

# CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

2025-2026  
Handbook



*Department of Psychology*  
*Northwestern State University*

# ***M.S. Program in Clinical Psychology Handbook***

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# DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

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The goal of the Master of Science program in Clinical Psychology is to develop competent professionals who are intelligent consumers of research and skilled providers of psychological services in a variety of health care settings.

All courses integrate science and practice as it prepares individuals for employment in various health care settings and/or for a doctoral program. Outstanding faculty are dedicated to assisting the students through instruction, supervision, and advisement in developing professionally and reaching their educational goals.

Students are registered as a group in a well-structured sequence of coursework, in which courses build upon previous classes to prepare students for the required capstone courses: Psychological Research: Application and Practicum.

All coursework, except for a summer class, is face-to-face and takes place at Northwestern State University's main campus in Natchitoches. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis.

## Graduate Faculty

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Psy.D. Clinical Psychology, Spalding University, 1997

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Ph.D, Clinical Psychology, Fielding University, 1997

## Mission Statement

In keeping with the stated mission of the University, the Department of Psychology is dedicated to providing a high-quality and functional education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels by actively engaging in discovering and disseminating knowledge across the subfields of Psychology, including clinical, experimental, and applied areas. Students develop mastery and integration of vocabulary and theory, as well as critical thinking and analytic skills, through didactic, laboratory, and practicum/externship training experiences. To further illustrate the relationship between theory, research, and application, the Department of Psychology emphasizes the ethical use of psychology principles in applied contexts.

As part of our educational mission, both the faculty and students provide encouragement and support for research and scholarship. These activities are designed to foster professionalism and enhance opportunities for graduate education and/or immediate employment and service in the community.

## Program Objectives

In order to achieve the Mission of the Department of Psychology at NSU, the following program goals/objectives have been developed.

- 1) To provide students with a foundation of psychology on which to build the science and practice of clinical psychology.
- 2) To provide quality advising and mentoring leading to the pursuit of ultimate professional goals.
- 3) To provide quality programs that are consistent with the recommendations of national or accrediting organizations.
- 4) To provide quality instruction that is current in topics related to clinical psychology, including administration, scoring, and interpreting assessment instruments
- 5) To provide quality instruction that is current in topics related to clinical psychology leading to the application of research and treatment issues relevant to the field
- 6) To provide quality instruction that is current in topics related to clinical psychology leading to the use of technology and writing designed to integrate clinical psychological literature with practice
- 7) To complete and report research projects relevant to the field of clinical psychology.
- 8) Work with local, state, and national organizations to provide vocational and/or educational opportunities for the students.

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The Master of Science degree in Clinical Psychology is designed for students who plan to continue doctoral training in Clinical Psychology or seek clinical employment at the M.S. level. The emphasis is on clinical assessment, theory, application, and research. The M.S. degree in Clinical Psychology requires 39 hours of coursework, comprehensive examinations, an empirical thesis or paper-in-lieu of a thesis, and a 300-hour practicum. The therapy course has accompanying practica, which provides applications and "hands-on" experiences associated with the specific course content.

### ADMISSION

#### **For students with undergraduate degrees in psychology:**

##### **Regular Admission**

Admission with Regular Status into the program requires students to meet one of the following conditions:

- GPA of at least 3.5 (no GRE is required)
- GPA of at least 3.0 but less than 3.5 AND at least a 3.5 or better in Research Methods, Statistics, Abnormal Psychology, and nine hours in 3000 or 4000 psychology courses (no GRE is required).
- GPA of at least 3.0 but less than 3.5 AND GRE of at least 290 (combined verbal and quantitative)

##### **Conditional Admission**

Conditional admission to the Clinical Psychology program may be granted for the first nine semester hours of approved graduate study for students meeting one of the following conditions:

- GPA of at least 3.0 but less than 3.5 AND either no GRE OR GRE of at least 280 but less than 290 (combined verbal and quantitative)
- GPA of at least 2.5 but less than 3.0 AND a GRE of at least 290 (combined verbal and quantitative)

Conditional status in a master's degree program may be changed to regular status by earning nine semester hours of approved graduate degree credit and a 3.0 GPA at Northwestern State University with a grade of B or better on all graduate work pursued. Failure to achieve regular status after nine graduate semester hours will result in dismissal from the program unless an exception is made by the Graduate Council.

**For students who do not have undergraduate degrees in psychology:**

Students who did not major in psychology must have 18 hours in psychology, including Research Methods, Statistics, Abnormal Psychology, Tests & Measurements, and six hours of electives. The GPA for these courses will be applied to the admission standards along with the cumulative GPA.

***Reinstatement***

Students may withdraw from the program due to circumstances beyond their control.

- A letter of appeal written by the student with a written endorsement from the student's advisor submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research for approval.
- Re-admission and completion of 9 additional semester hours of approved degree credit at Northwestern State University with no grade lower than B. (Only approved degree credit courses will be computed in the grade average);
- And
- If reinstated, failure to maintain regular status will result in terminal suspension.

***Transfer of Credit***

A maximum of twelve (12) semester hours with grades of at least B (3.0) and relevant to the planned program may be transferred into the master's program. Transfer credits must be approved by the Director of Clinical Training and the Dean of the Graduate School.

**COURSE LOAD**

Regular students must be full-time while completing coursework. Full-time during the fall and spring semesters is nine semester hours. During a summer session, a full load is six hours. Approval must be obtained for a part-time course load and a course load greater than 12 graduate/undergraduate hours in the fall and nine in the summer.

**FEES**

Undergraduate and Graduate course fees and student fees are listed in the NSU Semester Class Schedule (Fall, Spring, Summer). These fees are subject to change without notice. All fees and charges assessed by the University regarding registration are due in full on scheduled fee payment dates.

Students receiving Graduate Assistantships are eligible for a "Waiver of Out-of-State Tuition." This waiver will be effective only for the semesters the student is employed as a graduate assistant. Refer to the NSU semester class schedule for NSU's refund policy.



## GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Teaching and research assistantships are available for qualified graduate students. Students must be accepted into the Clinical Psychology Master's degree program and have achieved regular graduate admission status at Northwestern State University to be eligible for a graduate assistantship. A graduate assistant must be full-time (at least 9 hours); six must be graduate level and no more than 12 (graduate/undergraduate) hours total. To be eligible to retain the assistantship, the student must maintain a 3.0 grade point average in all graduate courses, as well as meet all other stated requirements of the graduate school. Graduate assistants are required to work 320 hours a semester, approximately 20 hours per week. Those granted a graduate assistantship will receive a \$12,000 stipend over a nine-month period. Out-of-state tuition is waived, if applicable, but only applies to those semesters the student is employed as a graduate assistant. Additional information from the Graduate School is available, and applications should be directed to the Dean of Graduate Studies & Research.

## REQUIRED COURSES

The following is a list of courses required for the master's degree in clinical psychology:

COURSE		HOURS
PSYC 5100	Psychological Research: Statistics	3
PSYC 5120	Psychological Research: Method and Design	3
PSYC 5130	Psychological Research: Application	3
PSYC 5200	Theories of Psychotherapy	3
PSYC 5250	Psychological Intervention and Therapy	3
PSYC 5260	Practicum I: Psychological Intervention and Therapy	3
PSYC 5270	Clinical Psychology Internship	6
PSYC 5300	Intellectual Assessment	3
PSYC 5320	Personality Assessment	3
PSYC 5400	Group and Family Psychotherapy	3
PSYC 5750	Psychopathology	3
PSYC 5950	Psychological Research: Advanced Application	3
PSYC 5980	Thesis	
	Or approved elective	3
PSYC 6000	Ethics & Professional Conduct	<u>3</u>
TOTAL		45

**\*Sequence of Courses:****FIRST YEAR**

<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
PSYC 5100	PSYC 5120	PSYC 5130
PSYC 5250	PSYC 5200	
PSYC 5750	PSYC 5300	
PSYC 6000	PSYC 5400	
12 hours	12 hours	

**SECOND YEAR**

<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
PSYC 5260	PSYC 5270	Continuation of
PSYC 5320	PSYC 5980	Thesis/PIL
PSYC 5950	or elective	until complete
9 hours	6 hours	

\* The sequence of courses is subject to change depending on the availability of faculty. In addition, the sequence for students admitted in the Spring semester will be on an individual basis as determined by the Director of Clinical Training.

## PSYCHOLOGY GRADUATE COURSES

PSYC 5100 - PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH: STATISTICS. (3-3-0). Descriptive methods, statistical inference, correlation, multiple correlation, simple and multiple regression analysis, sampling distributions, analysis of variance and covariance, and nonparametric methods.

Prerequisite: 4400

PSYC 5120 - PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH: METHOD AND DESIGN(3-3-0).

Theory and application of experimental design in psychological research; design strategies in relation to hypotheses and statistical procedures. Prerequisite: 5100 or demonstrated competency.

PSYC 5130 - PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH: ADVANCED APPLICATION. (3-3-0). The major assignment for this course is to develop a thesis or Paper-In-Lieu of a thesis (PIL) proposal. This course is designed to synthesize the knowledge and skills developed in previous research courses and apply them to the graduate thesis process. Students will learn about the process, standards, and expectations of developing and completing the proposal.

Prerequisites: 5100 and 5120, or consent of instructor.

PSYC 5200 - THEORIES OF PSYCHOTHERAPY. (3-3-0). A comparative introduction to the theories, techniques, and outcomes of major approaches to psychotherapy.

Prerequisites: 4450 or 4470, or consent of instructor.

PSYC 5250 - PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTION AND THERAPY. (3-3-0). An experiential-didactic course that teaches the skills, strategies, and self-awareness necessary to provide basic helping interventions. The course involves the specification of helping skills and strategies and their conceptual bases, as well as demonstration, practice, and feedback on helping interventions. Particular foci will include the nature of the therapist-patient relationship, current research findings on the process and outcome of psychotherapy, and ethical issues.

PSYC 5260 - PRACTICUM I: PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTION AND THERAPY (3-0-0). The opportunity to build a variety of therapy skills and applied therapeutic techniques. These skills will include specific interviewing strategies, report writing, and measurements of therapeutic outcomes. Prerequisites: PSYC 5200, 5250, 5750, and 6000, or approval of the Director of Clinical Training. The practicum must be completed with a grade of "B" or better to apply toward the Clinical Psychology degree.

PSYC 5270 – CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP: PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTION AND THERAPY (6-0-0). Clinical students will complete 300 hours of field training in a range of mental health settings, including state-operated mental health facilities, community mental health centers, psychiatric units of private hospitals, and university-based student counseling centers. These practicum experiences will help students learn to apply classroom knowledge to the real-world service needs of the public. Prerequisites: PSYC 5200, 5250, 5260, 5300, 5320, and 5750 with at least a grade of "B" or with approval of the Director of Clinical Training. The internship must be completed with a "B" or better grade to apply for the Clinical Psychology degree.

PSYC 5300 - INTELLECTUAL ASSESSMENT (3-3-0). Administration, scoring, and interpretation of standardized psychometric instruments in evaluating individual intellectual functioning. Prerequisite: PSYC 4410, 5250, 5750, 6000, or approval of the Director of Clinical Training.

PSYC 5320 - PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT (3-3-0). Theory and rationale in the use of objective assessment instruments in applied settings for adults and children. Prerequisites: PSYC 5750, 5300, 6000 or approval of the Director of Clinical Training.

PSYC 5400 - GROUP AND FAMILY PSYCHOTHERAPY. (3-3-0). Overview of the major theoretical and practical issues in group and family psychotherapy as they relate to the clinical setting. Development of basic skills in small group facilitation and strategies for family assessment and intervention.

PSYC 5500 - EXTERNSHIP IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY. (3 to 12-0-0). Minimum 300 hours of direct experience in an approved mental health setting under the supervision of a licensed psychologist. Application of appropriate intervention techniques; assessment tools and techniques; management of clinical cases. Prerequisites: 5270, Director of Clinical Training's

approval. Must be completed with a grade of B or better in order to be used toward the master's degree.

PSYC 5750 - PSYCHOPATHOLOGY. (3-3-0). Etiology, classification, and research methods relating to abnormal human behavior. Special emphasis is placed on the use and practical limitations of the current diagnostic system. Prerequisite: 4450.

PSYC 5780 - PHYSIOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY. (3-3-0). Examination of the biological basis of behavior, with emphasis on underlying neural mechanisms. Surveys neuroanatomy and neurophysiology and investigates how the nervous system produces various types of behavior. Prerequisite: 3010 or consent of instructor.

PSYC 5950 - PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH: APPLICATION. (3-3-0). Design, organization, and implementation of a research project under the direction of the student's major professor. A written proposal-ready and evaluation paper is required. Prerequisites: PSYC 5100 and 5120.

PSYC 5980 - THESIS. (3 to 6-0-0). Students will meet regularly with their thesis advisor for support and direction in writing their thesis. Prerequisite: PSYC 5950

PSYC 6000 - ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT. (3-3-0). Learning about appropriate behavior and anticipated ethical/moral issues in all aspects of practice as a psychologist, including therapy, diagnostics, assessment, research, and teaching.

For more information concerning undergraduate and graduate psychology courses see the Northwestern State University General Catalogue.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. All work applied towards the degree must have been earned within six years of completion of the graduate program.

### **Revalidation**

In special cases, upon approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, expired credits may be revalidated by examination. TRANSFERRED CREDITS MAY NOT BE REVALIDATED. The examination must include a written test or demonstrated performance that measures those topics currently taught in the course and must be evaluated as if the student had just completed the course. The student's written examination paper, portfolio, or performance document with accompanying instructions, course learning outcomes, and designated activities with completed rubrics must be filed in the Graduate School office. Test construction and evaluation of the assessment instrument will be done by the instructor currently teaching the course or who has most recently taught the course. Revalidation will be on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. For grade point average purposes, the initial grade will be utilized. Requests for revalidation must be initiated in writing by the Clinical Director, approved by the College Dean, and submitted to the Graduate Dean for final approval. The cost of revalidation is \$20 a course and must be paid, and the receipt must be on file in the Graduate Dean's office prior to taking the test.

- B. A student may withdraw from the program due to circumstances beyond their control. Should this occur, the student should work with the Clinical Director.
- C. Students may be permitted a medical or personal leave of absence with supporting evidence and pending approval of the Clinical Director. The length of leave is dependent on the circumstances.
- D. Students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 with no grade lower than "C," and not more than six hours of credit with a grade of "C" shall be presented to fulfill the course requirements for the degree. No grade below "B" is acceptable for transfer credit.
- D. A minimum grade of B must be earned on all "clinical" psychology courses pursued. Clinical courses include 5200, 5250, 5260, 5270, 5300, 5320, 5400, 5500, 5750, 5950, 5980, and 6000.
- E. The students shall successfully demonstrate competency in all of the following areas:
1. Students shall pass written comprehensive examinations in the areas of psychopathology and diagnostics, theories of psychotherapy, statistics and research methodology, and ethical practice of psychology. (See section on comprehensive examinations.)

2. In PSYC 5320, students shall demonstrate proficiency in psychological assessment by earning a minimum grade of 80% on the administration, interpretation, and written report of a comprehensive psychological evaluation.
  3. Students shall demonstrate proficiency in treating psychopathology by earning a minimum rating of 80% on their practicum and internship evaluations and grades.
  4. The students will complete and successfully defend a paper-in-lieu or an empirical thesis.
- G. Students must complete a 300-hour internship (PSYC 5270; 6 hours) at an approved mental health site (see section on practicum). Students cannot earn a grade lower than “B” for the requirement to be met.
- H. Students are required to conduct themselves ethically and professionally in compliance with Northwestern State University’s Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.nsula.edu/student-code-of-conduct/>) and APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2017; see Appendix A). If students engage in unethical behavior or violate the code, they will be subject to dismissal from the program.

### ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL VIOLATIONS

Allegations of ethical, academic, and/or professional misconduct will be investigated by the Clinical Psychology Graduate Council, which is a standing committee chaired by the Director of Clinical Training and at least two other graduate faculty members. If a faculty member is involved in the allegation and is serving on the committee, she or he will be recused and replaced by another graduate faculty member or the Department Chair. The committee's purpose is to investigate such allegations and impose judgment and appropriate intervention or discipline. Intervention varies but can include required individual therapy. Discipline can include immediate dismissal from the program if the council finds the violation is sufficiently severe in nature.

## GRADES

Students are graded in their studies on the quality of their work. Five grades are in use as follows: A (excellent), B (good), C (average), D (below average), and F (failure). A course with a grade of Pass or a grade of D may not be used to satisfy a course requirement for a graduate degree. Not more than six hours of credit with a grade of C shall be used to fulfill course requirements for the degree. A third grade of C will result in a review by the Clinical Director and may lead to dismissal from the graduate program. A minimum grade of B must be earned for all clinical psychology courses.

A grade of I (incomplete) means that the coursework is incomplete due to circumstances beyond the control of the student and that successful completion of this work could lead to a passing grade. Incomplete grades must be removed within 60 calendar days after the end of the term in

which the grade was assigned. If the work is not completed within the allotted time, the grade of I will be changed to F.

For research courses (PSYC 5950 and 5980), students are graded with an “in progress” (IP) if they did not fulfill the course requirements but made progress. If a student earns more than six hours in thesis, the student's transcript will provide only six hours of grades for thesis. All other “in progress” (IP) grades will remain IP on the transcript. The letter grade given by the thesis director will be assigned to the last six hours upon satisfactory completion of the thesis.

A student who repeats a course that he/she has successfully completed must accept the last grade received as the final grade.

W represents an official withdrawal from the course. If a student withdraws from a course after the "final day to resign and drop courses," a grade of WA, WB, WC, WD, or WF will be assigned based on the student's midterm grades.

## **ACADEMIC APPEAL**

### ***Grade Appeal***

Students who receive grades they believe do not reflect the quality of their work may appeal grades within 120 days following the academic period in which the grades were earned. The procedure for grade appeal is as follows:

The student should consult the instructor in an effort to reach an understanding. If no understanding is reached, the student should secure a Grade Appeal Form from the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The student should submit the written appeal with all signatures to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, requesting a hearing with the University's Graduate Council. An appeal to the Graduate Council should be in the form of an explanatory letter, including the signed appeal form and a request for a specific action. Appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Council at regularly scheduled monthly meetings. The student and the instructor may be present when the appeal is reviewed. The Graduate Council will rule on the appeal according to standing policy and procedures and submit a recommendation to the Dean. The action of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research on the recommendation will be considered final.

### ***Other Appeal – Appeals related to conduct***

Students who disagree with the judgment and/or discipline imposed by the Clinical Psychology Graduate Council (CPGC) can appeal such decision with the following procedures:

The student should submit a written appeal in the form of an explanatory letter with all signatures and a request for a specific action to the Assistant to the Provost for Graduate Studies, who will review the evidence gathered by the CPGC along with their written response to the student's appeal. The Assistant to the Provost for Graduate Studies will then rule on the student's

appeal. If the student is unsatisfied with this decision, a request to forward the appeal to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, requesting a hearing with the University's Graduate Council, should be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Council at regularly scheduled monthly meetings. Both the student and the chair of the CPGC, or a representative, may be present when the appeal is reviewed. The University's Graduate Council will rule on the appeal according to standing policy and procedures and submit a recommendation to the Dean. The action of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research on the recommendation will be considered final.

## **ELIGIBILITY TO REMAIN IN GRADUATE SCHOOL**

### ***Academic***

A student on Regular status whose graduate cumulative average or semester average falls below 3.0 on a 4.0 scale will be evaluated by the Graduate Council for continuation in the program. The Council can elect to place the student on probation, suspend the student, or dismiss the student from the program, depending on the Council's overall assessment of the student's progress and standing in the program. Students who have graduate assistantships and are placed on probation may not be eligible to continue their assistantships (see Graduate Assistantships).

Upon suspension from graduate studies, a student may, after the expiration of one semester, appeal for readmission by submitting to the Clinical Director a letter addressed to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The Clinical Director will forward the appeal to the Dean, who makes the final decision. Upon a second suspension, the university allows the student to use the same procedure after the expiration of one calendar year. However, the departmental committee will not support readmission into the program after a second probation.

### ***Ethical & Professional Conduct***

Unethical and unprofessional conduct will be addressed in compliance with the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2017; <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>) (the procedures are modified to identify the appropriate university parties and policies):

#### Informal Resolution of Ethical Violations

When students or faculty members believe that there may have been an ethical violation by another student, they attempt to resolve the issue by addressing it with the individual if an informal resolution appears appropriate and the intervention does not violate any confidentiality rights that may be involved. (See also Standards 1.02, Conflicts Between Ethics and Law, Regulations, or Other Governing Legal Authority, and 1.03, Conflicts Between Ethics and Organizational Demands.)

#### Reporting Ethical Violations

If an apparent ethical violation has substantially harmed or is likely to substantially harm a person or organization and is not appropriate for informal resolution or is not resolved properly in that fashion, students or faculty members take further action by making a formal report to the Council on Ethical and Professional Conduct. This standard does not apply



when an intervention would violate confidentiality rights or when psychologists have been retained to review the work of another psychologist whose professional conduct is in question. (See also Standard 1.02, Conflicts Between Ethics and Law, Regulations, or Other Governing Legal Authority.)

#### 1.06 Cooperating With Ethics Committees

Students cooperate in ethics investigations, proceedings, and resulting requirements of the Council on Ethical and Professional Conduct and the Graduate Council. In doing so, they address any confidentiality issues. Failure to cooperate is itself an ethics violation.

#### 1.07 Improper Complaints

Psychologists and students do not file or encourage the filing of ethics complaints that are made with reckless disregard for or willful ignorance of facts that would disprove the allegation.

## RESEARCH PAPER

Students in the Clinical Psychology program are required to complete a research paper (paper-in-lieu) or an empirical thesis to the satisfaction of the research committee and to successfully defend the paper in an oral examination. The students must follow the Department of Psychology Research Policy (Appendix B) while completing this requirement.

### PROCESS AND GRADING

- A. All students register for PSYC 5950. The objective of PSYC 5950 is to successfully complete and defend the research proposal. After the first enrolment in PSYC 5950, students must register for the course each subsequent semester until the proposal is completed, defended, and approved by the research committee.
- B. For students who elect to complete a paper-in-lieu of a thesis, the objectives are met upon successful completion of PSYC 5950.
- C. Students who elect to complete a paper-in-lieu of a thesis must also take a 3-hour elective.
- D. Students who elect to complete a thesis are required to complete PSYC 5950 and PSYC 5980. PSYC 5980 may not be enrolled until the completion of PSYC 5950. Any premature enrollment in PSYC 5980 must be approved by the student's major professor and Clinical Director. Early enrollment will only be approved for students who are scheduled to propose within one month of the start of the semester. After the first enrollment in PSYC 5980, students must register for the course each subsequent semester until the proposal is completed.

- E. Only 3 hours are required for thesis per semester. However, students may choose to take 6 hours for financial reasons. Students *must* take the same number of hours in the two consecutive semesters *preceding* graduation.
- F. For PSYC 5950 and PSYC 5980, students who make adequate progress toward the completion of the research project are graded with *IP* (In progress) until the successful completion and defense of the written document.

### **RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

Students are assigned a major professor. Students completing a paper-in-lieu or project will be assigned a major professor and one reader based on the guidelines below. Students completing a thesis will be assigned a major professor and two readers based on the guidelines below:

- The major professor will be from the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies.
- At least one reader of a thesis will be Graduate Faculty from the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies.
- A second Reader may be a member of the Graduate Faculty outside the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies or an expert from outside the University. Either person must have special expertise related to the research.
- All external committee persons must be approved by the Clinical Director and the Graduate School.

### **PAPER-IN-LIEU OF A THESIS (PIL) REQUIREMENTS OF THE PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

The student develops a paper in consultation with his/her major professor within the following guidelines:

- A. The document shall be typed according to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2010) and the Graduate School's *General Guidelines for Preparing your Final Research Document*. Once the PIL has been completed in first draft form, it should be presented to the student's major professor. The major professor will endeavor to return the proposal to the student within two weeks. *Summer sessions and university breaks are an exception*. Multiple revisions are expected. Upon final approval of the draft by the major professor, it will then be submitted to the committee member(s).
- B. The formal proposal is submitted to the Research Committee, and the candidate orally defends this proposal. The student shall submit a hard copy of the proposal for review to the student's research committee *no less than two weeks* prior to the oral defense meeting

and *no less than three weeks* before the date on which the student's materials are due to the Graduate School.

- C. The student is responsible for collaborating with the committee to schedule the time and place of the student's oral defense. No meetings concerning papers will be held during final examination week or one week prior to final examination week, except with those students who expect to graduate that semester.
- D. Defense of the student's research paper is open to the faculty and graduate students of Northwestern State University. Students are responsible for notification of the time, place, and date of the defense, which should be distributed in the Department at least one week prior to the time of the defence. All departmental faculty and graduate students who are interested are invited to attend.
- E. The Research Committee may approve the proposal as is, suggest changes, or disapprove the proposal. The review process may be repeated until the committee considers the draft acceptable for final form. However, on all subsequent submissions following the initial meeting, it is the committee's discretion to determine the length of the period between submission and meeting but not to exceed two weeks. The student's committee may choose to bypass additional meetings if they believe that the draft is acceptable and only requires minor edits.
- F. If the student's performance is acceptable, the student will secure the original signatures for the paper and the comprehensive exam form. The student must then submit a minimum of two spiral-bound copies of the paper and the original signature page(s) to the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research (See requirements of the Graduate School). The spiral-bound copy will include a clear front cover page and black vinyl back cover. Upon approval of the Dean, the two copies are to be distributed by the Graduate School as follows: one copy goes to the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies, and one copy goes to the Major Professor.. Additional copies may be submitted and distributed at the student's discretion.

### **THESIS REQUIREMENTS OF THE PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

The student develops a thesis in consultation with his/her major professor within the following guidelines:

- A. The document shall be typed according to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2010) and the Graduate School's *General Guidelines for Preparing your Final Research Document*. Once the proposal or thesis has been completed in first draft form, it should be presented to the student's major professor. The major professor will endeavor to return the proposal to the student within two weeks. *Summer sessions and university breaks are an exception*. Multiple revisions are expected. Upon final approval of the draft by the major professor, it will then be submitted to the committee member(s).

- B. The formal document is submitted to the Research Committee, and the candidate orally defends the thesis proposal and thesis, heretofore referred to as proposal and thesis. The student shall submit a hard copy of the documents for review to the student's research committee *no less than two weeks* prior to the oral defense meeting and *no less than three weeks* prior to the date on which the student's materials are to be submitted to the Graduate School.
- C. The student is responsible for collaborating with the committee to schedule the time and place of the student's oral presentation of the proposal and final thesis. No meetings concerning papers will be held during final examination week or one week before final examination week, except with those students who expect to graduate that semester.
- D. The defense is open to the faculty and graduate students of Northwestern State University. Students are responsible for the notification of the time, place, and date of the defense, which should be distributed in the Department at least one week prior to the time of the defense. All departmental faculty and graduate students who are interested are invited to attend.
- E. The Research Committee may approve the proposal or thesis as is, suggest changes, or disapprove the proposal. The review process may be repeated until the committee considers the draft acceptable for final form. However, on all subsequent submissions following the initial meeting, it is the committee's discretion to determine the length of the period between submission and meeting but not to exceed two weeks. The student's committee may choose to bypass additional meeting(s) if they believe that the draft is acceptable and only requires minor edits. On approval, the major professor will place a copy of the approved proposal in the student's departmental file.
- F. Once the research committee approves the proposal, and not before, research involving human subjects must be submitted to and approved by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB). The student who has proposed the research should be available to answer questions. No research involving humans may be done until the proposal is approved by this committee.
  - All persons involved in the administration of the research, including investigators, sponsors, and approving agents, must complete the Ethical Treatment of Human Subjects Training before a research proposal can be submitted to IRB.
- G. After defense of the thesis, the student's committee will determine if the student's defense and final exam copy of the thesis were acceptable. If they were not, the committee will inform the student of his/her options. If the student's performance is acceptable, the student will secure the original signatures for the paper and the comprehensive exam form. The student must follow the Graduate School's paper requirements and then submit a minimum of three copies of the paper and original signature page(s) to the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research (See requirements of the Graduate School). The copies are to be distributed by the Graduate School as follows: two copies are kept by the Graduate School, and one copy goes to the Department of Psychology and

Addiction Studies. The student's Major Professor may request a copy, but is financially responsible for the copy. Additional copies may be submitted and distributed at the student's discretion.

- H. The student may prepare the thesis research for publication. The major professor of the research committee will be the second author of a publication or presentation of the research at a professional meeting. Others may be offered co-authorship as deemed appropriate according to APA guidelines. If the student fails to prepare the research for publication within six months, the major professor may prepare the article and claim first authorship in accordance with accepted practices for assigning authorship, assign second author to the student, and offer co-authorship as deemed appropriate according to APA guidelines.

## WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

Students are required to take written comprehensive examinations. A student must earn a total score of 70 on each of the four examinations to pass. Once a student attempts the comprehensive exams and fails to pass all or any portion of the exam, he/she must repeat the exam. Failure of the exam for a second time may result in required remedial work. If the student fails to complete the exam after a third attempt, if the judgment of the Graduate Faculty is that such action is warranted, the student may be dismissed from the program. Results (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) from each administration of the comprehensive exams are submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies and recorded on the student's transcript.

All comprehensive examinations will consist of multiple-choice questions and essay questions.

### Areas of Examination

1. Psychology 5200: **Theories of Psychotherapy**
2. Psychology 5750: **Psychopathology**
3. Psychology 6000: **Ethics**
4. Psychology 5120: **Psychological Research: Method and Design**  
This examination tests knowledge from PSYC 5100: Psychological Research: Statistics and PSYC 5120: Psychological Research: Methods and Design

## CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Each student will be required to complete two practical experiences in clinical psychology with the option to complete a third.

### **Practicum**

The first practicum, PSYC 5260: Practicum, provides an opportunity to build a variety of therapy skills and applied therapeutic techniques. These skills will include specific interviewing strategies, report writing, and measurements of therapeutic outcomes. The goal is for students to have ten direct client contact hours. Students participate in weekly group supervision. The prerequisites for PSYC 5260 are PSYC 5200, 5250, 5750, and 6000, or approval of the Director of Clinical Training. Must be completed with a grade of “B” or better in order to apply toward the M.S. degree in Clinical Psychology.

### **Internship**

The internship is PSYC 5270: Practicum II. Clinical students will complete 300-hours of field training in a range of mental health settings, including state-operated mental health facilities, community mental health centers, psychiatric units of private hospitals, and university-based student counseling centers. These practicum experiences will help students learn to apply classroom knowledge to the real-world service needs of the public. Prerequisites: PSYC 5200, 5250, 5260, 5300, 5320, and 5750 with at least a grade of “B,” or with approval of the Director of Clinical Training. Must be completed with a grade of “B” or better in order to apply toward the M. S. degree in Clinical Psychology.

Requirements of PSYC 5270: Internship:

1. Internship sites are assigned by the Director of Clinical Training.
2. The site must have a licensed psychologist available to supervise the student weekly (one hour).
3. The student may be required to attend an interview at the internship site.
4. A site visit by the Director of Clinical Training will be required for each student.

**Note: Under no condition should a student initiate contact with a practicum site without approval of the Director of Clinical Training.**

### **Internship Sites**

All practicum agencies must be approved and supervised by the Director of Clinical Training in the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies at Northwestern State University. Each

practicum site determines the number of externs it will supervise at any one time. The names of contact persons for each externship site are available from the Director of Clinical Training.

### **Externship (Optional)**

Psychology 5500, Externship in Clinical Psychology, is optional for the MS degree in Clinical Psychology at Northwestern State University of Louisiana. It is recommended for those students who foresee the need for additional clinical hours to meet certification or licensure requirements in other states. The number of hours required for the externship depends on the needs of the student and externship site, but is available for 150 hours (3-hour credits) and 300 hours (6-hour credits). The externship includes direct experience in a departmentally approved mental health setting under the supervision of a licensed psychologist. Start dates are individually arranged with the externship site to which a student has been accepted. Prerequisites: 5270 and Director of Clinical Training's approval. Must be completed with a grade of B or better in order to be used toward the M.S. degree in Clinical Psychology.

## **CONCENTRATION IN SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

The NSU Clinical Psychology Substance Abuse Concentration offers a multi-diverse track within the program for graduate students. The completion of the track is the first step in a three step process for licensure as an addiction professional counselor for the state of Louisiana. The steps include the following: education from an approved provider, Counselor-In-Training from an approved provider, and finally taking the state-required exam.

Courses required for the concentration include:

HED	4600	Drug and Alcohol Education
CJ	4500	Drug Use in Modern Society
PSYC	6870	Seminar in Addiction
SOWK	4800	Practice in Addiction Disorders



## **Appendix A:**

### **Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies Research Policy**

As a considerable amount of research is conducted through the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies and many of the participants are undergraduate college students, it is important to provide guidelines for such research in the Department.

1. Research involving human subjects must be preapproved by the Human Subjects Internal Review Board.
2. For all students recruited from the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies, the following policies are offered:
  - a. In order to advance knowledge of the research process, students in psychology classes may be required to participate in a research project. This requirement may be fulfilled in at least one of two ways: First, students may participate in ongoing research projects conducted by faculty members or graduate students of the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies. Such participation may involve, for example, filling out a questionnaire or engaging in an activity that is part of the experiment. Alternatively, students may engage in another equally beneficial research project, such as reading articles published in a psychological journal and writing a short paper on the study. Specifically, students must be provided with at least one equitable alternative to participating in a study.
  - b. Students may be recruited from classes with instructor's prior permission, either with an announcement, sign-up sheets passed around the class, or by Moodle.
  - c. In those circumstances in which students are unable, ineligible, or disinterested in participating in a study, alternative but equivalent opportunities must be provided to students.
3. Psychology undergraduate or graduate students conducting research with participants outside of the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies must show evidence of prior approval by that department or institution before recruiting from that population. Examples include other departments, universities, or prisons.
4. Research participants will have the option of discontinuing participation at any time without penalty (including loss of points).
5. Research participants must have the option of requesting summary group results of the study and the summary must be provided at the end of the research project.
6. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including but not limited to large language models and text generators, is strictly prohibited in the creation of the students' thesis or paper-in-lieu of thesis. All submitted work must be entirely the

students'. Any use of AI tools will be considered a violation of academic integrity policies and will be treated as plagiarism

7. *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (2017) will be adhered to in all research.