a client, repeatedly acting in a manner that is detrimental to the client even after receiving supervision about the behavior).

If the plan is for a temporary leave from client-related work or from the program more generally, that decision should be made in consultation between the student, the faculty advisor, and the DCT. The goal will be to generate a specific plan that includes actions for amelioration or rehabilitation. Returning from the leave will be conditional on demonstrating that the plan has been enacted and has had the intended effect. Prior to taking the leave, the student’s advisor and the DCT will create a written statement that documents: (a) length and reason for leave; (b) plans for remediation; and (c) how it will be determined that the student is fit to return; and (d) plans for monitoring the student after returning.

As stated in the USC catalogue, and in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), USC offers equal access to its degree programs to academically qualified applicants with physical, psychological or learning disabilities. USC is committed to providing appropriate, reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Disability Services and Programs (DSP) is dedicated to maintaining an environment that ensures all students with documented disabilities at USC equal access to its educational programs, activities and facilities. Accommodations are designed to level the playing field for students with disabilities, while maintaining the integrity and standards of our academic program.

##### **XII. Faculty-Student Relations**

We aim for collegial, mutually respectful relationships between faculty and students in the clinical psychology program. This applies among faculty and among students as well. Our program is known for its non-competitiveness and mutually supportive environment. Maintaining this ambiance requires a high level of professionalism and integrity on the part of everyone.

**XII.a. Collaborative Relationships**

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 student 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.

**XII.b. Dual Relationships**

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. Examples of dual relationships include, but are not limited to, romantic/sexual involvements, financial partnerships, long-time personal friendships, family relations, etc. 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 the dual relationship become known to others in the program (e.g., the DCT) rather than kept a secret. In addition, the Department Chair should be informed.

Psychotherapeutic relations between faculty and student must be avoided altogether.

Should a dual relationship 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.

**XII.c. Coercion or Discrimination in Relationships**

There is no place for coercive or exploitative relationships in any professional activities or work in our program. Coercive relationships take a number of different forms. The university has explicit policies against discrimination and sexual harassment as stated in SCampus: Student Conduct Code and Policies in A.5 Principles of community: “USC is a multicultural community of scholars from diverse racial, ethnic and class backgrounds, national origins, religious and political beliefs, physical abilities and sexual orientations. This diversity enriches all of our activities and everyday interactions, and we strive to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. As a scholarly community, we aspire to create an environment in which racism, sexism, ageism, xenophobia and homophobia do not go unchallenged.” Complaints should not go unreported. Every effort should be made to break a sometimes expected norm of silence. Complaints related to discrimination or harassment should be directed to the Office of Equity and Diversity at <http://equity.usc.edu/> or 213-740-5086.

Coercive relationships additionally would be defined as taking advantage of the faculty-student relationship by requesting work unrelated to academic development, inhibiting a student’s progress in order to benefit from the student’s proficiencies, or demands on the student unrelated to the student’s professional development.

It is the responsibility of each faculty member to create an atmosphere conducive to the student’s learning and professional development. Faculty are to commit themselves to impartially evaluating student performance and avoiding discrimination based on irrelevant personal or demographic characteristics (including the student’s race, sex, age, sexual orientation, religious faith or lack thereof, or national origin).

**XII.d. Student Feedback to Professors**

Students provide feedback on the instructional quality of the program through course evaluations, which are filled out every semester. Students are encouraged to write comments to give specific and detailed feedback to their instructors. Instructional issues that arise during a course should be discussed with the course instructor. A further option would be to talk to the DCT or Associate DCT if further discussion could be useful.

**XII.e. Grievances, Settling Disputes, and Due Process**

When a dispute or grievance arises between a student and faculty member, the goal is to resolve the matter as quickly and informally as possible. The student first should attempt to resolve the matter directly with the faculty member. If this is unsuccessful, the student should seek assistance at the next level of administrative command, e.g., the DCT or the departmental chair.

The university has particular policies and procedures for certain types of student grievances. For issues related to discrimination, sexual harassment, or disputed academic evaluation, see SCampus: Student Conduct Code and Policies (<https://scampus.usc.edu/b/>).

1. In general, if the student believes she/he has been evaluated unfairly, the Graduate School offers the following steps:
2. *The student schedules a meeting to discuss the problem with either the faculty or staff in question, or the student’s supervising faculty or staff.*
3. *If the problem is not resolved, the student schedules a meeting with the chair of the department or program.*
4. *If the problem is still not resolved, the student schedules a meeting with the dean of the school in which the program or department is located.*
5. *If the problem remains unresolved, the student brings the problem to the attention of The Graduate School, which may resolve the issue via informal mediation with the concerned parties.*

In general, the University offers the following sources of student advocacy:

Graduate Students’ Advocates, https://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current\_student\_resourc\_01.html;

##### Formal Appeal Procedures, <http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_student_resourc_03.html>.

**XIII. Graduate Students’ Relations with Undergraduates**

When serving as a teaching assistant or mentoring an undergraduate in the lab, the graduate student is in a position of authority with the undergraduate students. According to the Graduate Assistant Handbook (page 2), “All TAs, RAs, and Assistant Lecturers shall respect the rights and opinions of students and uphold the academic and community standards of the university as set forth in the Student Conduct Code and in the USC Code of Ethics in the performance of their responsibilities.” Graduate assistants are governed by the same standards of conduct in the performance of their academic responsibilities as are members of the faculty (see Faculty Handbook: <https://faculty.usc.edu/> . Related Websites > Faculty Handbook). For purposes of emphasis, the university considers it inappropriate conduct for a teaching assistant or assistant lecturer to have a dating relationship with one of his/her students. You are advised to exercise foresight and reasonable caution in any dating relationship involving a USC student, especially if that student is an undergraduate, recognizing that a relationship that begins innocently may entail conflicts of interest later on that were not originally anticipated (such as if a dating partner switched majors and became a psychology major, which ultimately involved them having you or your classmates as their TAs).

All instructors, including Teaching Assistants, are required to complete the university’s Harassment Prevention Training prior to the beginning of their first semester of teaching. For continuing instructors, the course must be repeated every two years (or sooner if the first course is taken during the university’s collective non-training year). The training is offered in an online format and in live training sessions, if necessary. New Teaching Assistants will not be permitted to teach until they complete the training, print the certificate of completion, and submit the documentation to their home department. For further information, see: Harassment Prevention and Campus SaVE Act Training (<http://www.usc.edu/dept/hr/tm/i-harassment.html>).

An additional issue involves clients in the PSC. It is not uncommon for undergraduate psychology majors to seek therapy at the PSC. You should not see a client for whom you have previously served as a TA or research mentor. In addition, you should recuse yourself from any group supervision or peer consultation regarding a client with whom you have had a previous relationship of any sort (TA, personal, or research). If a dual relationship later arises (e.g., a previous or current client is in the class you have just been assigned to TA), you should discuss the situation immediately with your supervisor (and probably also the clinic director).

##### **XIV. Diversity**

Our program respects diversity and promotes an understanding of cultural and individual diversity in each of our three training components—classroom activities, research experience, and clinical experience. Each clinical course is designed to address substantive issues of how ethnic, cultural, and/or gender issues interface with the content area being studied, i.e., how issues of diversity are pertinent to diagnosis, assessment, and intervention. With respect to research, we expect that a student’s research and scholarship (either master’s project, dissertation project, qualifying exam paper, or other research project) will address some aspect of diversity. In the Annual Activities report, we ask students to report on their experiences with diversity in clinical work and in research. For students who have not had opportunities to work with diverse clients or to include diversity in their research, the faculty will work with the student to correct the situation. We also expect students to monitor this and let us know if they want more opportunities with clients of underserved or diverse backgrounds.

We would also like to make clear that we believe in the spirit of APA’s recent statement regarding preparing professionals to serve a diverse public (for full statement see: <http://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/diversity-preparation.aspx?tab=1>). Borrowing from the language in this statement, the clinical science program at USC has a commitment to helping students navigate conflicts that may arise between their worldviews, beliefs or religious values and our commitment to offering culturally responsive psychological services to all members of the public, especially to those from traditionally marginalized groups. For example, a student may experience strong negative reactions toward clients/patients who are of a particular sexual orientation, religious tradition, age or disability status. We take a developmental approach to student skill and competency acquisition and support individual students in the process of developing competencies to work with diverse populations. We respect the right of students to maintain their personal belief systems while acquiring such professional competencies. We also strive to model the process of personal introspection; the exploration of personal beliefs, attitudes and values; and the development of cognitive flexibility required to serve a wide diversity of clients/patients, as these are all cornerstones of developing cultural competence as a clinician and researcher. Training to work with diverse clients is integral to the curriculum, and consists of both didactic coursework and practical training. Thus, students entering our program should have no reasonable expectation of being exempted from having any particular category of potential clients assigned to them for the duration of training.

##### **XV. Research Ethics**

As part of the research community, you are expected to comply with ethical policies of both USC and the American Psychological Association ethics code currently in force. All graduate students should take the IRB-required online CITI Human Subjects education course (<https://oprs.usc.edu/education/citi/>) within a few weeks after arriving on campus, if not before. This course is required prior to conducting any work with human subjects. HIPAA educational training also is required for any investigators using protected health information, that is, any identifiable health information relating to an individual's past, present or future physical or mental health condition (and is also required prior to participating in any clinical activities as noted above).

No research with human subjects can be conducted until approval for the study has been obtained from the University Institutional Review Board (IRB), also known as the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS). The USC OPRS website (<http://oprs.usc.edu/about/>) contains valuable guidance about all human subjects research, e.g. even archived de-identified data sets need to be submitted to the IRB/OPRS although ultimately they are likely to be designated as exempt research or Not Human Subjects. All Human Subjects applications must be submitted through iSTAR (<http://oprs.usc.edu/review/istar/>) and approved and co-signed by the research advisor. The department has a representative to the IRB who can provide useful help in completing applications. There also is an IRB graduate student consultant.

Procedures for the ethical conduct of research are specified in the USC Policy on Scientific Misconduct (<https://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>) and in the APA Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>). Specifically, the USC Policy sets out ethical aspirations as well as minimum requirements that define grounds for discipline (e.g., falsification of data, plagiarism or abuse of confidentiality, improprieties of authorship, administrative and financial responsibility, violation of federal, state, or university research rules, and inappropriate behavior in the relationship of misconduct).

APA Ethical Principles Sections 8.01 through 8.15 are pertinent to conducting research and disseminating findings.

###### **XVI. Academic Integrity**

We assume that all members of our clinical area function with the highest regard for academic integrity. The following, however, is provided as a means of avoiding incidents that may reflect unfavorably upon the student, the program, and the university.

Academic integrity violations are spelled out in detail in SCampus as well as in the APA Ethical Principles.

These include, but are not limited to: (a) fabrication of data; (b) plagiarism; (c) the acquisition of papers or other assignments and representing them as one’s own; and (d) cheating on an examination. Violations of academic integrity can result in dismissal.

Additional issues that raise questions of academic integrity include: (a) submitting a paper in fulfillment of a class or research requirement if that paper, or one similar to it, was submitted in fulfillment of any other requirement; and (b) duplicate publication or republishing data. If you are uncertain about the boundaries of these issues (and sometimes these boundaries are difficult to define), be sure to seek advice and consultation from your research advisor or other faculty members.

##### **XVII. Student Representation**

Each year level (years 1 through 5+) is invited to select a student representative to attend and participate in our clinical area faculty meetings. These representatives serve as liaisons between faculty and students, bringing student issues to the faculty and reporting to their classes on what happened in the faculty meeting. Any representative who wishes to have a particular issue addressed in the faculty meeting should contact the DCT prior to the meeting so that the issue can be put on the agenda. It is important that the student representatives are available at the time slotted for the clinical faculty meetings. If they are not available another representative should be selected.

Student assistance and input are welcome and needed during our admissions process although, for the protection of the individuals under consideration, the admissions folders and formal admissions discussions are limited to faculty. During admissions, it is very helpful if students talk (by phone or in person) with prospective applicants about their experiences in the program and help them feel welcome during their visits to campus. Students will be asked to interview applicants, especially if the applicant is interested in working in the same research lab. Students, usually in the earlier years, host applicants by having them stay with them one or two nights, or by taking them to and from campus. Not all students are in a position to serve as hosts. Moreover students are not required to host applicants, to cook them meals, or to take them to and from the airport. All students are encouraged, however, to interact with applicants as they are in a unique position to inform them of the program as well as evaluate them at the same time.

Student involvement and input also are encouraged when we are conducting faculty recruitment in the clinical area. Students are expected to attend job talks. In addition, all faculty applicants will have time set aside in their interview schedules to talk, in private, with students. Following a candidate’s visit, we will ask the student representatives to poll students as to their opinions, and present the students’ feedback at a faculty meeting. Formal discussion among faculty, however, and the final vote will be taken without the students present.

Student participation and representation in the department is encouraged, e.g., participation in the Graduate Association for Students in Psychology (GASP).

**XVIII. Professional Identity and Use of Public Websites**

As students enter the Ph.D. program in clinical science, they need to assume the role of a professional in clinical science and USC communities. One dimension of this is taking care at all times and in all circumstances to maintain the confidentiality of personal and sensitive information related to clients, colleagues, and undergraduate students.

Another dimension is being aware of and careful about personal information posted or statements made on Facebook or any similar site, as well as any statements posted in any public forum. Clients have access to all such sites and the public image conveyed should be one that is appropriate for any client to read. In addition, whether on or off campus, any on-line behavior with another member of the USC community must be viewed with the same respect and recognition of professional boundaries as any face-to-face encounter. Particular care should be exercised in graduate student-undergraduate student on-line communications. Having any member of the USC community as a Facebook friend subjects your postings to public access and scrutiny and potentially subjects your posting to the USC harassment standards.

**XIX. Students’ Financial Support and Financial Obligations**

USC College requires that admission letters include an assurance of 5 years of financial support. The faculty recognizes the importance of financial support so that students devote themselves fully to their graduate training without feeling pressured to obtain employment unrelated to psychology. Several types of financial support are offered through faculty, department, or university resources: teaching assistantships, research assistantships, graduate school fellowships, and training grant traineeships. In addition, there are several types of support that students can generate on their own, or with the assistance of the faculty, for example, NIMH and NSF pre-doctoral awards, stipends from private granting agencies, research assistantships outside the department, etc. All support is contingent upon being a student in good standing in the program, i.e., maintaining at least the minimal enrollment in coursework and maintaining academic standards. In addition, continuance of support as a research assistant or teaching assistant is contingent upon professional and competent performance in those positions.

The source of students’ financial support varies. Some students receive support based on Teaching Assistantships (TAships) and Research Assistantships (RAships) only. TAships and RAships typically require 20 hours per week of work. Other students receive University or external funded fellowships that require no specific form of employment other than that they be engaged in their research. The most frequent form of support includes three years of employment based support (TAship or RAship) and two years of a fellowship without specific responsibilities. Students can request to be on fellowship or TAship for a given year but all such requests need to fit within the overall departmental funding picture and thus are decided at the departmental level. When possible, the fellowship years without specific responsibilities are best taken when the student wants more time to complete research.

In general, students are strongly urged to be active in applying for outside means of support (e.g., their own grant support, research or clinical opportunities off-campus). Although we require at least one semester of being a teaching assistant, other forms of funding may be more consistent with a student’s career goals (e.g., neuropsychological assessment positions with the USC Alzheimer Disease Research Center; independent undergraduate teaching through the Writing Program; TAship with the Joint Educational Project; PSC Clinic Assistant). Students should discuss all such options with their faculty advisor before submitting an application.

Students are strongly encouraged to apply for pre-doctoral research funding through NSF or NIH National Service Research Awards (NSRA http://grants.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm) or more specialized fellowships through professional organizations. Even if the awards do not provide a full year of funding, they can help considerably by providing funding for conducting research. Faculty advisors often know what sources of funding are available for specific areas of research. Applying for such awards requires time, effort, and planning. However, because master’s and dissertation research proposals can be written in a format for the NRSA award, a good part of the work can already be part of the research requirements.

In general, efforts toward obtaining extramural funding are an essential part of establishing an academic career. Applying for funding while in graduate school is likely to make it easier to get funding later on, and grant applications help build a trainee’s skill set and CV in important ways. In addition, faculty look favorably upon students who put forth such efforts to obtaining their own support and may consider this in later funding decisions.

Some funding opportunities include tuition remission whereas others do not. Please consult your advisor and your appointment letter for detailed information about the tuition covered by your funding offer. In general, University RA’s and TA’s come with some tuition remission as do University Fellowships. Private foundation research assistantships may or may not include tuition remission.

With respect to all funding options, students are advised to check with appropriate departmental staff to determine the exact level of support (as this changes from year to year) and the amount of tuition and university fees that might be covered.

**XIX.a. Summer Support**

Some entering support packages (e.g., Provost Fellowships) include summer support but most do not. Other forms of summer support through the College, Department and University vary from year to year. When such support is available, we notify students and encourage them to apply. Students who receive departmental summer support propose to accomplish specific goals (e.g., complete a manuscript or write a fellowship application). The department will evaluate whether the goals were met and this can influence whether a student obtains future departmental funding. By and large, students should be proactive in seeking out summer funding options.



The following serves as an acknowledgement that I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, am aware of the student policies and procedures given to me by USC’s clinical science program.

Specifically, I acknowledge that I am responsible for reading, in its entirety, the Clinical Science Handbook, the Psychology Department Handbook, the PSC Policies and Procedures Manual, and the APA and USC’s ethics codes.

I also understand that I need to complete USC’s training for Human Subjects and HIPAA no later than December 1st of my first year (earlier if contact with research participants requires it), and that I will turn in the forms certifying my completion of these training programs to the Director of the PSC.

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Signature Date

PLEASE TURN THIS FORM IN TO ERIKA QUINLY NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 30.