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**MA in Psychology**

**Clinical Concentration**

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**Graduate Student Handbook**

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CHAPTER 1: MISSION STATEMENT

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## MISSION STATEMENT

VISION

* Ethical professionals with the knowledge and skills to apply the principles of evidence-based practices in psychology

MISSION

* To provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to provide ethical and culturally sensitive clinical services, to conduct/consume research, and/or to pursue further graduate study

CORE VALUES

* Provide a training curriculum that is up-to-date and informed by science
* Provide comprehensive training in the three components of evidence-based practices: Best Research Evidence, Client Characteristics and Preferences, and Clinical Expertise
* Provide a solid grounding in clinical and research ethics
* Provide opportunities to apply and practice research and clinical skills under the direct supervision of a university faculty member
* Provide opportunities to further develop research and/or clinical skills through practical experiences in community settings

PROGRAM GOALS

* Prepare students to work as ethical professionals (e.g., as clinicians, behavioral specialists, or research project managers) at the master’s level
* Enhance competitiveness of students seeking admission to doctoral programs

TRAINING GOALS

***Goal 1***: Train scientist practitioners who are knowledgeable and able to apply and integrate the three main components of evidence-based practices in psychology (EBPP): Consume or produce quality research (Best Research Evidence), understand and consider patient preferences and characteristics as they impact clinical decision-making (Patient Preferences and Characteristics), and be knowledgeable of and able to apply best practices (Clinical Expertise)

*Sub-goal 1A*: Demonstrate skill in culturally-sensitive clinical interviewing, assessment, and diagnosis

*Sub-goal 1B*: Demonstrate knowledge of evidence-based treatments and ability to apply skills and techniques associated with those treatments

*Sub-goal 1C*: Develop knowledge of client characteristics that affect assessment and treatment

*Sub-goal 1D*: Demonstrate ability to read and critically evaluate the research literature, as well as to use that literature to guide clinical practice

***Goal 2***: Facilitate students’ knowledge of quantitative research methods and statistics, as well as skill in consuming and disseminating research

*Sub-goal 2A*: Demonstrate knowledge of research design and statistics

*Sub-goal 2B*: Demonstrate ability to read and synthesize the research literature and generate testable hypotheses

*Sub-goal 2C*: Demonstrate ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing

***Goal 3***: Ensure that students adhere to the highest ethical standards when conducting research and clinical practice

*Sub-goal 3A*: Demonstrate knowledge of professional ethics as they apply to clinical practice and state laws pertaining to mental health providers

*Sub-goal 3B*: Demonstrate knowledge of professional ethics as they apply to the conduct of applied research

CHAPTER 2: ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

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## PROGRAM OF STUDY

You will choose between the Researcher and the Practitioner options. Students pursuing either option must complete 48 units of required and elective coursework and a two-term, 500-hour field placement. You may need to take summer courses to meet the program requirements. In order to meet full requirements for licensure at the master’s level, students will need to take 60 credits of coursework (including 12 credits taken over the summer). Each semester, you will be provided with a seat (or permission) code from the program graduate assistant that will allow you to register for courses.

RESEARCHER VS. PRACTITIONER OPTIONS

Researcher Option

This option is recommended for students who plan to pursue doctoral work in psychology (Ph.D.) after completing their master’s degree at Towson University.

If you elect to pursue the Researcher Option, you will work with a faculty member to complete an empirical thesis. You must take a total of 6 units of thesis credits; you may either take PSYC 897 for 6 units in one semester or PSYC 898 for 3 units over the two semesters of your second year of the program. You must also take at least 6 units of elective credits.

Note: You must remain continuously enrolled in a thesis course until all thesis requirements have been completed and must be enrolled in thesis credits during the term in which you plan to graduate. If you have taken all 6 units of thesis credit but have not yet completed the thesis requirements, you must take PSYC 899 (Thesis Continuum) for 1-unit during each subsequent term, excluding summer and winter, until the thesis requirements are complete.

Practitioner Option

This option is recommended for students who plan to pursue master’s level licensure as a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) after graduating from Towson University.

If you elect to pursue the Practitioner Option, you will work with the program director and internship coordinator in order to make a professional case study presentation towards the end of your second year of the program. In addition, you will be required to take Advanced Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy.

See CHAPTER 6 for further details about the researcher and practitioner options.

REQUIRED COURSEWORK

|  |
| --- |
| **FALL SEMESTER: FIRST YEAR** |
| PSYC 612 | Diagnostic Interviewing and Assessment | 3 |
| PSYC 631 | Advanced Abnormal Psychology | 3 |
| PSYC 687 | Advanced Experimental Design I | 3 |
| PSYC 665 | Psychotherapy and Behavior Change I | 3 |
| **SPRING SEMESTER: FIRST YEAR** |
| PSYC 632 | Advanced Child Psychopathology | 3 |
| PSYC 688 | Advanced Experimental Design II | 3 |
| PSYC 666 | Psychotherapy and Behavior Change II | 3 |
| PSYC 790 | Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues in Psychology | 3 |
| **FALL SEMESTER: SECOND YEAR** |
| PSYC 755 | Cognitive Therapy I | 3 |
| PSYC 624 | Multicultural Issues in Clinical Psychology | 3 |
| PSYC 697 | Practicum in Clinical Psychology | 3 |
| SSPRING SEMESTER: SECOND YEAR |
| PSYC 797 | Internship in Clinical Psychology | 3 |
| ***Researcher Option***PSYC 897/898 Psychology Thesis**6 units of electives** (can be taken at any time, but most likely in Fall and Spring of Second Year, plus summer or winter terms) |
| ***Practitioner Option***PSYC 730 Advanced Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy**9 units of electives** (can be taken at any time, but most likely Fall and Spring of Second year, plus summer and winter terms – note that all LCPC elective courses count as electives for the master’s degree) |

**Notes**:

* All students have the opportunity to take one or more electives over the summer to reduce the workload during the second year. You may choose to take an optional 1 unit of PSYC 697 (Practicum in Psychology) over the Winter term. This option is available so that the hours accrued at the field placement during the Winter term can be counted toward the total hours required for LCPC licensure (i.e., hours may only be counted toward the total hours required for licensure IF the student is enrolled in a practicum or internship course).
* In rare instances, students may wish to make a request of modification to the program of study. The procedures for requesting a modification to the degree plan can be found in this chapter in the “CHANGES TO THE PROGRAM OF STUDY” CHAPTER.

ELECTIVES

See APPROVING ELECTIVE CREDITS, below, for the procedure for getting elective courses approved, as well as the procedure for transferring elective credits from another institution.

Between 6 and 9 units of courses are elected by the student from within or outside the field of psychology.

Only graduate level (i.e., 500 level and above) courses count as elective credit. Please note that students may not have more than **three**, 500-level courses count toward their degree.

Elective coursework should be consistent with your personal and/or professional interests and must be approved in writing by the program director.

If you want to work with children, you are required to take child-oriented coursework (e.g., Child Psychotherapy) to satisfy some or all of the elective requirements.

FIELD PLACEMENT REQUIREMENT

The practicum and internship carry with them a residency requirement of two terms. You must be available to complete a 16-hour per week placement in a clinical or research setting. You must obtain a grade of “B” or higher in the two courses you will take while completing your internship, Practicum in Clinical Psychology (PSYC 697) and Internship in Clinical Psychology (PSYC797). If you earn a grade lower than “B” in either course, you may repeat the entire sequence no more than one time. Failure to earn a “B” or higher in both courses will result in dismissal from the program.

CHANGES TO THE PROGRAM OF STUDY

In very rare instances, there may be a reason to change the program of study. If you want to request a change in the program of study, you must follow the procedure below:

* Schedule a meeting with the program director
* Be prepared to provide a rationale for why the change to the program of study is necessary/beneficial
* Develop an alternate plan using the “Revised Study Plan” form included as an appendix in this handbook. Both you and the program director will sign the revised plan.

*The following courses cannot be replaced with alternate courses*:

* Psyc 612 Diagnostic Interviewing and Assessment
* Psyc 665 Psychotherapy and Behavior Change I
* Psyc 666 Psychotherapy and Behavior Change II
* Psyc 631 Advanced Abnormal Psychology
* Psyc 632 Advanced Child Psychopathology
* Psyc 790 Legal and Professional Issues
* Psyc 697 Practicum in Clinical Psychology
* Psyc 797 Internship in Clinical Psychology

 If you are planning to pursue LCPC licensure upon graduation (and have no intention of pursuing doctoral training in the future), you may request to take either (a) PSYC 615 (Introduction to Research Methods in Counseling) through the Counseling Psychology concentration and an additional 3 units of elective credit in lieu of both PSYC 687 and 688 (Advanced Experimental Design I and II) OR (b) PSYC 687 plus an additional 3 units of elective credit in Lieu of PSYC 688. The request must be no later than the end of the first semester of the first year of study. It should be noted that a number of extenuating circumstances may prevent this request from being granted including, but not limited to, the following:

* Concerns over insufficient enrollment in PSYC 687 and 688 if the exception is granted (i.e., fewer than 12 students will be enrolled)
* Lack of space available in PSYC 615 (this course is offered through the Counseling concentration; the Counseling concentration program director is the only one with the authority to grant a seat code to students on a space available basis). You should obtain permission to take the course from the Counseling concentration program director before making the request for an exception to the program of study
* Other unforeseen circumstances.

You will be given a copy of the signed revised study plan; the original will be maintained in your permanent file. At the time that you apply for graduation, the revised study plan will be submitted to the graduate school, along with the graduation clearance form. You must understand that this revised study plan represents a contract between you and the program director. In order to be cleared for graduation, you must meet all requirements outlined in the revised study plan.

DEGREE PROGRESS REPORT

You may use the Academic Requirements function in PeopleSoft (accessed through the My TU website) to track your progress in the program and to determine whether you are on track to graduate on time and/or have met all the requirements for graduation. Academic Requirements can be found by selecting <self-service> once logged into your My TU account, then selecting <student center>. Follow the link <Academic Requirements> in the menu on the left hand side of the Student Center screen in Peoplesoft. The academic requirements page describes the requirements for graduation (i.e., required coursework; electives; thesis credits) and lists the courses that are completed that meet those requirements.

If the program of study has been modified, the academic requirements page will indicate that you have not met the requirements for graduation. As long as the revisions have been approved in writing by the program director (see CHANGES TO THE PROGRAM OF STUDY), you will still be able to graduate. The program director will provide a copy of the revised program of study to the graduate school with the graduation clearance form, indicating that you have met all of the requirements for graduation.

The system includes a large number of elective courses that will be counted as approved toward graduation. However, the degree progress report may indicate that you have not met all the requirements for graduation if you take a course that has not been approved in the system or you take a course at another institution and transfer the credits in. As long as the program director has documentation that the elective course was approved (see “Approving Electives”), and you have met all other program requirements, you will be cleared for graduation.

Note: It is your responsibility to ensure that any elective courses and/or revisions to the study plan are approved and documented in writing so that there are no delays in processing your application to graduate from the program. Any questions regarding required or elective coursework, thesis credits, the program of study, or readiness for graduation should be directed to the graduate program director as soon as possible.

**GRADING FOR GRADUATE COURSES**

The master’s program in clinical psychology has adopted the following percentage ranges in determining grades within all courses taught in the program:

A = 94 – 100%

A- = 90 – 93.9%

B+ = 86 – 89.9%

B = 80 – 85.9%

 C = 70 – 79.9%

 F = below 70%

 Note: The graduate school does not assign the following grades: B-, C+, C-, D+, D, or D-

 Note: The above percentages only apply to courses within the master’s in clinical psychology program. If you take a course in another program at Towson University, the grade percentage may be different.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to be eligible to graduate from the program, you must meet the following criteria:

* Completion of all required and elective coursework
* For Researcher Option students, the thesis must have been approved by the thesis committee and the graduate school. For Practitioner Option students, the case presentation must be completed before the end of the 2nd year of the program and must be approved as satisfactory by the Program Director.
* 3.0 minimum cumulative GPA
* No more than three 500-level courses may be counted toward the degree; no undergraduate courses (i.e., 400-level or below) may be counted toward the degree
* No more than two “C” grades may be counted toward the degree
* If students earn a grade of “C” or below in more than two courses, they will be permitted to retake those courses no more than one time.
* After retaking the course, if the student continues to have a grade of “C” or lower, s/he will not be permitted to graduate
* As noted in the Graduate Catalog: “All students must obtain the grade of “B” or higher in PSYC 697 (Practicum in Clinical Psychology) and PSYC 797 (Internship in Clinical Psychology). Students earning a grade lower than “B” in either course may repeat the entire sequence no more than one time. Failure to earn a “B” or higher in both courses will result in dismissal from the program.”
* All degree requirements must be completed within seven years from the first course counting toward the degree (included courses transferred in from another institution)
* Approval of the graduate program director

APPROVING ELECTIVE CREDITS

You should submit a request for elective approval via e-mail to the program director, at least one week before the course is scheduled to begin. If you attempt to obtain verbal approval, you will be directed to make the request in writing via e-mail. You should not enroll in the course until you have received approval, via e-mail, to do so from the program director. In the request, you should include the following information:

* The name and number of the course (e.g., PSYC 697: Special Topics: Child Development),
* Number of credits,
* A brief description of how the course is relevant to the students’ professional goals.

Transferring Elective Credits from Another Institution

If an elective course is to be taken outside of Towson University, you will need to complete a “Transfer Petition Form – Graduate”, in addition to requesting approval for the course. The form can be found at the website below: <http://www.towson.edu/registrar/forms/documents/transfer_petition_form_grad_inac_001.pdf> . The policy regarding credits transferred from another institution is as follows:

* They must only be taken at a regionally accredited institution (e.g., Middle-States Accredited)
* The course must be at the graduate level at the transfer university
* The course cannot already be utilized as a part of a conferred degree at the other university
* The student must have received a grade of at least a “B”
* The course must be taken within the Towson MA in Psychology, Clinical concentration time limit (7 years for master’s/certificates)

To ensure no issues in having the credits transferred, you should provide a course description and a copy of the course syllabus to the program director so that the appropriateness of the course can be evaluated.

Upon completion of the course, you will need to request that an official transcript be sent to the graduate school so that credit may be granted.

You will receive an e-mail response from the program director indicating whether or not the course has been approved. Students may request approval of more than one course at a time. Approval for classes taught at Towson should take no more than 48 hours. Approval for in-person or online courses being taken at another institution may take up to one week.

## ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The academic integrity policy can be found online at the following website: <http://inside.towson.edu/generalcampus/tupolicies/documents/03-01.00%20Student%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy.pdf>

In an effort to highlight critical elements of the policy, we have reproduced them, verbatim, here:

* “…academic evaluation includes a judgment that the student’s work is free from academic dishonesty of any type”
* “students are obligated not to violate the basic standards of integrity”
* Plagiarism - presenting work, products, ideas, words, or data of another as one’s own is plagiarism. Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever:
	+ one quotes another person’s actual words or replicates all or part of another’s product. This includes all information gleaned from any source, including the Internet.
	+ one uses another person’s ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one’s own words.
	+ one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials.

Because expectations about academic assignments vary among disciplines and instructors, students should consult with their instructors about any special requirements related to citation.

In addition to oral or written work, plagiarism may also involve using, without permission and or acknowledgement, internet websites, computer programs or files, research designs, ideas and images, charts and graphs, photographs, creative works, and other types of information that belong to another.

Verbatim statements must be enclosed by quotation marks, or set off from regular text as indented extracts, with full citation.

Multiple Submissions - submitting substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without authorization of the instructor(s). What constitutes a “substantial portion” of the same work is determined solely by the university.

Some Examples: Submitting the same or substantially the same work for credit in more than one course without prior permission of the instructor. Building upon or reworking prior work is acceptable with permission of the instructor.

Proper Citations

Although each faculty member may have different requirements, in general we expect you to use APA style for citations. Because ignorance of APA style will not excuse improper citation, you are encouraged to purchase the most current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

*A few key issues to remember:*

* paraphrasing does NOT mean changing only two or three words
* It is better to over-cite and learn to cut down than to under-cite
* Keep the use of direct citations to a minimum
* Overusing direct citations implies either that you did not understand the text or that you did not take the time to understand and synthesize the information
* Incorrect citation may result in a drop in grade
* Incorrect citation is no excuse vis a vis plagiarism

Penalties for Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty

The penalties that may be assessed by a faculty member for a course-related violation may include the following:

* revision of the work in question and/or completion of alternative work, with or without a grade reduction;
* reduced grade (including “F” or zero) for the assignment;
* reduced grade (including “F”) for the entire course.

Appealing Grades or Allegations of Academic Dishonesty

If you disagree with an assigned grade or with an allegation of academic dishonesty, you have the right to appeal. The detailed procedure for appealing grades/ charges of academic dishonesty can be found at the following website: <http://www.towson.edu/cla/pdf/appealguidelines_cla_rev_030212.pdf>

Briefly, you must appeal to the following people in the order specified. You must receive a response at one level before you may appeal to the next higher level.

* To the professor assigning the grade/making the allegation in person.
* To the professor assigning the grade/making the allegation in writing; the professor must respond in writing
* To the graduate program director (or the department chair if the professor is the program director) in writing; the program director or chair must respond in writing to the appeal
* To the Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts in writing
* To the Graduate Studies Committee in writing, whose decision is final.

Appeals that do not follow this procedure will be returned to the student. Grade appeals must be made within one year. The timeframe for appealing charges of academic dishonesty are outlined in the Academic Integrity policy which can be found at the following website: <http://inside.towson.edu/generalcampus/tupolicies/documents/03-01.00%20Student%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy.pdf>

READING

You may be required to purchase several textbooks for each class. You may also be assigned journal articles to read that are on reserve at the library. Additionally, you may be provided a list of articles and be required to obtain them for yourself from the library. In general, you should expect to be doing a lot of reading. Readings are assigned to foster knowledge, as well as to inspire class discussion. In fact, many of your classes may be discussion based; if you have not read for class, you will not be able to participate (see CLASS PARTICIPATION, below).

Please note that you may be expected to read more material than may be discussed in class. Readings are carefully selected by professors to enhance your educational and professional development. Moreover, one goal of the program is to help you develop the ability to learn independently; by reading all assigned materials (and by taking responsibility for bringing up for discussion information that you found interesting or did not understand), you are learning this very important professional skill. Just because a reading is not discussed in class does not mean it is unimportant and therefore should be removed from course expectations. Rather, you should be aware that you will be held responsible for information from all readings, whether discussed in class or not, on quizzes, exams, essays, etc.

*A few key issues to keep in mind:*

* It’s okay if you don’t understand the material – that is what class is for
* Take notes on what you read
* Jot down questions/comments you generate during reading
* If you have a question – someone else will too
* If you don’t ask – we assume you get it and will move on….
* i.e. you are responsible for your education

CLASS ATTENDANCE

It is our belief that graduate school should be your highest priority. As such, we expect that, except in extenuating circumstances, you will attend all scheduled classes and will arrive on time. However, see the SECTION on ***SELF-CARE***, in **CHAPTER 3** for exceptions to this policy. If you expect to be late or must miss a class, be sure to inform the professor as soon as possible, either by texting a classmate or through a telephone call or e-mail to the professor.

Classes Scheduled During Finals Week

*University policy states the following*: “In courses that do not lend themselves to final examinations (such as seminars and colloquia) faculty members *must* (emphasis added) meet their classes during the time scheduled for the examination. Please note, in particular, that ALL courses are required to meet during the specific period reserved for the final exam in that course. Having papers turned in at this time is fine as part of a meeting that extends during a significant part of the class session. Having papers turned in elsewhere, or simply dropped off with no collective class meeting during the class period, does not meet the stipulations of faculty policy.”

Faculty have the right to penalize students for not attending any classes scheduled during finals week. As such, please be sure to familiarize yourself with the class schedule during finals week (as the date/time of your class may be different than its scheduled time during the regular semester) and make your travel plans accordingly.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Unlike undergraduate courses, graduate courses often involve a great deal of discussion, as well as in-class experiential exercises and role plays. Some professors actually assign a grade for participation which may be used in calculating your final grade. Thus, you must come to class prepared so that you may participate in class discussions and exercises.

Class Discussions

The content and focus of discussions vary considerably from class to class, but are likely to focus on some or all of the following:

* Assigned readings
* Questions you have
* Points of contention\*
* New ideas
* Problem solving

\* We encourage students to express (as appropriate… see ***Sharing Personal Information***) differing points of view regarding class material. However, these perspectives should be presented in a respectful and appropriate manner. You should also be aware that faculty reserve the right to end such discussions for any number of reasons (i.e., limited time; discussion is becoming too emotionally charged; etc,).

Experiential Exercises

Because the purpose of many classes is to foster the development and mastery of clinical skills (e.g., interviewing, assessment), we may also spend time practicing techniques either in mock role plays with fellow classmates or with practice clients recruited through the subject pool. Again, you should always be aware of what is needed for these exercises and come prepared for them.

Sharing Personal Information

Sometimes class discussions or exercises may trigger personal issues or concerns. It is useful to have some guidelines regarding when it is, or is not, appropriate to share personal information.

*When sharing personal information is okay*…

* When you are learning new techniques
* When examples are needed to demonstrate a point/technique/theory

*When it is NOT okay…*

* I think my boyfriend has bi-polar….
* I am feeling this.. do you think I have…. (*i.e., we do not do therapy nor will we diagnose students – we can listen and refer. Do this in private. Class is not therapy*.)
* In intake interviews, assessments, or therapy sessions with practice clients (this circumstance will be discussed in more detail in class)

*Please consider the following policy regarding class assignments, in-class experiential exercises, and discussions in which personal information may be shared*:

For some assignments/ in-class exercises/ or discussions, you may be asked to use yourself or your experiences as examples. Please note that you are neither required nor encouraged to self-disclose uncomfortable personal details. In such situations, you should be careful to select an issue that you are willing to share with the professor or other class members. You may also choose an issue that someone close to you is dealing with if that is more comfortable. While it would be beneficial if your example were suitable to share, you are not required to share anything in class or through assignments that would make you uncomfortable. Your decision NOT to share overly personal information/ experiences is considered appropriate self-care and will in NO WAY impact your grade.

Sometimes, students elect to share an experience only to discover after the fact that it is more emotionally charged than originally thought. In this case, we ask that all students be respectful of one another’s feelings and dignity by avoiding making insensitive or belittling comments and by respecting one another’s privacy. What is discussed in class stays in class; in other words, any personal experiences shared in class MAY NOT be discussed with anyone outside of the class. Of course, you may discuss your feelings about what occurred in class with a mentor, advisor, or partner; but the details and content of the discussion should remain confidential. This is good practice for your clinical work, as the APA ethical principles regarding confidentiality and privacy prohibits you from sharing information discussed in clinical and research sessions with anyone not involved with that clinical case or research project. This prohibition includes family, friends, and romantic partners.

WRITING

Like reading, writing is emphasized in this program and you will be expected to do a considerable amount of writing which will be evaluated. We believe that writing is a critical skill, regardless of your career aspirations. Excellent writing skills help you to present yourself in a favorable light with potential employers and doctoral programs. Moreover, excellent writing skills are the foundation of professional success.

A portion of your grade for written assignments will be based on the quality of your writing (see “Criteria for Grading Writing Quality”, below). To the extent possible, we will provide constructive feedback that can be used to improve your writing skills. However, you may have issues with your writing that we do not have the skill or the time to address. If this is the case, we will refer you to the Writing Center on campus. We realize that this feedback may be difficult to hear; it may be the first time that anyone has told you that you have issues with your writing. Please be aware that this is not intended as criticism, but rather as constructive feedback. However, we do expect you to follow through with this referral. It has been our experience that students who follow through with the referral to the Writing Center make dramatic improvements in their writing, which is reflected in their grades.

Criteria for Grading Writing Quality

*In general, writing quality is graded on the following dimensions*:

* *Grammar* 🡪 Does the student use proper sentence structure and appropriate grammar?
* *Clarity* 🡪 Can I read a sentence/paragraph once and understand it?
* *Organization* 🡪 Does your writing tell a story; does it follow a logical sequence?
* *Succinctness* 🡪 Have you made your point using as few words as possible?
* *Excessive verbiage* 🡪 lack of clarity
* *Formality* 🡪 Do you write the way you talk to your friends or to a professional colleague? (Do not confuse informality and simplicity)
* *Adherence to directions* (including APA style)
* Etc.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

In addition to writing effectively, you need to be able to be able to communicate in oral forms as well. During the course of your graduate training, as well as your career, you may present research at conferences, give lectures to students or presentations to colleagues, and be required to summarize clinical cases, treatment options, etc. During the course of your training, you are likely to be required to give at least one oral presentation in each of your classes. Again, we will provide you with constructive feedback that is designed to help you become a more effective presenter.

Criteria for Grading Oral Presentations

* *Adherence to time limits* 🡪 This is important; you often have a limited amount of time to make your case
* *Pacing* 🡪 Was the pace even throughout? Did you talk slowly and clearly?
* *Key info/ Content* 🡪 Did you impart the critical information? Did you cover the necessary material?
* *Q&A* 🡪 Could you answer reasonable questions? That is, did you have a thorough grasp of the topic area?
* *Etc.*

WORKING COOPERATIVELY AS A GROUP

The requirement to work effectively as a member of a group is a critical skill. Many employers and graduate schools ask references to comment not only on a student’s ability to work independently, but also on his/her ability to work cooperatively with others. During your time here, you will be required to work in pairs, small groups, large groups, and as a cohort. Your ability to work with others will be observed and evaluated.

When assigning group work, we fully expect all members of the group to expend an equal amount of effort. Faculty reserve the right to reduce the grade, relative to the overall group grade, of anyone found to be slacking on a group project. If you are concerned that a student with whom you are working is slacking, please speak with the course instructor AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. DO NOT WAIT until the assignment is complete, or nearly, complete, as it will not be possible for the professor to remediate the problem at that point.

Working Cooperatively In and Outside the Classroom

Your involvement and participation in class also reflects your ability to function effectively within a group. In general, we do not expect you to like every member of your cohort. However, we do expect you to make an effort to get along with everyone and to treat both faculty and other students with respect, both in and outside of the classroom. Inappropriate behavior is defined at the discretion of the program director, other program faculty and/or the University Student Code of Conduct policy and may include, but is not limited to, whispering, snide remarks, eye-rolling, or other disruptive behavior in class, as well as spreading rumors, talking badly about other cohort members or faculty, and in person- or cyber-bullying. If you have an issue with a cohort or faculty member, we encourage you first to discuss it with him/her directly (for more on this issue, see BEHAVIOR, in CHAPTER 3). If the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should then consult with the program director or, if the program director is the problem, with the psychology department chair.

Consequences for violating this policy: For a first offense, YOU will be required to meet with the program director to discuss the behavior. A written note, documenting the issue, will be placed in your academic record. Subsequent or ongoing offenses will be considered a violation of the Code of Conduct and will be subject to any of several penalties, as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

CHAPTER 3: PROFESSIONALISM

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In addition to developing your knowledge, the program also focuses on your professional development and growth. As you will be representing the Towson University Graduate Program in your employment, field placements, and beyond, you should always present yourself in a professional manner. In particular, you should pay careful attention to the following areas.

## APPEARANCE

You should dress professionally and appropriately at all times. When in doubt about how to dress, err on the side of caution; it is better to be over-dressed than to be under-dressed. You can always modify your choice of clothes at a later date. Specifically, while on field placements, you should observe how others at the site dress and use that information as your guide for appropriate attire. As a general rule, however, you should be certain that your clothes are clean and free of holes and stains. While classroom attire can be casual (jeans and t-shirts, etc. are acceptable), we do ask that you not wear any belly shirts, cut-off shorts, low-cut or see-through blouses, or overly short skirts.

## BEHAVIOR

We ask that you are respectful of both faculty and other students. Please make every effort to arrive to class on time; if you are unable to attend class for any reason, please be certain to inform the faculty member as soon as possible. During class, we ask that you put your cell phones on silent or vibrate and please -- NO TEXTING. We realize that you may want to bring laptops to class for the purposes of taking notes, but we do request that you refrain from surfing the web, using Facebook or any other social networking site, answering e-mails, or engaging in any other non-course-related behavior that may be distracting to faculty or other students.

You may wish to bring food to class because classes are often scheduled during normal meal times. You should check with each professor to determine his/her policy regarding eating in class. If the professor does not object, you should try to avoid eating overly noisy (i.e., crunchy) snacks and refrain from bringing food in crinkly bags. As some students may suffer from serious food-related allergies, it is best that you check with your fellow classmates before you bring food made with peanuts or tree nuts.

Another aspect of professional behavior involves learning how to advocate for yourself, as well as how to handle conflict with colleagues and supervisors. There may be times when you believe that you or someone else in your cohort has been treated unfairly, or you may vehemently disagree with a grade or evaluation you have received. In such instances, you should use the following guidelines in order to address the issue:

Begin by addressing the issue directly with the faculty member or student involved. Be respectful, but state your concerns clearly and concisely. You should be prepared to listen to the other person’s point of view; they may have a legitimate reason for their behavior. You should also be prepared to compromise – do not expect that you will get exactly what you want.

If, however, the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction through direct discussion with the person involved, you may then address the issue with the program director. In discussing the issue with the program director, please be sure to describe the concern in detail and what you have done to address the concern.

If the issue is with the program director (and direct discussion with him/her has not resolved it to your satisfaction) or if you feel that the program director has not adequately addressed the issue, you should address your concern to the Chair of the psychology department. In this instance, you should follow the university Policy regarding Appeals, Petitions and Grievances in the Towson University Graduate. In particular, the grievance will have to be submitted in writing.

## E-MAILING PROFESSORS OR OTHER PROFESSIONALS

Electronic mail is often a preferred method of contact today. It can be easier to get in touch with professors or other professionals via e-mail than via telephone. Be aware that the impression you make electronically is just as important as the impression you make over the phone or in person. Use the following to guide your interactions with faculty and other professionals:

When contacting someone, do some research as to what the appropriate from of address is: If the individual has a PhD, PsyD, MD, or ODD – refer to them as “Doctor.” A professional with a Master’s degree (MA, MS, MSW, MCSW, MFT, etc.) is referred to as “Mr.” or “Ms.” If you have no clue, begin the email generically: “Dear Jane Smith.”

*Always be professional and deferential at first*. An example is e-mailing someone to request a copy of a measure they used in a study. Do not e-mail and assume you can get a copy of it…

*Not Recommended:*

Dear Joe, I would really like to use the XXX in my thesis. Could you send me a copy? Thanks!

*Better*:

Dear Dr. Smith:

I recently read your article on XXX (Journal of Abnormal Psychology) and was very interested in the measure you developed for this study. I am currently a graduate student at Towson University and am working with Dr. Deborah Smith. I am planning my master’s thesis and am currently planning on investigating XXXYXXXZZ. I would be very interested in using your measure, as it will tap into the variable I am hoping to study.

I was hoping that you might be able to direct me to where I could obtain this measure, or, if you would be willing to send me a copy of it. I will be happy to share my findings with you.

Thank you very much for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John Doe

**PLEASE NOTE:**

* Do not use overly informal or abbreviated text in an e-mail (i.e., if you would text it to a friend, do not e-mail it to a professor).
* **Do not respond immediately to an e-mail that has upset you. Take a break, re-read it and then draft a response.**
* When in doubt about the tone of an email you are about to send – ask someone else to read it first.

When you receive an e-mail from a professor or other professional, it is important to respond as promptly as possible (preferably within 24 hours). Please note the following additional guidelines for responding to e-mails.

If you are unable to respond to an e-mail request within 24 hours, (e.g., you are on vacation without access to e-mail), it would be advisable to create an out-of-office reply that indicates how long you will be unavailable and when the correspondent can expect a response.

If you need more than 24 hours to formulate a response, (e.g., you need to look up information), you should send a brief e-mail letting the person know when they can expect a more detailed response.

If a detailed response is not required, it is still advisable to send a brief response letting the individual know that you have received their e-mail; something as brief as “I got it, thanks!” would be sufficient.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

PRESENTATION OF SELF

Many of you use social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. It is important that you recognize that, depending on your security settings, information that you post on your Facebook or other social media page MAY NOT be private. There have been several stories in the news about people who were either fired, or lost job offers, because of photos, videos, etc. that they posted on social media sites. You should also recognize that what you post on social media sites does not only reflect on you. Because many of you list your academic institutions and degrees in your profiles, what you post may also reflect on the program and the university.

While we have no problem with your use of social media, we would like you to keep the following things in mind when posting to these sites:

* Use the strongest security settings that are appropriate. Generally, it would be recommended that you limit access to your posts to your friends only. You probably do not want your field placement supervisor or your practicum clients to have access to photos of you in a bathing suit or videos of you drinking at a bar.
* Please also check security settings multiple times per year, especially after system-wide updates to social media programs, as security settings may be automatically reset to a less secure level.
* Remember that social media is not the only way that information is shared. A friend who has access to your posts may share it with others. Thus, information you post to a social media site can still be circulated to unintended recipients and therefore have unintended consequences.
* When posting to a social media site, it is best to assume that anyone could see it. Thus, if you would not want your boss or grandmother to see it, you probably should not post it to a social media site.

FACULTY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Many of the faculty use social media sites as well. In general, it is not recommended to connect with a faculty member unless invited to do so. This is particularly true for students who are currently matriculated in the program. While some faculty may be open to connecting via social media with students who have graduated from the program, this may not be true for all faculty. Thus, it is best to ask faculty what their policy is about connecting with current and former students via social networking sites.

PROGRAM FACEBOOK PAGE

The MA in Psychology, Clinical Concentration maintains a Facebook page. The page can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/TUClinicalPsych?ref=hl>

*The purpose of the page is to*:

* help maintain contact with alumni;
* recognize the accomplishments of our current and former students;
* allow current and former students to connect and network with one another;
* connect current and former students with potential employers;
* permit alumni to maintain contact with program faculty; and
* market the program.

We ask that all students who have Facebook pages “like” the program page. You are welcome to post information to the page, but please be mindful of the audience. If your post is likely to be considered offensive to members of our audience, the post will be removed.

## ATTITUDE

We expect you to come to every class with a positive attitude and an enthusiasm for learning. We expect you to be respectful of other student’s privacy and confidentiality. We also expect you to adhere to local, state, and federal laws concerning confidentiality.

Throughout the course of your academic studies, we will be required to provide you with feedback around a variety of issues (i.e., class performance; professionalism; etc.). We ask that you be open to this feedback; it is not intended as criticism, but rather as a vehicle to foster personal and professional growth. You will be evaluated with regard to your ability to accept and effectively utilize feedback, as this is a critical skill that will be of interest to both potential employers as well as graduate school mentors. You will receive a formal evaluation at the end of your first semester in the program (see MID-YEAR EVALUATION section below) and also at the end of your second year.

## SELF-CARE

Ethical Standard 2.06, Personal Problems and Conflicts, of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2002), states the following:

“(a) Psychologists refrain from initiating an activity when they know or should know that there is a substantial likelihood that their personal problems will prevent them from performing their work-related activities in a competent manner.

(b) When psychologists become aware of personal problems that may interfere with their performing work-related duties adequately, they take appropriate measures, such as obtaining professional consultation or assistance, and determine whether they should limit, suspend, or terminate their work-related duties.” (p. 5)

In brief, this principle implies that taking care of yourself and recognizing your mental state and areas of sensitivity are your ethical responsibility. If you are ill or have had a recent loss, you are unlikely to be able to be fully present for your client; this would be considered an ethical violation.

Because we consider graduate training an opportunity for you to practice professional skills, we feel that learning to recognize when you need to take a break, and actually acting on that recognition, are critical skills that we want to foster. Thus, during the course of your graduate studies you may become ill, experience a loss, or experience some other emotionally challenging event which may require you to make a decision about whether or not to attend a class. Because you are likely to impact the health of the other students and faculty or may serve as a distraction to others, we encourage you to stay home, even if this may ultimately result in a grade reduction. Remember, “B” = MA; that is, you do not need to have all “A’s” to be considered successful in graduate school.

In addition, during class discussions or practice client sessions, issues or situations may arise that may trigger an emotional reaction that you have difficulty controlling or may make it difficult for you to maintain emotional boundaries. To the extent possible, we will address these issues in supervision. However, we also recommend that if you are aware of such issues, you should consider seeking professional help in dealing with them.

## MID-YEAR EVALUATION

Every first-year student will be evaluated by all program faculty following the first semester of study. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide the program director with a more comprehensive assessment of your performance in the program. In particular, the assessment will be used to provide you with feedback about areas of strength and weakness that can help to foster personal and professional growth, to determine the degree to which you have mastered the course material (independent of course grades), and to assess your readiness to go on practicum/internship. The feedback will become a part of your record and will also be used as the basis for writing letters of recommendation.

You will be rated on the dimensions below using a 5-point scale: A (outstanding); A- (Above Average); B (Average); B- (Below Average); or C (Unacceptable). Faculty are also asked to provide narrative feedback regarding the student in general or to explain any of the ratings provided.

DIMENSIONS ASSESSED IN THE MID-YEAR EVALUATION

* *Intellectual potential* 🡪 the ability to learn and apply new information
* *Mastery of course material* 🡪 the degree to which you have a full understanding of and an ability to apply the skills and knowledge taught in the course
* *Communication skills (oral, written)* 🡪 the degree to which you can express an idea or concept, either orally or in writing, in a clear, concise, and organized manner
* *Professionalism (behavior, appearance, and attitude)* 🡪 the degree to which you are (or will be) able to work effectively in a professional environment
* *Interpersonal skills* 🡪 your ability to interact appropriately and get along effectively with faculty and students in the cohort
* *Ability to accept criticism/feedback* 🡪 the degree to which you are able to graciously accept constructive criticism and use it to improve your performance
* *Emotional maturity* 🡪 the degree to which you demonstrated emotional stability, sensitivity, insight, judgment, and common sense

In addition, faculty will be asked to comment on whether you regularly missed or arrived late to class.

The faculty ratings will be summarized and will be provided to you, anonymously, by the graduate program director in individual meetings scheduled at the beginning of the second semester of study.

CHAPTER 4: PRACTICUM & INTERNSHIP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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##  GENERAL POLICIES

You are required to complete a 500-hour (16 to 20 hours per week) field placement between August and May of your 2nd year in the program, which represents the program capstone experience. You may choose to complete a clinical, research, or combined placement. You may elect to work with adults, children, or both. You may complete your field placement experience at a site where clinical students have been before or you may identify a new site. Please keep the following in mind when searching for a field placement:

Any new sites must be approved in writing by the program director before you may accept the placement.

For clinical placements, the appropriate supervisor must be a licensed mental health professional (e.g., LCPC, LCSW-C, Licensed Psychologist, Psychiatrist, etc.). Your supervisor during your internship does not need to be a board approved supervisor. However, please note that all of the hours you will accrue towards licensure after you have completed your master’s program have to be supervised by a board approved supervisor, according to Maryland law. Many of our site supervisors are board approved supervisors. If you choose to complete a clinical field placement where a board approved supervisor is unavailable, you must be careful to ensure that any additional hours accumulated toward licensure are supervised by a board approved supervisor. If you wish to verify if your supervisor is board approved or not, please see the following link: <https://mdbnc.dhmh.md.gov/PCTVerification/supervisionZip.aspx>

For research placements, the appropriate supervisor must be an experienced researcher and/or project coordinator.

*The field placement supervisor must guarantee*:

* You will receive, at minimum, one hour of face-to-face supervision per week. For clinical placements, this must be one consecutive hour of in-person individual supervision. For research placements, while the expectation is one hour of supervision per week, this may come in many forms, including lab meetings, discussion of research ideas, feedback on written work, etc. While meetings may last less than an hour, the expectation is that cumulatively, you will receive an hour of supervision per week. The program director, through discussion with the field placement supervisor, will determine what type of supervision will be appropriate given the nature of the work required.
* You will be able to work a minimum of 16 hours per week (in order to meet the 500-hour requirement).
* You will never be on-site without an appropriate supervisor either present on-site or readily available by telephone for consultation (for clinical placements, this must be a licensed professional).
* You will never be required to go off-site to do in-home therapy or to conduct in-home interviews without either an appropriate licensed supervisor or another experienced staff member OR until you have received adequate training from the site supervisor and are deemed to have achieved a level of competence necessary to do so.
* There are other licensed/appropriate individuals available to provide supervision in the event that the primary supervisor is unavailable.

*In order to be approved to pursue a field placement, you must*:

* Complete all required coursework. Any additional courses that may be required will be determined by the field placement supervisor or program director. You should be certain to check in with the program director to ensure that all coursework requirements have been satisfied.
* Have the placement approved, in writing, by the program director.
* Purchase Professional Liability Insurance from the APA Insurance Trust (APAIT) in the amount of $1,000,000/ incident for up to $3,000,000 (i.e., 3 incidents). In order to purchase your liability insurance, please follow this link: <https://www.trustinsurance.com/Products-Services/Student-Liability>
* Not begin the placement until the program director has approved it and given you permission to do so.
* Meet the requirements for going on practicum/Internship (see ELIGIBILITY TO GO ON PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP, below).

See Appendix for a copy of the letter to be presented to Field Placement supervisors regarding Practicum Requirements

TIMELINE FOR FINDING A FIELD PLACEMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Timeframe** | **Activity** |
| **Nov.-Jan.****Of first Year** | Attend Internship forum and determine type of placement (i.e., research vs. clinical; adult vs. child)Review Internship book (available in LA 1103) to identify potential sites or begin search to identify new sitesSchedule meeting with internship coordinator or program director to discuss type of placement and possible sitesUpdate resume |
| **January** | Contact and apply to potential sites/supervisors; plan to interview with between 3 and 5 sites |
| **Feb. – March** | Complete InterviewsAdvise program director and internship coordinator of progress in obtaining interviews/securing a placement |
| **April** | Select and accept placement Provide program director with information regarding the placement, including contact information for the supervisor, for approvalComplete internship contract with site supervisor and provide a copy to program director and supervisor |
| **May-August** | Determine requirements that must be completed before beginning the placementComplete any orientation/ required paperworkPurchase insurance though APAIT (effective date: first day of semester unless otherwise notified by program director)Provide copy of Memorandum of Insurance to program director and field placement supervisor |

ELIGIBILITY TO GO ON PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP

You should be aware that there is the possibility that you will not be permitted to go on internship when you want to. There are a number of reasons why this may occur:

* You receive consistently low ratings (i.e., below average or unacceptable) across multiple faculty on one or more dimensions of the Mid-Year evaluation
* You have failed to achieve satisfactory grades (i.e., “B” or higher) in key courses.
* There is documented evidence that you are experiencing problems (whether physical, emotional, social or academic) that would interfere with your functioning and/or poses a risk for unethical behavior and/or to the physical, emotional, or other well-being of patients, study participants, and/or university or field placement staff and administrators with whom you will be working. It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and reasons for keeping a student from completing the field placement are at the discretion of the program director in consultation with other program faculty, the department chair, or other appropriate university officials (See CHAPTER 5).
* You are found to be using illicit substances or you fail a drug test that is administered by the field placement site.
* You do not comply with the requirements of the internship course (e.g., purchasing professional liability insurance; completing required training or other orientations; etc.).

In these cases, you will work with the program director to address any deficits so that you may go on internship as soon as possible. You should take responsibility for informing the program director of any personal issues that may interfere with your ability to go on internship or to complete the program in the expected time frame.

CHAPTER 5: ACADEMIC WARNINGS, DISMISSALS, AND POLICIES CONCERNING PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT



## ACADEMIC DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability, such as a learning disability, hearing loss, disabling anxiety, etc., you should register with the Accessibility and Disability Services (ADS) office. Information regarding the ADS office can be found at the following website:

<https://www.towson.edu/accessibility-disability-services/> . The ADS will provide you with documentation outlining the accommodations to which you are entitled. You must provide a copy of this documentation to each faculty member at the beginning of the semester. You must be aware that faculty are not permitted to make accommodations without the proper documentation from the ADS office. It is up to you to determine whether or not you want to take advantage of the accommodations available to you.

## ACADEMIC STANDING

The graduate catalog states the following regarding good academic standing in a graduate degree program:

“Good academic standing in a degree program requires a minimum 3.00 GPA for all courses taken for graduate credit whether or not they are taken for the degree…. A student who is dismissed from a degree program is not eligible to re-enter the same program but may apply to another degree program.”

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Academic Probation

*You will receive a letter of warning and be placed on academic probation in the following instances*:

* Your overall GPA falls below 3.00. You will receive a letter of warning, to be included in your permanent file, and be placed on academic probation. To remain in the program, and come off of academic probation, you must restore your overall GPA to 3.00 or above within 9 units. The courses used to raise the GPA to 3.00 must be courses required in the degree program or approved elective courses.
* You have more than 2 “C” grades on your transcript. To remain in the program, you must retake one or more of the courses for which a “C” was earned and achieve a grade of “B” or better within one year of when the “C” grade was earned. You may only retake courses one time. An extension may be granted, at the discretion of the program director, in extenuating circumstances with documentation (e.g., mental or physical health problem).
* You earn a grade of “F” for any one course. You must retake the course and earn a grade of “B” or better within one year of when the grade of “F” was earned. An extension may be granted, at the discretion of the program director, in extenuating circumstances with documentation (e.g., mental or physical health problem).

Academic Dismissal

*You will be dismissed from the program in the following instances*:

* You fail to restore your overall GPA to 3.00 or above within the required timeframe.
* You fail to raise specific course grades from a “C” to at least a “B” within the required timeframe so that there are no more than two courses with “C” grades on the transcript.
* You fail to bring the “F” grade up to a “B” within the required timeframe.
* You earn an overall grade of “F” in either Practicum or Internship. This grade will only be assigned in the event of a serious ethical violation (as defined in the APA Code of Ethics), if you fail to submit required documentation that you have attended the site, or if you fail to return the Mid- or End-of-Year Evaluation. In the latter two instances, the program director will make two attempts to contact you via e-mail to obtain the required documentation. If you fail to respond by the time grades are due, then the grade of “F” will be assigned. You will have up to 6 months after the end of the semester to provide the required documentation in order to have the grade changed from an “F.” However, if submitted after the semester ends, this information must be supplemented with a letter from the field placement supervisor indicating that the documentation is valid.
* You have been placed on Academic Warning by the program director and you violates the terms of the remediation plan.

*Practicum and/or Internship*. You must earn a grade of at least “B” in PSYC 697 Practicum in Clinical Psychology and PSYC 797 Internship in Clinical Psychology to remain in good academic standing and graduate from the program.

If, during the Fall semester, the practicum supervisor assigns a grade of “C” or “F” (i.e., a score below 80 on a 100-point scale) on the Mid-Year Evaluation, regardless of the overall grade for the course, you will be removed from the practicum site and will earn a grade of “C” or “F” (based on the numeric grade assigned by the field placement supervisor) for the course. Depending on the reason for the grade, the student will either be placed on academic probation or be dismissed from the program.

Students who earn a grade of “C” or “F” (i.e., a score below 80 on a 100-point scale) on the End of Year Evaluation for the Spring semester (after successful completion of PSYC 697 in the Fall), will be assigned a grade of “C” or “F” (based on the numeric grade assigned by the field placement supervisor) for the semester. Students may not graduate with a grade of “C” in either PSYC 697 or PSYC 797. As such, you will either be placed on academic probation, with the option to retake the two courses, or will be dismissed from the program depending on the reasons for the assigned grade.

The decision of whether to place you on academic probation or to dismiss you from the program will be based on a discussion with the site supervisor regarding the reason for the grade (e.g., a deficit in your training vs. an ethical violation). The content of that discussion will be documented in writing.

*If the decision is to place you on academic probation, the following will occur*:

* The program director will work with you to develop a plan directed toward remediating the deficits that accounted for the grade (e.g., you may be required to take additional coursework to address any deficits in your training or knowledge). The plan will be in writing; you will be provided with a copy of the plan, signed by you and the program director, and the original will be maintained in your permanent file. The timeframe within which the plan must be completed will be specified by the program director.
* You will be expected to provide documentation that you have adhered fully to the remediation plan before being allowed to retake the practicum/internship sequence.

You may repeat the PSYC 697/797 sequence no more than one time. Failure to earn a “B” or higher in either of the courses the second time they are taken will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

**PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Students are expected to adhere to APA guidelines regarding professional conduct during their time as a graduate student in the master’s program in clinical psychology. We recognize the ADA and Towson University’s policy prohibiting discrimination based on disabilities and respect for student privacy on these matters. At the same time, as noted in the section on **SELF-CARE**, above, the APA ethics code requires that psychologists must refrain from professional activity when their physical or mental health or other circumstances prevents them from performing competently. Physical health problems can include acute (e.g., the flu) or chronic illnesses (e.g., cancer). Mental health problems include, but are not limited to: anxiety, depression, ADHD, or a substance use problem. Other circumstances may include family crisis, recent break-up of a long-term relationship, etc.

You are expected to be aware of when you are sufficiently compromised, such that you cannot perform competently in your classes or your field placements. If you are not self-aware, the issue may be brought to your attention by the program director.

In the event that you become aware of a physical or mental health problem, or other unusual circumstance that prevents you from performing adequately in the program or on your field placement, you should schedule a meeting with the program director to discuss the issue as soon as possible after the issue is identified. In the event that the program director identifies the issue (e.g., you are missing a lot of classes; other faculty have raised concerns; you are disruptive in class, a field placement supervisor has raised a concern about your performance at your internship), the program director will schedule a meeting with you as soon as possible after it has been identified to discuss these concerns.

During this meeting, you will be asked to discuss the issue of concern to the extent that you feel comfortable and so that the program director can help direct you to services needed to address the concern.

Depending on the nature of the problem, the program director and you will develop a plan for how to remedy the problem so that you can continue to be successful in your courses and/or field placement. This plan may include some or all of the following ideas:

* A referral to Accessibility and Disability Services (ADS) to help determine appropriate accommodations for your problem or situation.
* A referral to the Towson University counseling center to help you address the problem (or other medical or mental health care to remediate the problem).
* Taking a medical withdrawal from one or more courses during the semester
* Withdrawing from the field placement. If it is determined that you must withdraw from a field placement, it will need to be done in consultation with the field supervisor and in such a way as to minimize harm to any affected clients. The field supervisor will be provided with only that information which is necessary for him/her to understand why it is necessary for you to withdraw from the placement. You must understand that there is no guarantee that you will be able to pursue the same placement at a later time. However, assuming that the problem is successfully addressed, you will be assisted in finding an alternative field placement so that you may finish the program.

Other elements of the plan may also be included, depending on the nature of the problem (e.g., consultation with a psychiatrist about the need for medication to control ADHD or other symptoms; attendance at a drug and alcohol education program and submission of a drug negative urine specimen).

The timeframe by which the remediation must have been completed will be specified in the plan. In extenuating circumstances, the timeframe may be extended. However, you are responsible for providing documentation that additional time is required for the problem to be sufficiently addressed.

The plan will be documented in writing and signed by both you and the program director. You will receive a copy of the plan and the original will be placed on file with the registrar’s office and in your permanent file, which will be maintained either in the program director’s office or in the locked file room in the Liberal Arts 1103C suite.

Prior to re-enrolling in classes or re-applying for field placements, you must provide the program director with documentation that you have fully adhered to the plan and are fit to return to the program or to pursue a field placement. The documentation will be maintained in your file.

DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM DUE TO PROFESSIONAL IMPAIRMENT

It is the responsibility of the program director to ensure that the students who graduate from Towson’s program are able to perform the duties of a licensed mental health professional both competently and ethically. As such, students may be dismissed from the program if a significant personal problem is identified that compromises the student’s ability to competently provide professional services and the student refuses to adhere, or fails to provide adequate documentation that s/he has adhered, to the remediation plan developed to address this problem within the time-frame specified. In addition, a student may be dismissed from the program if the program director becomes aware of evidence (supported with documentation such as e-mail exchanges from program faculty; behavioral observations; etc.) of social, emotional, and/or behavioral problems that are sufficiently severe that they pose a risk to fellow students, department faculty, community partners, research participants, clients, etc.

As with all dismissal decisions, the nature and extent of the problem will be considered (and consultation sought) before a final decision is made. Assuming the student is open to feedback and willing to take steps to remediate the problem, and the problem identified is not considered sufficiently serious that immediate dismissal is warranted, the student may be placed on warning and given a remediation plan. As noted above, failure to adhere to the remediation plan or to provide documentation requested in the plan will be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Appeals Process

In the event that a personal problem is identified, the program director, in consultation with other program faculty, the department chair (and/or other appropriate agents of the university) will determine whether you are fit to go on or remain at your field placement, participate in classes, or remain in the program. The program director will only share that information which is necessary for the program faculty, department chair (or other agent of the university) to assist the program director in making a final decision. If you disagree with the program director’s decision, you may appeal that decision. You will be required to provide evidence that you are, in fact, physically and mentally fit to participate fully in all relevant program activities.

The appeal should be made in writing. You should first appeal to the graduate program director, to which the program director will respond in writing. If the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should then appeal, in writing (including your letter to the program director and the program director’s written response) to the Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. If the issue is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you should then appeal, in writing, to the Graduate Studies Committee. The decision of the Graduate Studies Committee is final. You must follow this procedure exactly or the appeal will not be considered. The appeal must be submitted within 30 days of the date that the dismissal letter was received.

WARNINGS AND DISMISSALS DUE TO UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Students in the clinical program are expected to demonstrate the highest standard of ethical and professional behavior both in- and outside of the classroom, as well as in the community.

Professional Expectations

You are expected to attend classes and your field placement regularly, arrive on time, be prepared, and be attentive. You are expected to treat other students, faculty and/or field supervisors with respect. You are also expected to behave ethically at all times and should adhere to the APA code of ethics in all of your research and clinical endeavors.

*The following behaviors will not be tolerated*:

* Regular, unexcused late arrivals to class or the field placement: defined as three or more times total across all courses in a given semester. You must provide documentation to excuse any late arrivals in excess of one per course (e.g., receipt from a towing company or auto repair shop to verify car problems). If traffic is an issue, you should plan to leave early to ensure that you arrive to class or your field placement on time. You should inform the professor as soon as possible of the fact that you will be late to class (e.g., by texting a fellow classmate or e-mailing the professor).
* Excessive, unexcused absence. Excessive refers to more than two absences total across all courses or from the field placement in a given semester. You should inform the professor or field placement supervisor as soon as possible that you will not be attending class/ the site. You must provide documentation to excuse the absence.
* You are rude and/or disrespectful towards classmates, program faculty, or field placement staff/supervisors, either via e-mail, text message, social media, in person, on the telephone, or via other communication mediums.
* Your behavior in class is disruptive.
* You are verbally or physically aggressive or make threats (veiled or otherwise) toward other students, faculty, or field placement staff/supervisors, etc.
* You engage in any form of sexual contact with a practice client, field placement client or study participant, an undergraduate student enrolled in a class in which you are a teaching assistant, etc.

Consequences for Violating this Policy

A first violation of the lateness or absence policies will result in a meeting with the program director and a written warning. A plan will be developed to assist you in becoming compliant with the policy. You will be required to have a weekly attendance sheet signed by the faculty of all courses, for the month after the problem is discovered, to be turned into the program director. Subsequent to that month, the program director will periodically check in with faculty to determine whether the issue has been resolved. In the event that the problematic behavior persists, you may be placed on academic probation, not be permitted to pursue a field placement (if it is a first-year student) or be dismissed from the program, depending on the extent of the offense.

If you behave rudely or disrespectfully or are disruptive in class, you will meet with the program director. Depending on the nature and extent of the problem, the consequence for this behavior could involve a verbal warning, written warning, probation due to violating the code of student conduct, or dismissal from the program.

Threats (either veiled or direct) of any kind, as well as physical and verbal aggression, will never be tolerated. Any student who violates this policy will be immediately dismissed from the program.

Minor violations of the ethics code may result in one or more of the following: a verbal or written warning; being required to retake the professional ethics course; being required to postpone the field placement for a year or more; etc. More serious violations (e.g., having a sexual relationship with a research participant, practice client as part of a course, or field placement client; fabricating data; etc.) will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Appeals Process

The decision to apply a sanction or to dismiss a student from the program for a professional or ethical violation will be made by the program director, in consultation with other program faculty, department chair (and/or other appropriate agents of the university). The program director will only share that information which is necessary for the department chair (or other agent of the university) to assist the program director in making a final decision. If you disagree with the decision, you may appeal that decision. The appeal should be made in writing. You must first appeal to the graduate program director, to which the program director will respond in writing. If the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should appeal, in writing and including all documentation from previous appeals, to the Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. If the issue is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you should then appeal to the Graduate Studies Committee. The decision of the Graduate Studies Committee is final. You must follow this procedure exactly or the appeal will not be considered.

## CRIMINAL OFFENSES / SUBSTANCE ABUSE

CRIMINAL OFFENSES

On the graduate school application, you are asked to indicate whether you have been convicted of, received probation before judgment for, or have charges pending against you for a criminal offense, including DUI/DWI, but excluding minor traffic violations. If an applicant answers “yes” to any of these questions, the graduate school will block his/her admission to the program pending an investigation. Once the investigation is complete, the graduate school will either inform the applicant that s/he is unable to be admitted to the program or will remove the block, thereby permitting the program to admit the applicant. Failure to disclose such information on the application is in violation of the student conduct policy and may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

*Some field placements/practicum sites require students to complete a criminal background check. You must be aware of the following*:

* The University will not complete the background check for you. Results of the background check should not be sent to the University or the program director.
* You are responsible for having the background check conducted, as well as any costs involved in conducting the check. You are also responsible for ensuring that the results are submitted to the practicum site.
* You should use Pre-Check (<https://www.precheck.com/> ) or another reputable vendor to complete the background check.
* The field placement site may refuse to provide a practicum to you based on the results of the background check.
* In the event that you are denied a field placement due to prior criminal behavior, this information will be relayed by the practicum supervisor to the program director.
* Depending on whether or not you reported the offense on the application and on the nature of the offense, you may be subject to a sanction, up to, and including, dismissal from the program.
* If the University has been made aware of the offense, but you are still denied a field placement, the program director will assist you in finding an alternate field placement. You should be aware that completion of the field placement may be delayed at least one year.

SUBSTANCE USE

The Towson University Student Code of Conduct prohibits the manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, or controlled substances. Many field placement sites are “drug-free workplaces” and require submission of a drug-free urine specimen prior to beginning the placement.

*You must be aware of the following*:

* The University will not complete the drug test. Results of the drug test should not be sent to the University or the program director.
* You are responsible for having the drug test conducted, as well as any costs incurred. You are also responsible for ensuring that the results are submitted to the practicum site.
* The field placement site may refuse to provide a practicum to you based on the results of the drug test.
* In the event that you are denied a field placement due to a positive or inconclusive drug test, this information will be relayed by the field placement site to the program director.

CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATING THESE POLICIES

*Although the University allows for a variety of different penalties, a first offense will result in the following*:

* You will not be permitted to complete a field placement during the academic year in which a positive drug test was submitted.
* You will be required to complete the 6-week (12 hour) Alcohol and Drug Education and Awareness program and follow any additional recommendations of the Coordinator of Substance Treatment programs at the Towson University Counseling Center (TUCC). You will be required to provide written documentation of successful completion of the program to the program director.
* You will be required to submit the results of a urine drug screen, taken within one day of the first day of your practicum placement, which is negative for all drugs tested.

Subsequent violations of this policy will be met with more serious sanctions up to, and including, dismissal from the program.

Appeals Process

In the event that you are found to have violated the Code of Conduct related to failure to disclose criminal activity or illicit and controlled substances, the program director, in consultation with the department chair, program faculty (and/or other appropriate agents of the university) will determine the appropriate consequence. The program director will only share that information which is necessary for the department chair, program faculty, (or other agent of the university) to assist the program director in making a final decision. If you disagree with the program director’s decision, you may appeal that decision. The appeals process is the same as has been described previously.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH AND PRACTITIONER OPTIONS

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## OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

Consistent with our goal of training scientist-practitioners, who are fully capable of producing high quality clinical research, and/or practitioner-scholars, who are prepared to consume and apply the best research evidence available in their clinical practice, ALL students will be required to complete a project as part of their master’s program, consistent with their professional goals

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

If you are pursuing the Researcher Option, you are required to complete an original, empirical thesis under the direction of a psychology department faculty mentor. If you are pursuing the Practitioner Option, you will make a professional case presentation in which you incorporate research and case material in order to provide a case conceptualization of a client you have worked with during your internship.

RESEARCHER OPTION

The University has specific guidelines regarding the preparation and conduct of theses which can be found at the following link: <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/office/documents/guidelines.pdf&sa=U&ved=0ahUKEwitj6_qufHbAhVSwVkKHfueDEgQFggEMAA&client=internal-uds-cse&cx=005253052272869529049:5m5ztfg8h8s&usg=AOvVaw1Q-tdUYVLruop0GOSXrmx1> . Below is a list of guidelines regarding the conduct of theses that are specifically for students pursuing the Researcher Option in the MA in Psychology, Clinical Concentration. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with both sets of guidelines to ensure your project meets all requirements. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in you having to postpone graduation or not being able to graduate.

Thesis Advisor

The first thing you need to do is find a thesis advisor. While it is ideal if you are linked with an advisor prior to beginning your first semester, this may not have happened. As such, if you do not already have one, plan to meet with the program director as soon as possible during your first semester to identify an appropriate thesis advisor.

Your thesis advisor must be (1) a full-time faculty member at Towson University, (2) a member or associate member of the graduate faculty at Towson University, and (3) a faculty member of the psychology department. The advisor should also have expertise in the area you want to research. Bear in mind that it may not be possible for you to work with your first-choice advisor; it is ultimately up to the faculty member to determine if s/he will be taking on thesis students in a given year, as well as how many students s/he is willing to advise at a time. If your first-choice advisor is unavailable, the program director will work with you to find an appropriate alternative; having said that, you may need to modify your research interests so that they are in line with the interests/expertise of your thesis advisor.

Thesis advisors are expected to be available during the academic year to meet with their thesis advisees. Thesis advisors are expected to give prompt and specific constructive feedback on drafts submitted by their thesis advisees. Please understand that thesis advisors are not obligated to be available during breaks between academic semesters or during the summer, so feedback may take longer at those times.

*A few key issues to keep in mind regarding advising*:

* Advocate for yourself; you need to keep on top of your advisor to make sure you get the help you need.
* Your advisor will likely be working with more than one student. He or she is most likely to respond to students who advocate for themselves, check in, and are prompt with revisions and persistent in requests for meetings and help.
* Seek out as many opportunities to interact with your advisor and/or help with his/her research. The more time you spend with your advisor doing research, the better.
* Keep your advisor in the loop and heed his/her advice

Thesis Timeline

Two years is not a lot of time to get a thesis completed, so it is best that you begin working on your thesis as soon as possible after you begin the program. In some cases, you can begin working with your thesis advisor before you begin your first semester in the program. Below is a sample timeline for conducting a thesis.



**Please note**: This timeline will vary depending on: (a) your thesis advisor; (b) the complexity or your study; (c) whether you will be using an experimental or non-experimental design; and (d) your sample (e.g., the departmental research pool; a clinical sample; infants; etc.).

Research Questions/Designs

The thesis must represent an original research project that will meaningfully contribute to the extant literature. Your research question should be developed as a result of a thorough literature review and regular meetings with your thesis advisor. There are no specific requirements regarding the type of design or method to be used: both experimental and non-experimental designs, as well as quantitative and qualitative methods, are considered appropriate. Thus, while a comprehensive literature review would not meet the requirements for the thesis, a meta-analysis would. Overall, the design and method should be appropriate for answering the research question and should be approved by your thesis advisor and committee.

Thesis Proposal

Once you and your advisor have agreed on an appropriate idea, it is time for you to write a thesis proposal. Thesis proposals must be written in the current version of APA style (exceptions noted below) and contain the following:

* Title page
* Introduction
	+ Brief introduction to the topic that identifies why it’s important.
	+ A road map for what will be covered in your paper.
	+ A thorough integrated review of previous literature on your topic.
	+ Be sure to describe relevant methodology, as well as results of previous studies.
	+ Your literature review should provide a logical basis for your hypothesis.
	+ Your literature review should demonstrate your familiarity with the literature that is relevant to your proposed study.
* Overview of the present study.
	+ Rationale for your study.
	+ Identify the design (e.g., 2 X 2, Between-subjects factorial).
	+ Hypothesis
* Method
	+ Participants or Subjects: number, characteristics, how they will be recruited or obtained.
	+ Procedure: explain, as vividly and specifically as possible and in chronological order, what will happen in the study.
	+ Explain the manipulations and measures in detail.
* Proposed analysis
	+ Describe the statistical analyses you will use to test your hypothesis.
	+ Describe the expected results (a graph may help).
* References
	+ Complete list in APA style.
* Figures (if necessary)
	+ Graph of hypothesized results
* Appendices (if necessary)

**Note**: When describing your proposed study, you should use future tense (e.g., Participants *will* be recruited…).

It is likely that you will need to revise and resubmit several drafts of your thesis proposal before it meets your advisor’s approval. It is your responsibility to revise your own work as much as possible before submitting each draft. To increase the chances that you receive timely feedback on your drafts, be sure to complete requested revisions in a timely manner, address ALL comments (if you do not agree with a comment, make sure to explain why in a comment or footnote), and be mindful of your thesis advisor’s schedule. For example, if your thesis advisor is also a program director, do not wait to begin submitting drafts until the spring semester when admissions is going on; this will likely lead to slower turnaround times than if you were to have gotten drafts to him/her during less busy times of the academic year.

Once your thesis proposal contains all of the above elements and meets your advisor’s approval, you are ready to form a thesis committee and schedule a thesis proposal meeting.

Thesis Committee Composition

A thesis committee is composed of your thesis advisor plus, at least, two additional members. At least two members (including the thesis advisor) of the thesis committee must be TU psychology department faculty; the remaining committee member(s) may be psychology department faculty, may be from other departments/colleges within Towson University, or may be an individual with particularly relevant expertise from outside of Towson University. Any non-TU committee members will need to be approved as graduate faculty before they can serve on your committee. This process can take time (sometimes a month or more). As such, if you want to include a non-TU faculty member on your committee, be sure to take this into account as you develop the timeline for completing your thesis project. The graduate faculty application form can be found at the following link: <https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/office/resources/>

You and your thesis advisor should choose committee members together. In general, you should choose faculty who have relevant knowledge or expertise; for example, if you are planning on conducting complicated statistics, then you should have a committee member who has statistical expertise. You should have the Thesis Committee Approval Form (see the Towson University Office of Graduate Studies Guidelines for Preparing Theses and Dissertations, p. 26, for a copy) signed and submitted to the graduate school before a proposal defense date is set. A copy of the fully executed Thesis Committee Approval Form should be provided to the graduate program director ASAP to be maintained in your permanent file.

Thesis Credits

You must register for 6 units of thesis credit. You may register for either PSYC 897 (6 units) for one semester or PSYC 898 (3 units) for two semesters. To register, you should ask your thesis advisor to set up a CHAPTER of thesis and provide you with a seat code. The program director does not set up thesis courses; they are set up at the request of the thesis advisor. You may only register for thesis credits if you have already defended your thesis proposal or your proposal is complete and you have a firm date scheduled for your proposal defense. If you are pursuing the Researcher Option, and you have registered for thesis credits, you MUST complete your thesis, including defending it and submitting a final draft to the graduate school, before you will be cleared for graduation.

You must be continuously enrolled (during the Fall and Spring semesters) in thesis credits until you have successfully completed your defense. If you do not complete your thesis by the end of the semester in which you are registered for PSYC 897 or the last 3 credits of PSYC 898, you will have to register for a 1-credit thesis continuum course (PSYC 899) in each subsequent semester (not including summer or minimester) until you complete your thesis. However, if you plan to defend your thesis over the summer and graduate in August, you must enroll in a thesis continuum credit during the 10-week summer term.

Thesis Proposal Meeting and Approval

Once your thesis advisor has determined that you are ready to defend your proposal, you should contact your committee members to find a mutually convenient date and time for your defense. You (not your advisor) are responsible for scheduling a room for the defense. In order to schedule a room for your meeting, you should contact Amy Vickers (avickers@towson.edu), the administrative assistant for the Psychology Dept. The room request should be made as soon as possible, but no later than one week before the defense date.

You MUST provide a copy of your proposal and/or final document to your committee (in either electronic or hard copy form, based on committee member preference) A MINIMUM OF TWO WEEKS before your defense date. Alternatively, with the approval of the advisor and ALL committee members, you may circulate the documents less than two weeks in advance. If you do not submit the documents to the committee within the agreed upon time frame, the defense date WILL BE POSTPONED; no exceptions.

While it would be ideal if all committee members could be physically present at the defense, in some circumstances (i.e., you have a non-TU committee member who is unable to travel to TU) it is reasonable to have one or more members join the defense via Skype, Webex, Teleconference, or other remote means. At the thesis proposal meeting, you are expected to provide a brief oral summary of your thesis proposal. Committee members will then ask you questions about your proposal. Questions may focus on your understanding of the literature, the design of your study, recruitment of participants, ethical issues, or the proposed analyses. The main purpose of the proposal meeting is to ensure the success of your project, so it is likely that committee members will suggest that you make changes to improve your study, including, but not limited to, changes in the design, addition of measures, etc.

Resources for Completing your Thesis Research

You may need lab space and other resources to complete your research. While planning your thesis, consult with your thesis advisor to make sure you will have access to all of the resources that you need. If you need to purchase materials for your thesis (e.g., software, animals, animal food), you should consider applying for a Graduate Student Association (GSA) award. For information on GSA research and travel awards, visit the following website: <https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/gsa/>

Data Collection

*Before you may begin collecting data, YOU MUST*:

* …complete an online research ethics training course. Towson University uses CITI Program which can found at the following link: <https://www.citiprogram.org/>. You will need to create an account. If you are completing human subjects research, you need to take the Human Subjects Research (choose biomedical or social, behavioral, and educational depending on the focus of your study) and the Responsible Conduct of Research courses. If you are conducting animal research, you will need to take the Animal Use and Care and the Responsible Conduct of Research courses. You will need to submit a copy of the certificate of completion of the courses to the IRB/IACUC, as well as to your thesis advisor.
* …obtain approval from the appropriate ethics committee. If you are conducting Human Subjects Research, you will need to submit a proposal to the IRB. If you are conducting research with animals, you will need to submit a proposal to the IACUC. Please note, your IRB/IACUC application MUST be co-signed by your faculty mentor/thesis advisor before it is submitted. Because it may take up to 6 weeks for your proposal to be reviewed by the IRB/IACUC (and they may request additional information or that you make changes to your consent form, etc.), you may want to submit your application for review prior to defending your proposal and then submit an addendum with any changes required by your committee after your defense. This will ensure that you can begin data collection as soon as possible after your defense.

**PLEASE NOTE**: ABSOLUTELY NO DATA MAY BE COLLECTED before 1) the thesis proposal has been completed and the project defended and approved by the thesis committee, and 2) the student has received IRB/IACUC approval of the study.

Once your thesis proposal has been approved by your thesis committee and IRB/IACUC, you may carry out your research. You should complete data collection and analyses as described in your thesis proposal. If you need to make changes to your procedures or analyses, you should obtain approval from your thesis advisor who will consult your committee members, if appropriate. Depending on the extent of the changes, you may also need to submit an addendum to the IRB/IACUC.

While it would be ideal if the sample size for your study met or exceeded the sample size you specified in your proposal, it will ultimately be up to the thesis advisor to determine the sample size at which the student may begin analyses and write the thesis. This ensures that students who have been diligent in completing their thesis work in a timely manner, but have been unable to recruit the sample size specified in the proposal, can still defend their theses and graduate on time. It is expected that, if you plan to publish your thesis, you will continue to recruit participants until a sufficiently large sample has been recruited.

Writing the Complete Thesis

The complete thesis should conform to the formatting guidelines published by the TU Office of Graduate Studies (see their website). Where formatting is unspecified by TU, you should follow APA style.

*The complete thesis should include the following*:

* Title page
* Abstract
* Introduction
	+ Brief introduction to the topic that identifies why it’s important.
	+ A road map for what will be covered in your paper.
	+ A thorough integrated review of previous literature on your topic.
	+ Be sure to describe relevant methodology as well as results of previous studies.
	+ Your literature review should provide a logical basis for your hypothesis.
	+ Your literature review should demonstrate your familiarity with the literature that is relevant to your study.
* Overview of the present study.
	+ Rationale for your study.
	+ Identify the design (e.g., 2 X 2, Between-subjects factorial).
	+ Hypotheses
* Method
	+ Participants or Subjects: number, characteristics, how they were recruited or obtained.
	+ Procedure: explain, as vividly and specifically as possible and in chronological order, what happened in the study.
	+ Explain the manipulations and measures in detail.
* Results
	+ Describe the statistical analyses you used to test your hypothesis.
	+ Make sure that any data included in your analyses have been properly cleaned and checked before it is analyzed
	+ Describe the results of each analysis in detail and provide descriptive (e.g., means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (i.e., the values of statistics such as *r*, *F*, or *t* and *p* values).
	+ Tables and/or graphs may be used to supplement the description of the results.
* Discussion
	+ Summarize your findings in layman’s terms
	+ Interpret your results in the context of previous literature.
	+ Discuss the applied and/or theoretical implications of your findings.
	+ Identify limitations of your research and avenues for further research.
* References
	+ Complete list in APA style.
* Appendices (if necessary)

When describing your completed study, you should use past tense (e.g., Participants *were* recruited…). Thus, you may need to go through and change from present to past tense when revising your proposal for inclusion in the final document.

Thesis Defense

Once your thesis advisor has determined that you are ready to defend your project, you will need to contact your committee members to find a mutually convenient time to schedule your thesis defense. Thesis defenses can last anywhere from one to two hours, so schedule a two-hour block of time to ensure that all committee members can be there for the entire meeting. You should provide a complete (either electronic or hard copy, depending on committee member preference) copy of the document AT LEAST TWO weeks in advance of the defense date. Alternatively, with the approval of the advisor and ALL committee members, you may circulate the documents less than two weeks in advance. If you do not submit the documents to the committee within the agreed upon time frame, the defense date WILL BE POSTPONED; no exceptions. You (not your advisor) are responsible for scheduling a room for the defense.

While the thesis proposal is closed (i.e., limited to the student and committee member only), the thesis defense is open to the public (including the entire TU community, as well as your friends and family members). At least ten working days prior to the defense dates, you must complete a copy of the Thesis/Dissertation Defense Announcement form (which can be found in the Towson University Office of Graduate Studies Guidelines for Preparing Theses and Dissertations) and submit it, in either electronic or paper form, to the Office of Graduate Studies. The Office of Graduate Studies will be responsible for posting the Thesis Defense Announcement on the T3 (Towson Tigers Today).

During the defense, you will provide a brief (20 minute) professional presentation (with PowerPoint slides and handouts if appropriate) that summarizes your study. After your presentation, both committee members and other attendees will be given the opportunity to ask questions. After the question and answer session, you, and anyone who is not a member of the committee, will be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates. At this point, the thesis committee will discuss their overall evaluation of the thesis and any revisions that may be needed. Your thesis advisor will take notes and summarize this information for you. If revisions are necessary, the committee will decide if they need to see a revised copy of the thesis before granting approval or, alternatively, if the thesis advisor will be responsible for ensuring that the revisions are made.

Each committee member will complete the Clinical Psychology Thesis Rating Scale as a means of assessing your attainment of program learning goals. The original files will be maintained in your permanent file. You may request a summary of the feedback, in aggregate form only.

Submitting the Final Document to the Graduate School

Once you have successfully defended your thesis and made all revisions required by your committee, you will need to submit a copy of the final document, including a copy of the signed committee approval page, to the graduate school by the deadlines posted in the Towson University Office of Graduate Studies Guidelines for Preparing Theses and Dissertations. The thesis must conform to the Office of Graduate Studies formatting requirements outlined in the Towson University Office of Graduate Studies Guidelines for Preparing Theses and Dissertations and must be submitted by the specified deadline.

**Please note**:

* All theses are required to be submitted to the graduate school electronically; hard copies WILL NOT be accepted.
* The absolute last day that the final document may be submitted to the graduate school is 10 days prior to the official end of the semester (i.e., the last day of finals). If you do NOT meet this deadline, it is likely that you will NOT be able to graduate that semester. If you are not permitted to graduate because you missed this deadline, you will be required to take, and pay for, a thesis continuation credit during the next semester during which you plan to graduate.

Publishing Your Thesis

You should discuss the possibility of publishing your thesis with your advisor as soon as possible. As part of this discussion, you and your advisor should agree on what will be necessary to publish your research, who will complete the additional work, who will be included as authors on a journal submission, and the order of authorship. The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association is a good reference for understanding intellectual property rights.

PRACTITIONER OPTION

Students completing the practitioner option will work with the internship coordinator and program director to make a professional case presentation during the 2nd semester of the 2nd year in the program. These case presentations must be based on a client that the student has worked with during their internship year, preferably for an extended period of time (e.g., at least 5-10 sessions). The following sections provide greater detail on the nature of the presentation, ways for the student to prepare for this presentation, and assessment of the assignment.

Case Presentation

A professional case presentation seeks to integrate case material across multiple sessions of work with a particular client in order to arrive at an overall case conceptualization and in order to summarize and reflect upon a course of treatment with this client. In order to make a good presentation, students need to develop a theoretically-based approach to understanding their client’s dysfunction and show how they used this theory to guide their interventions. In this context, a theory can refer to one of the large, over-arching theoretical approaches within psychotherapy (such as psychodynamic theory, cognitive-behavioral theory or humanistic theory) or it can refer to a more specific evidence-based approach to treatment that was utilized with your client (such as Acceptance-Commitment Therapy or Dialectical-Behavior Therapy). In either case, you will need to explain as part of your case presentation how you used this theoretical approach to understand your client’s presenting concerns and how this theory helped you understand the work you did with your client. In addition, you should provide background information about your theoretical approach as part of your case presentation and also review any research evidence that supports the efficacy of the use of this approach for the type of problems that your client was grappling with.

What Needs to Covered in Your Case Presentation

The following is a brief overview of the sections that should be covered in your case presentation:

1. **Background and presentation information about your client** (make sure to disguise any potentially identifying information about your client) - Should including basic demographic information (age, sex/gender, race, social class, living situation, sexual orientation, etc), information on your client’s developmental background and upbringing, current relationship dynamics, and presenting problem(s). You should also present information on your client’s social and cultural background and consider systemic factors that may be affecting your client’s life and presenting concerns.

2. **Case Conceptualization** – Present the theory-informed approach to treatment utilized with your client. Provide an explanation of the theory and research evidence supporting its efficacy with your client’s problems.

3. **Summary of Treatment** – Provide an integrative overview of how the treatment progressed with your client. How did treatment work initially? How did the treatment change over time? How did treatment end? What was your sense of the amount of progress made by the client during the course of treatment? Who else was involved in the treatment progress (other professionals, family members, partners, etc.)? What factors facilitated or inhibited progress? In this section you should include results of measures that you administered to your client to track their progress in treatment.

4. **Client-Therapist Relationship** – Provide a reflection on the nature of the client-therapist relationship in this case. How would you describe your client’s relationship with you? Did that relationship change over the course of treatment? Provide a description of how you contextualized the relationship dynamics between you and the client based on the theoretical formulation you are using for your case presentation.

5. **Self-Reflection** – Discuss your experience treating this client overall. What strengths did you offer this client? What were ways that you might approach aspects differently if offered a second chance at the same client? What did you learn as a result of conducting this therapy about yourself as a therapist and about your future development as a therapist? Did this case make you more or less inclined to pursue a career as a mental health professional in the future? Why or why not?

Preparation for Case Presentation

Students should begin thinking about their case presentation towards the middle or end of their first semester as an intern (during their 2nd year in the program). At that point, students should meet with their clinical supervisors and begin discussing a client in their case load who would be an appropriate candidate for this presentation. During the 2nd semester of their internship year, students should discuss their case presentation with their clinical supervisor at their internship in order to develop a case conceptualization for their case presentation. They can also make use of the internship coordinator and program director to ask questions of their case presentation and seek consultation, as needed. Actual presentations will be given starting around March of second semester and students will need to turn in an outline of their presentation at least **two weeks** before their presentation is scheduled. The internship coordinator and program director will review students’ outlines and provide any feedback needed to insure that the material covered is sufficiently detailed to meet the guidelines of this assignment.

Assessment of the Case Presentation Assignment

The internship coordinator and program director will provide you a written assessment of your case presentation and determine if you have passed the assignment. Successful completion of this assignment will be based on the following factors:

* Extent to which you conducted yourself professionally during the preparation of the presentation, including meeting in a timely way with the clinical supervisor to develop the case conceptualization and updating the internship coordinator over time about the progress of the case presentation; (20%)
* Successfully having turned in an outline of the presentation two weeks ahead of time; (15%)
* Extent to which you covered all aspects of a professional case presentation during the actual presentation; (50%)
* Extent to which you presented information in a clear and coherent manner, conducted yourself professionally during the presentation, and answered questions well during the presentation. (15%)

In the event that the internship coordinator and program director determine that you did not pass this assignment, you will be given one additional opportunity to revise your presentation and present it again. This second presentation must be given before the end of the Spring semester of 2nd year in order for the student to complete graduation requirements. Given the short time frame for the completion of these presentations, we strongly urge students to master all requirements for successful completion of this assignment their first time. Students must realize that a second presentation may significantly delay their graduation from the program. Successful completion of this assignment is a criteria for obtaining your master’s degree in this program.

***Scheduling of Case Presentations***

Students will work with the internship coordinator and program director to schedule their case presentation. Case presentations will be scheduled outside of class time and the time of the presentation will be publicized to all students in the master’s program in clinical psychology as well faculty who teach in the program. Students are strongly encouraged to invite faculty and other students to attend their presentation. At a minimum, the internship coordinator, program director, and the student’s internship supervisor should be invited to attend the student’s case presentation.

CHAPTER 7: APPLYING FOR LICENSURE

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## LICENSING REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW

Students should be aware that the MA in Psychology, Clinical Concentration is not specifically designed to meet Maryland Board of Professional Counselors’ Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) licensing requirements. However, students wishing to pursue master’s level licensure should be able to take all the courses they need for licensure as part of the program, as long as they are willing to enroll in summer courses, in addition to the 48 credits offered during the regular semesters (for Maryland licensure, students are required to complete 60 credits of coursework). The program coursework that meets Maryland LCPC licensing requirements are discussed below.

If you are planning to become licensed at the MA level in Maryland or another state, you are strongly encouraged to become familiar with the state’s licensing requirements to be certain that they will be adequately satisfied by this program. Each state’s licensing board can be found at the following website: <http://www.nbcc.org/Directory>

REQUIREMENTS FOR MA-LEVEL LICENSURE IN MARYLAND (LCPC)

You must hold a master’s degree with a minimum of 60 graduate semester credits, with 3 graduate semester credits in each of the following areas:

* Alcohol and drug counseling
* Appraisal (i.e., Assessment)
* Counseling theory
* Counseling techniques
* Diagnosis and psychopathology
* Group dynamics, processing, and counseling
* Human growth and personality development
* Lifestyle and career development
* Marriage and family therapy
* Professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities
* Psychotherapy and treatment of mental and emotional disorders
* Research and evaluation
* Social and cultural foundations of counseling
* Supervised field experience

You must also have 3 years of clinical experience prior to applying for LCPC licensure. You must acquire a minimum of 3000 hours of supervised clinical experience in professional counseling under a board-approved supervisor (any licensed clinical professional counselor or another health care provider under the Health Occupations Article, Annotated COMAR, such as psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker, etc.). Of the 3 years, 2 years must be post-graduate hours, while one year may be acquired before completion of the MA degree.

*Regarding the supervised clinical experience*:

* Of the 3 years of required supervised clinical experience, 2 years must be post-MA, while 1 year may be acquired before the completion of the MA degree
* Of the 3000 hours required, 2000 hours must be accumulated after the MA degree; Up to 1000 hours may be accumulated prior to earning the MA degree. While the hours counting towards licensure that you earn during your internship year do not need to be provided by a board-approved supervisor, all hours earned post-degree must be supervised by a board-approved supervisor. You can verify if a supervisor has been approved by the Board of Professional Counselors to provide supervision to LGPC’s at the following link: (<https://mdbnc.dhmh.md.gov/PCTVerification/supervisionZip.aspx> )
* At least 1500 hours of face-to-face client contact hours (i.e., direct session time with client physically present) are required
* Up to 1500 hours may be devoted to adjunctive psychotherapy or support therapy hours (i.e. crisis intervention, referral, intake assessment, etc.)
* You must also achieve passing scores on the National Counselors Examination (NCE) of the National Board for Certified Counselors and the State Law Test.

The forms needed to apply for LCPC licensure may be found at the following website: <https://health.maryland.gov/bopc/Pages/index.aspx>

LICENSED GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR (LGPC) IN MARYLAND

Students who have met the academic requirements (i.e., MA degree with 60 graduate credit hours, including required coursework) but have not yet acquired the supervised experience may apply for LGPC status by achieving passing scores on the NCE and the Maryland State Law test. An LGPC may practice graduate professional counseling for 2 years under the supervision of a board-approved supervisor while fulfilling the required supervised clinical hours. The following persons may provide supervision provided they are board-approved: License Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC), Licensed Clinical Social Work (LCSW), Licensed Psych Nurse, Licensed Clinical marriage Family Therapists (LCM), a Licensed Psychiatrist or a Licensed Psychologist.

LGPCs must provide all clients with a disclosure indicating their status as an LGPC, the name of their supervisor, fee schedule, etc. A sample disclosure statement can be found at the following website: <http://dhmh.maryland.gov/bopc/pdfs/sampleprofessionaldisclosure.pdf>

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY COURSES AND THE LCPC/LGPC REQUIREMENTS

The table below lists the clinical courses that are required in the master’s program in clinical psychology that meet the requirements for LCPC licensure.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Required Coursework** | **Relevant Clinical Program Course** | **Credits** |
| Counseling Theory | Psychotherapy and Behavior Change I (Psyc 665) | 3 |
| Counseling Techniques | Psychotherapy and Behavior Change II (Psyc 666) | 3 |
| Appraisal and Diagnosis | Diagnostic Interviewing and Assessment (PSYC 612) | 3 |
| Research and Evaluation  | Advanced Experimental Design I (Psyc 687) | 3 |
| Professional, Legal, and Ethical Responsibilities | Ethical, Legal, & Professional Issue in Psychology (Psyc 790) | 3 |
| Supervised Field Experience (must include at least 125 hours of direct face-to-face client contact hours) | Practicum in Clinical Psychology (Psyc 697) and Internship in Clinical Psychology (Psyc 797) | 6-7 |
| Diagnosis & Psychopathology | Advanced Abnormal Psychology (Psyc 631) | 3 |
| Psychotherapy & Treatment of Mental/Emotional Disorders | Cognitive Therapy I (Psyc 755) | 3 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Social and Cultural Foundations of Counseling | Multicultural Issues in Clinical Psychology (Psyc 624) | 3 |

In addition to the required courses listed above, students will need to take additional elective courses in each of the following topic areas in order to complete their required coursework for licensure: (1) Human growth and development; (2) Group dynamics, processing, and counseling; (3) Lifestyle and career development; (4) Marriage and family therapy; and (5) Alcohol and drug counseling.

Each of these additional, required courses are offered at Towson University, either through the counseling or clinical MA programs. Listed below are the courses within the TU graduate curriculum that fulfill the requirements for these courses:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Required Coursework | Relevant Coursework at TU | Credits |
| Human Growth and Development | Psyc 611: Developmental Psychology | 3 |
| Group Dynamics, Processing, and Counseling | Psyc 721: Group Counseling | 3 |
| Lifestyle and Career Development | Psyc 606: Career Development | 3 |
| Marriage and Family Therapy | Psyc 718: Techniques of Family Counseling  | 3 |
| Alcohol and Drug Counseling | Psyc 637: Counseling Strategies for Drug and Alcohol Counseling | 3 |

The program director of the clinical program will make every effort to offer these courses during semesters when students are able to take electives (i.e., first and second semester of 2nd year) and during summer semesters, as long as there are sufficient numbers of students interested in taking these courses. Students may also take these courses through the Counseling Psychology MA program at Towson or through another regionally accredited university. These additional courses can count as electives toward graduation from the clinical program.

*Students should remember*:

* When requesting seat codes for courses offered through the counseling psychology program, they are awarded in the following priority order: first Counseling MA students, then Clinical MA students.
* The program director of the Clinical MA program does not have any influence over whether a particular student will be able to get into a desired course. Students will have to request the seat codes from the Counseling Psychology GA who will maintain a wait-list and award seat codes to clinical students on a “first come, first-served” basis, after all higher priority students have been given seat codes.

**Licensure Requirements for other States and the District of Columbia**

The clinical psychology program cannot guarantee that students completing the master’s program at Towson University will have met all licensure requirements in states outside of Maryland (the program is designed specifically for licensure laws in Maryland). However, our program does align with licensure requirements in many other states throughout the United States. The program has also compiled a document that details many of the licensure requirements in these other states. This document can be accessed through the following link:

[..\..\Licensure Information\Master's Level Licensure Requirements (States Across USA).xlsx](file:///%5C%5Cpsych003%5Cfacultyfiles%5CClinical%20Psyc%5CLicensure%20Information%5CMaster%27s%20Level%20Licensure%20Requirements%20%28States%20Across%20USA%29.xlsx)

CHAPTER 8: APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX A: UNIVERSITY POLICIES AFFECTING STUDENTS

Code of Student Conduct:

<https://www.towson.edu/studentaffairs/policies/documents/code_of_student_conduct.pdf>

Academic Integrity Policy:

<https://www.towson.edu/about/administration/policies/documents/polices/03-01-00-student-academic-integrity-policy.pdf>

Policy on Substance Abuse for Faculty, Staff, and Students:

<https://www.towson.edu/about/administration/policies/documents/polices/07-01-10-policy-on-substance-abuse-for-faculty-staff-and-students.pdf>

All Other Policies Affecting Students:

<http://www.towson.edu/studentaffairs/policies/>

## APPENDIX B: REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The University has strict policies regarding the reporting of child abuse and neglect that affect all members of the campus community. The policy, as well as information on reporting procedures, can be found at the following website: [file:///C:/Users/jmattana/AppData/Local/Temp/06-01-50-policy-on-the-reporting-of-suspected-child-abuse-and-neglect.pdf](file:///C%3A/Users/jmattana/AppData/Local/Temp/06-01-50-policy-on-the-reporting-of-suspected-child-abuse-and-neglect.pdf)

Briefly, the policy requires all members of the university community to report suspected Child Abuse or Neglect, regardless of when or where it happened, to the local department of social services or local law enforcement agency.

A report should also be made to the Campus Police Chief if the suspected abuse:

* took place in institution facilities or on institution property
* was committed by a current or former employee or volunteer of the University
* occurred in connection with an institution sponsored, recognized or approved program, visit, activity, or camp, regardless of location (excluding field placement sites, unless it was committed by a Towson University employee or student), or
* took place while the victim was a registered student at the institution

The individual may also be required to report the incident to the designee of the University President.

Graduate students in the MA in Psychology, Clinical Concentration, may become aware of instances of actual or suspected child abuse in a number of ways including the following:

* when collecting data from students
* when conducting practice interviews or counseling sessions
* when serving as teaching assistants

If child abuse has been discovered or suspected, regardless of how long ago or where it happened, as well as how vague the information, students should immediately inform their faculty supervisor/mentor or graduate program director. The faculty supervisor/mentor or program director will then assist the student in making a report.

Students should understand that practicum sites will have their own policies and procedures for handling reporting of child abuse/neglect. As such, students should consult with their field placement supervisor immediately in the event that child abuse is suspected. In this instance, the graduate program director need not be informed unless there are concerns that the situation has not been handled properly.

## APPENDIX C: WRITING DO’S AND DON’TS

***DON’TS:***

**Do not** use first person for formal papers (research reports, testing reports, etc.). The first person is acceptable for response and opinion papers.

**Do not** write literature reviews in such a way that they read as if they are a list of study descriptions.

**Do not** obsess about how long a paper needs to be. It needs to be as long as it needs to be in order to succinctly and clearly convey information and make your point. That being said, some papers will have page limitations.

**Do not** rely on spell-check to find all your typing and spelling errors.

**Do not** use contractions.

**Do not** use overly informal language.

***DO’S***

**Do** write more than one draft of a paper.

**Do** re-read your paper before handing it in.

**Do** be mindful of little errors. The devil is in the details and the details demonstrate your level of care.

**Do** be familiar with the APA manual. It is your friend.

**Do** ensure that you have subject/verb agreement.

**Do** remember that articles do not conduct studies, the researchers do (e.g., the article found that anxiety was more common in… NO the researchers found or the findings of the study indicated that…)

**Do** be sure you know when to use “that” and when to use “which”

 ***When in doubt, Do visit the writing center***

## APPENDIX D: MID-YEAR EVALUATION

Dear Faculty

First of all, I want to thank you for the time and effort you put into providing the students in the Clinical Psychology program with a high quality, science-based education. I am very interested in getting your opinion of the first-year clinical psychology graduate students. I would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to complete the attached evaluation forms for the students in the first-year cohort. You will evaluate each student on the following criteria:

* *Intellectual potential* 🡪 the ability to learn and apply new information
* *Mastery of course material* 🡪 the degree to which the student has a full understanding of and an ability to apply the skills and knowledge taught in the course
* *Communication skills (oral, written)* 🡪 the degree to which the student can express an idea or concept, either orally or in writing, in a clear, concise, and organized manner
* *Professionalism (behavior, appearance, and attitude)* 🡪 the degree to which the student is (or will be) able to work effectively in a professional environment
* *Interpersonal skills* 🡪 the ability to interact appropriately and get along effectively with faculty and students in the cohort
* *Ability to accept criticism/feedback* 🡪 the degree to which the student is able to graciously accept constructive criticism and to use it to improve performance.
* *Emotional maturity* 🡪 the degree to which the student demonstrated emotional stability, sensitivity, insight, judgment, and common sense

This information will be used in writing letters of recommendation for students and, in combination with other information, to determine the student’s readiness to go on internship. Please feel free to include any narrative comments (both positive and negative) in the space provided. This information will be summarized and passed on to students anonymously.

I would appreciate it if you could return these to me before the start of the spring semester.

Thank you for your time in completing these evaluations.