

Program Philosophy and Model of Training

1. The mission of the Department of Psychology is to acquire, advance, and disseminate knowledge within the Psychological and Biobehavioral Sciences (Appendix B, pages 3-4). The *philosophy and model of training* for the UM program in clinical psychology is a scientist-practitioner model, as elaborated at the Boulder Conference in 1949, with a somewhat greater emphasis on the clinical science component. To facilitate the clinical science component, we use a “mentor model” for research training: applicants are admitted to the program partly by a “match” with the research interests of a specific faculty mentor; mentors closely supervise the research activities of students working in their labs. The UM clinical program prepares students to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field and to practice clinical psychology. Beyond broad and general training in clinical psychology, the program provides training in one of the following areas of focus within clinical psychology: adult, child, pediatric, and health psychology. UM’s clinical program’s philosophy and model of training is compatible with the mission of the University and is appropriate to promote the science and practice of psychology.

Integration of Science and Practice. Following from the program’s philosophy, the educational model and curriculum plan *integrate science and practice* in its two goals: 1) to produce graduates who have the knowledge and skills to produce and disseminate knowledge in clinical science and who understand the interface between science and practice, and 2) to produce graduates who have the knowledge and skills for entry into the practice of clinical psychology with a track-specific area of focus (adult, child, pediatric or health psychology), and who understand and value the importance of a scientific basis to clinical practice (see Table 12 for details). The integration of science and practice takes place through coursework, practicum, and research training.

In **coursework**, required and elective clinical courses in psychopathology, assessment, and intervention emphasize empirical findings that are pertinent to clinical practice, and the literature reviewed in these courses is critiqued from a science perspective. In **practicum** training, all students spend at least two semesters at the Department’s Psychological Services Center (PSC), where they are required to use evidence-based¹ assessments in evaluating clinical cases, and to incorporate evidence-based treatment strategies. Several other advanced practicum sites that are primary external practicum placements, such as the Mailman Center for Child Development, the University of Miami Counseling Center (UMCC), and the Miami VA, are also APA-accredited clinical internships that emphasize the scientific basis of practice.

In **research**, the emphasis is on research that focuses on important clinical issues in psychopathology, assessment, and/or intervention with clinical or clinical health populations. Thus, with the exception of a very rare student whose interests are in animal models, all students engage in clinically relevant research activities (for master’s thesis, dissertation) that involve clinical populations, investigate clinical treatments, and/or have direct implications for clinical practice. As listed in Table 8, dissertation topics of our

¹ We use the term “evidence-based” to include “empirically-supported” (assessments and interventions) as well as other evidence of “best practices” in cases where empirically-supported assessments or interventions are not available.

graduates since 2000 have focused on applied clinical issues, such as cognitive-behavioral interventions for HIV infected individuals; stress management among breast cancer patients; the relationship between peer victimization and adolescent depression; affective dysregulation and bipolar disorder, and so on.

Goals and Competencies of UM Clinical Program

The UM clinical program specifies education and training objectives as they pertain to its goals and competencies. As noted in **1.a** (above), the two interrelated program goals focus on research training and clinical training. Given the space limits of this document, the text below provides a *brief overview* of our plan for training our program goals and competencies, and is supplemented by Table 12, which contains details on how *each of the programs' specific objectives and competencies* are trained and evaluated.

Research training (Goal 1) is accomplished through structured and sequential coursework, readings for Clinical Qualifying Exams, and a structured sequence of research requirements and activities. As noted above (**1.b**), and also in the curriculum plan (below, point **3**), statistics and research methods courses taken in the first year help prepare students for research activities, as will the new seminar for incoming students (PSY 600), and several orientation activities (research ethics workshop; CITI Certification). Advanced courses in statistics and elective seminars that pertain to students' research interests are typically taken later in the program. Readings for the three Clinical Qualifying Exams (*Basic Science and Pathology; Methodology and Assessment; Ethics and Intervention*) cover areas that are relevant to both research and clinical competencies, as well as "broad and general" training in psychology; the reading lists contain both general (Core) as well as track-specific materials (see Appendix F.) Structured research activities include ongoing involvement in a mentor's lab; proposing, writing, and defending a master's thesis and doctoral dissertation; and submitting abstracts for conference presentations and papers for publication. The sequence of these activities is outlined in paragraphs 3 – 5, of section **1.b** (above) (and noted in Table 12).

Clinical training (Goal 2) is accomplished through structured and sequential coursework, readings for Clinical Qualifying Exams, and a structured sequence of practicum requirements and activities. As noted above (**1.b**), and also in the curriculum plan (point **3**), students take an introductory assessment course (PSY 645) and clinical methods course (PSY 657) *before* beginning practicum training. Introductory clinical courses are taken prior to advanced, track-specific ones. All students take courses in assessment, intervention, and psychopathology, both at a general and track-specific level (see curriculum plan in point 3). Qualifying Exams are another way we train clinical competencies, both for clinical psychology in general as well as for track-specific areas of focus; the Qualifying Exams are described in the paragraph immediately above. The structure and sequence of practicum requirements and activities has already been summarized in point **1.b** above (second paragraph.), and follows the rule that more general, closely supervised practicum training precedes more advance and track-specific practicum experiences.

The above goals, objectives, and competencies are consistent with the UM program's philosophy and training model. These goals, objectives, and competencies prepare

students for the entry level of practice in clinical psychology. The program prepares students to be skilled clinical researchers, and clinicians skilled in assessment, intervention, and consultation with respect to the behavioral and psychosocial aspects of mental health and physical health. Moreover, the program prepares its students to have a specific research and clinical focus within clinical psychology, via one of the program tracks.

These goals, objectives, and competencies are consistent with promoting an understanding of professional issues, including ethical, legal, and quality assurance principles. Specific program competencies (listed in Table 12) include a focus on ethical issues in practice and research. Issues pertaining to legal and quality assurance principles, including but not limited to ethical standards for research and practice, and state laws on child abuse reporting and custody evaluations, are incorporated throughout the curriculum (e.g., PSY 600, PSY 657, PSY 645), through required practicum and related case conferences at the PSC, through required readings on the Clinical Qualifying Exams, and other research and practicum activities.