



Handbook for M.A. Students

Psychology Department

Effective: August 21, 2018

Policy Priority

University and Psychology Department policies also apply to graduate students and have precedence over graduate program policies. Anyone discovering a conflict between these various policies should notify the appropriate coordinator immediately. Students are responsible for meeting all Western Kentucky University policies and requirements including the WKU Student Handbook (<https://www.wku.edu/handbook/>), Academic Affairs policies (<https://www.wku.edu/policies/academic-affairs/>) especially if you are a Graduate Teaching Assistant, and WKU Human Resources policies (<https://www.wku.edu/policies/>) for those employed on campus.

Navigation of Digital Handbook:

For easier navigation, in Adobe select View/Show/Navigation Panes/Bookmarks. Or click on the ribbon icon to the left of the document. This will open a menu to the left of the document that shows all topics (like a Table of Contents) and allows you to jump to the section of interest.

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Welcome to the M.A. Program!

Congratulations on being accepted to our M.A. graduate program in psychology. We are very pleased that you are joining us to develop your professional skills and achieve your career goals. We want you to succeed and will be there to encourage, teach, and support you as you acquire new skills, ways of thinking and methods of problem solving.

The clinical faculty have created this handbook to help you through the transition from undergraduate to graduate school and then to your professional career. It is based on observing what helps students succeed and on what “goes wrong” for students in graduate school.

In addition to this M.A.-specific handbook there is a **document with Common Policies** that you will also need to read.

“Graduate school” is a misnomer. While it has features of undergraduate school, the expectations are like the working world, **the risks are greater, and the protections fewer.** Correspondingly, however, **the rewards and independence are also greater and carry more meaning.** Facing the risk and learning to grow from it is critical to success as a professional.

You will likely find that study techniques and lifestyle choices engaged in as an undergraduate will **not** work as well in graduate school. The time demands are higher and you will likely no longer “stand out” from the crowd as the others in your class are at your same ability level. You may struggle for the first time in your academic life. Your self-identity will likely shift and we hope become both deeper and broader. You were chosen because you have displayed a greater than average level of understanding and we will assume you start from day one using that greater capacity. It may be stressful at first but will gradually improve as you become adjusted to and even enjoy that

greater trust. We do not want perfect people (there is no such person). We want people who can reduce the odds of error and recognize, correct, and grow from their imperfections.

By the end of two years, you have to be a functioning professional capable of licensure and public trust. That means intense work from now until graduation. Consider your current set of practices and values and reflect on how much and how quickly you will have to update those skills to be ready in two years. Your teachers are here to suggest and provide direction, but as a budding professional it is up to you to implement these changes and to anticipate and solve problems before they develop.

Ways in which graduate school differs from undergraduate: The volume of information to be learned and the rate at which you must learn it is much greater, roughly equivalent to 2 to 3 undergraduate classes in 1 graduate class. Therefore, a graduate course load of 12 hours is equivalent to a 24 to 36 hour load as an undergraduate. Plan accordingly. The load can be “sneaky”—fine for awhile and then it piles on. Try to work ahead.

- Class time is not for repeating what was in the readings but for discussion of them and exploring new information in greater depth. Ask your questions before the instructor moves on or you will be left behind.
- You will be expected to hear the directions for tasks on the first recitation of them whether that is orally or in written form. Unlike undergraduates, you are not going to get repeated reminders of deadlines or other tasks. The information comes one time.
- **Better performers do not use technology when in class.** They put all their attention on what is occurring now. **You cannot**

afford to split your attention as the information will not be re-presented.

- There is no “catching up” in graduate school as there is no “slow time” in the semester. You aren’t going to make-up that material you fell behind on as the next batch is coming along. Re-think any ineffective strategies early—in the first 2-3 weeks of the term.
- You will sink or swim to the extent you can get along with your classmates. You will often have to work collaboratively and rely on one another. Pull your weight and learn to collaborate. Be polite and helpful. Follow through on commitments to others. These persons are your first professional network. Networks talk. Your reputation will follow you.
- You are expected to bring your own thoughtfulness and ideas to many tasks. Instructions will typically not be as detailed as in undergraduate programs, as you are expected to think through the task to achieve the stated goal. The exception is learning intelligence and other test administration. That must be done precisely and without deviation from any of the directions.
- You will be trusted to handle matters that have adverse legal consequences if done incorrectly. We will instruct you in proper behavior and then you need to manage it—think, act, follow-up.
- Your final work will be judged against what is done by functioning professionals. We know you will need several “drafts” to get to that point and that is the function of your courses...to take you from beginner to professional.
- Professionals are “self-governing,” which means we (including you now) hold ourselves responsible to a higher standard than the general population. In return for the perks of being a professional, we must

recognize what in our own behavior has contributed to problem situations and generate a solution involving modifying our own behavior. If you encounter a problem, you will be asked what you will do to improve your outcomes.

We have supervised many students through this process and **we know it is not going to be perfectly smooth**. Everyone stumbles and hits walls—that is an essential part of learning, as that is a very real part of professional practice. **What you are here to learn is how to pick yourself up, learn and try again until you get through that issue**. There is no such thing as a perfect performance in graduate school because the problems you will face as a student and as a professional do not come with simple directions or simple answers. We want you to **strive for excellence, not perfection**.

We do expect that on this journey you will continuously work

- to improve next time around (but not to delay facing a problem),
- to understand (but not to rationalize),
- to seek help as needed (but not to be dependent),
- to become self-correcting and self-reflective (but not to be neurotic).
- To do all of the above as efficiently as possible. The pace of the work does not allow for too many bobbles, as correction of them takes time away from work.

Finding the balance among all of these tasks is not easy and not smooth. Do your best to keep the number of missteps small and time-limited. **The faculty can better help you if you recognize and own issues sooner rather than later.**

Career goals. We expect that you will discover career ideas that are new to you and your goals may zig and zag a bit as you develop as a professional. Change is normal. In your first semester, talk with the different faculty members about what their perceptions of the job market are, do some reading about different areas of specialization, and get a general idea of what you think you would like to do. You want to notice which readings grab your attention. Most persons go through several phases in their work lives, so you are just anticipating the first 5 to 10 years of your career.

Start a journal to record your thoughts, experiences and observations about clinical work (but do not record client names).

Remember, **life is a process, not a product.** Be open to growth experiences. Try to enjoy the changes and to get time apart when too much is happening. Attend to your own mental health as well as your intellectual life. Talk with your faculty when the going gets tough.

Graduate school is a process of change, shaping who you are behaviorally, emotionally and, of course, intellectually. You

will also build professional relationships that will likely last your life-time and become the seed of your professional network. Graduate school can be a roller-coaster ride, terrifying or exhilarating depending on how you look at it, but definitely more fun if you talk with your colleagues and your faculty about the experience as it is happening. As you gain confidence and experience I believe you will find it becoming more and more exhilarating.

You should re-read this handbook periodically as you pass various graduate school events. I think you will uncover tidbits not perceived in your last reading. **Remember to use all of your resources: your persistence, your intelligence, your problem-solving ability, your patience, and your social network.** You will be the one in the best position to learn how to integrate all of your skills to produce success.

Welcome to graduate school!

Sally Kuhlenschmidt, Ph.D.,
M.A. Program Coordinator

About the Program

Introduction and philosophy. The Clinical Psychology M.A. program at Western Kentucky University, offered since 1979, prepares the student for applied practice or doctoral work. It is administratively housed in the Department of Psychology, which itself is located within the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences. The general theoretical orientation of the program is cognitive-behavioral, although students will be exposed to other philosophies. The program is practice-oriented, offering a broad foundation at the M.A. level that prepares students to have multiple career options. The program also values research and trains students in interpretation of evidence-based practices. Students interested in doctoral work should talk with their advisor about how best to prepare a strong portfolio of experiences.

Program overview.

Applied Work. The two-year program in clinical psychology offers a broad professional foundation for students who will function as professional psychologists at the M.A. level. Students must complete a minimum of [48 credit hours in psychology](#), usually over four semesters, including 1 winter term and 1 summer term course. Upon successful completion they will be licensable in Kentucky as a Licensed Psychological Associate (LPA). The [state requires 60 hours](#) to be a Licensed Psychological Practitioner (LPP) in Kentucky. See Appendix for other states that license at the M.A. level.

Graduates obtain employment in mental health centers, rehabilitation centers, college counseling centers, and various other mental health agencies. The program prepares students to be able to take the [Examination for the Professional Practice of Psychology](#) (EPPP, pronounced “E triple P”), required to practice in Kentucky and many other states. All but three of the graduates of the program since we started tracking in 2002-2003 who did not continue on

to a doctoral program have found work in an area related to their education.

Personal growth is a natural part of any clinical training program. Students will be required to examine their beliefs, values, and experiences with regard to their ability to perform applied tasks, such as therapy and assessment. In some classes, students may be required to discuss and disclose their beliefs, values, and experiences.

Doctoral Options. Many graduates pursue training at the doctoral level. Since 2002-2003, 28 clinical master program students have continued on to doctoral program placements (28 of the 89 who have graduated, about a 31% rate.) For example, students have been accepted into

- Clinical Psychology Psy.D. (14 students),
- Clinical Psychology Ph.D. (4 students),
- Counseling Psychology Ph.D. (7 students),
- School Psychology Ph.D. (1 student), and
- Education Leadership Ed.D. (1 student), and
- Developmental Psychology Ph.D. (1 student) programs.

Program mission. The Clinical Concentration of the M.A. in Psychology prepares students to be successful in both professional practice (See [201 Kentucky Administrative Regulations \(KAR\) 26:210 §1-2](#)) and in research. The program prepares graduate students to succeed as master’s level clinicians or doctoral students by developing their professional skills, attitudes, and values, providing foundational coursework and practical experiences, and training them in research-based problem-solving.

Program values. Values impact the effectiveness of applied and research work. The M.A. program endorses the following values:

- diversity, and efforts to build equality and respect;
- service to the behavioral health needs of underserved populations and rural communities;
- evidence-based practice skills that serve the profession and community;
- academic integrity and the highest levels of scholarship to advance our understanding of behavioral health;
- reflective practice, where students and faculty evaluate their professional actions on a regular basis;
- collegiality and developing an engaged community of learners, connecting faculty, alumni, current and future students;
- the prior professional experiences students bring with them to the program.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the M.A. in Psychology, Clinical Concentration, the student will be able to:

1. Function as a competent behavioral health practitioner under supervision and implement evidence-based practices for a general mental health population.
 - 1.1. Describe the theories, methods, and assessment of human behavior, affect, and cognition, development, individual differences, maladaptive behavior, and recognize the influences of biology and society.
 - 1.2. Apply principles from the science of psychology to behavioral health problems in familiar settings
 - 1.3. Recognize issues of diversity and multiculturalism for clients and address them appropriately.

- 1.4. Recognize and apply legislative, ethical and professional standards to practice issues such as those involving technology and privacy.

- 1.5. Effectively communicate their assessment and conceptualization to consumers and other professionals.

- 1.6. Profit from feedback on their behavior from clients, colleagues, or other professionals.

2. Behave in a professional manner toward clients, supervisors and colleagues and with respect for professional boundaries.

3. Review scholarly practice literature and effectively integrate it with practice considerations.

- 3.1. Demonstrate knowledge of contemporary advances in the field affecting their realm of practice.

- 3.2. Engage in data-based problem-solving in their respective practice settings, including adherence to American Psychological Association standards for the conduct of research and sensitivity to cultural and individual differences in the formulation of research questions, design, and implementation.
- 3.3. Accurately and thoughtfully interpret action-research that advances the needs of the practice community, and communicate the results to those affected.

Curriculum

The 48 credit hours of courses required for completion of the M.A. degree in clinical psychology are dictated largely by the [requirements for certification in the State of Kentucky \(201 KAR 26:210\)](#) as a Licensed Psychological Associate. This sequence of courses (see Appendix), standard for the profession, will provide students who apply themselves with the basic clinical skills, attitudes, and values needed for success in the field and to function effectively with clients and other professionals. In addition, students who do well will be prepared to take the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP). See 201 KAR 26: 230 §1-2 for details. Because

practica require intense interpersonal contact, the program is only available on the Bowling Green campus.

Full time vs. part time. Many students want to be employed at a job while attending graduate school. This desire is understandable; however, based on experience with prior students, caution is advised. We have found that graduate students can either go to school full-time **OR** work full-time if they wish success in both areas. Students who try to take 12 semester hours of classes and work 40 hours per week (and accept an assistantship and try to have a family/social life) will fail in one area or the other or both. Study time, sleep, good attention, and health really are essential to performance in graduate school. Students who lack these will not perform well at their course work. While students will need to evaluate their own situation, it is recommended by the faculty that students commit themselves to graduate school and attend full-time. We believe that students will have a better graduate experience if they attend full-time rather than part-time. Again, graduate school is not comparable to undergraduate school. **A 12 hour graduate course load is closer to 24 hours of undergraduate work or more and requires a higher level of cognitive integration.**

Full-time enrollment in the program, and accepting an assistantship in the process, allows students to become engaged in a community of colleagues. Students have a good opportunity to practice their professional roles and learn from faculty if they spend time within Gary Ransdell Hall. And, remember, the relationship with faculty members—for good or ill—does not end at graduation. The faculty continue to interact with students through professional venues and serve as their first mentors into a professional world in which connections matter.

Summer courses/January Term.

Students will be required to take three hours of course work in the January term between Fall Semester and Spring Semester of their first year and three hours of coursework during the summer session between their first and second years. These two courses are PSY 541 (Introduction to Professional Psychology, Ethics, and Standards of Practice) and typically PSY 520 (Individual Differences), although PSY 550 (Personality Theory) may be occasionally substituted for PSY 520.

Students who wish to complete the 60-hour program for the LPP may opt to take an additional three hours of courses in the summer session between their first and second year, an additional six hours in the second year and an additional three hours in the summer session after their second year. These additional courses will be electives. We generally recommend finishing the 48 hours so you have a degree in hand and taking the 12 hours later.

Transfer credit. Up to 12 semester hours of transfer credit from an accredited institution may be accepted toward meeting the course requirements for the degree. These courses must be properly identified as graduate level courses and must fall within the 6 year limit for degree completion.

Requests for transfer credit must be approved by the clinical faculty and include supporting documentation on course content and requirements, such as syllabi, reading lists and related materials. The Graduate School must also approve all requests for transfer credits.

Research tool. The University requires that graduate students complete a research tool as part of their program. EDFN 500 (Research Methods) meets this requirement. Students must earn at least a B in this class.

Practica. Graduate students in clinical psychology take practicum courses (PSY 562 and PSY 662) both semesters of their first year. A practicum course is one in which the student has “practical” experience with the profession being learned. In our program that means interacting with clients under supervision and engaging in professional behaviors. Tasks in such courses are often open-ended to meet the needs of the varying client population. It is very important that you follow supervisor instruction during practica and check in with the supervisor as requested in order to avoid putting the client, yourself, or the supervisor at risk.

You are practicing on the supervisor’s license in practica courses and so he or she will take your actions very seriously. They do understand you are learning. If something untoward occurs, your best action is to inform the supervisor immediately. Hiding or downplaying important information suggests poor judgment and is cause for dismissal from the program. Your goals are to avoid big mistakes (e.g., breaking confidentiality) and to learn from your small mistakes (e.g., writing the wrong gender on a *draft* report) and not repeat them.

Liability Insurance. Graduate students are involved in a variety of applied practicum experiences in the Psychology Training Clinic and in local practica with clients. Further, many students will also be employed full time while they complete the program. Therefore, all students are required to carry professional liability insurance and M.A. students need to obtain it *before* Christmas break. This insurance should be at the \$1 million/\$3 million level. The cost of insurance is at the student's expense. Your practica supervisor will give you direction on obtaining insurance. You apply and then must wait awhile to see if you are accepted. You will need to show proof of malpractice insurance before you will be allowed to see therapy clients in the second semester.

PSY 562 is associated with the course in intellectual assessment (PSY 560) and involves practice in administering and interpreting intelligence tests and other cognitive instruments. Both children and adults are recruited as volunteer clients. This practicum requires precision and attention to fine detail while retaining interaction with the client. It also requires capacity to improve over time.

PSY 662 is associated with the course in psychotherapy (PSY 641). Students are required to perform a certain number of hours of psychotherapy for 662. The type of therapeutic services ranges from individual therapy to psychoeducational groups. Students work with their practicum cases in the Psychology Training Clinic and must follow clinic procedures. This course requires empathy, flexibility while maintaining standards, and capacity to grow from feedback.

Most of the practicum work is completed in the Psychology Training Clinic within the Psychology Department (GRH 1035). You would be wise to **track your clinical hours, indicating direct client contact, various forms of preparation such as writing reports and indicating at least assessment versus therapy hours.** You will receive a suggested form for tracking in one of your courses.

Supervision.

Best practice in clinical work is to use ongoing supervision throughout your professional career. “Lone wolves” end up damaging clients and themselves. Training and practice as an M.A. psychologist requires supervision of your clinical activities. Your role as a trainee/supervisee is to be thoughtful, thorough, and careful when dealing with anything client-related and to discuss questions and concerns with your supervisor.

The supervisor’s role is to encourage your professional development through support with appropriate challenge, to guard client welfare and to evaluate your progress and needs.

Supervision may include live, videotaped, audiotaped, and other forms of observation, such as review of testing protocols, peer observation, or supervision by a doctoral student who in turn is supervised by faculty. Supervision may be conducted one-on-one or in a group. It may involve additional readings or research on your part in order to provide appropriate service. Details will be explained at the start of each course. Whoever your supervisor is, there is a “library” of knowledge and experience in that person that can profit you if you learn how to evoke it in honest, reflective conversations. Learning from a variety of people is the best preparation for clinical work as you learn alternative approaches and deepen your “toolchest” of options for your own work.

Practicum work is often recorded on video or audio, using our state-of-the-art system, at the discretion of the supervisor. The recordings are used to provide feedback and direction to the student. **Students are responsible for assuring the confidentiality of these recordings as well as all practicum materials.** You will be trained on the equipment. Pay attention. It usually does not go as smoothly when you are alone with a client. Practice in several rooms so you learn the general principles and quirks.

Internship.

A 600-hour internship/practica is [required by the Kentucky Board of Examiners of Psychology](#) (201 KAR 26:210 § 1(9)) in order to be license eligible in Kentucky. Most states (see section later in document) require an internship/practicum experience of some sort for licensure, so if you are planning to be licensed in another state, you will need to check that state’s regulations to determine the requirements. Internships may be completed in a variety of settings, according to the students’ needs and professional goals, and availability of internship sites. It can be helpful for some students to do extra internship hours. That will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

A limited number of internships are available in the Bowling Green area, for example, at [Rivendell](#), the [University Counseling and Testing Center](#), or the [Medical Center](#). Students may apply for internships in other cities or states. However, remember that the internship must include the practice of psychological skills in assessment, diagnosis, **and** therapy, and that your supervisor must be approved by our program. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that an appropriate supervisor is available for the experience.

Students will complete 20 hours a week of internship experience. This will include approximately 12 hours each week spent in activities at the off-campus site, 1 hour per week of University Supervision, and 7 hours in the Psychology Training Clinic. The number of hours spent at the off-campus site and the Psychology Training Clinic are subject to change based on the needs of the Training Clinic and the number of students in the class. Do not be tempted to skimp on supervision or you cheat yourself of some of your most effective learning experiences.

Electives.

Because of the state requirements, there are only 2 semesters (occurring during the second year) in which an elective can be taken. This allows students to take 54 hours total during the basic program. Most often students opt to use that time for more internship hours or the capstone project (see next section).

However, if students opt to take the [60-hour program to meet requirements](#) for Licensed Practicing Psychologist status, then students can elect to take 12 hours both semesters their second year and register for another 6 hours in either the summer session between the first and second year or the summer session after the second year. Suggested electives include courses in Group Therapy, Play Therapy or Brief Therapy. An [Addictions Education Certificate](#) is

available through the Counseling and Student Affairs Department.

We recommend that you complete your degree and earn the LPA designation (Licensed Psychological Associate) before returning for the credits to apply for LPP (Licensed Psychological Practitioner) status.

Thesis/Nonthesis Options.

Contingent on final approval, starting in the Fall 2018 semester, students may elect either the thesis or nonthesis option. Please consult with your advisor with regard to which track will fit better with your career objectives. Throughout this handbook we use “capstone project” to refer to either the thesis or the nonthesis project.

Nonthesis option. Students will complete one elective graduate level course with the approval of the M.A. advisor and will sign up for 3 hours of Psy 590 completing a capstone research review paper along the lines of a *Psychological Bulletin* review paper. The paper topic must be applicable to work in clinical psychology and a two to three page prospectus must be reviewed by the clinical faculty member (who will serve on the defense committee.) The faculty will judge acceptability of the topic as well as provide advice on how to effectively sculpt a do-able paper. The student is advised to be in regular contact with this person to ensure success in the project and is advised to set up a review meeting every 2 to 3 weeks, planning the meetings at the start of the term. Failure to keep the schedule tends to result in failure to complete the paper. It is acceptable to talk on the phone or via Skype.

This capstone paper, roughly 50 to 60 pages with Reference section, must meet APA Style criteria and will be defended orally in front of at least two graduate faculty, including at least one clinical faculty member. The committee is selected in consultation with the M.A. advisor. The student will schedule the oral. The selection of the review team will be with the approval of the clinical faculty. If there is disagreement on

the paper passing then a third person with a clinical doctoral degree will review the paper after corrections from the first two are made. As appropriate, the paper will be submitted to *TopScholar* for publication.

The oral examination is graded on a pass/fail scale as determined by a majority vote of the committee. To pass students must complete the selected tasks at the 80% level or above in quantity and quality and satisfactorily complete required corrections on their paper by two weeks before the Monday of Finals week to pass Psy 590. The M.A. advisor is responsible for submitting the Capstone form. For additional information on Graduate Studies rules concerning Capstone projects visit <http://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/enrollment/>.

Alternative path. An alternative path for completing this requirement is to work in a faculty lab for Psy 590 credit (most likely during fall semester of the 2nd year), completing 70 clock hours of work (recorded on a time sheet, signed by the faculty and a copy given to the M.A. advisor) and develop a research idea in partnership with the faculty. Then, in the subsequent semester, sign up again for Psy 590 as before. At this point the student will do 1 of 2 tasks.

- a. The student will have primary responsibility for writing and presenting a collaborative research project at an event such as REACH week or a conference. (A poster presentation does not typically include a formal presentation and so is not acceptable.)
- b. The student will complete a literature review, following the general standards listed in the first paragraphs, related to the research lab’s focus, and then defend it.

For both a) and b) the Graduate School rules on non-thesis oral examinations (e.g., two graduate faculty members) will be followed and will conform to the general procedure outlined above. Ideally the research faculty member will be on the examination committee along with a clinical faculty member.

In all cases, a copy of the presentation and the completed rubric will be given to the M.A. advisor stating the student name date, location and usual citation information.

Students switching from the Thesis option to Nonthesis will not be able to count any Psy 599 hours toward the electives required for the Nonthesis option. Students switching in the other direction, from Nonthesis to Thesis, may not count Psy 590 toward the required thesis hours. Those extra hours would count toward the LPP hours, however, if passed.

Thesis option. A total of six credits of course work (3 hours of Psy 599 across 2 semesters) are awarded for undertaking thesis research and for the completion of the project. **See the Thesis Checklist (separate document) for details.** The thesis must be psychological in method and content as per 201 KAR 26:210 §1(3).

Students electing this option should select a faculty research mentor and formulate an idea for research during the fall semester of the first year of their master's program in concert with a the research mentor. This will facilitate the timely completion of their thesis project.

Do not count on the summer for "catching up." The time disappears quickly. While many plan to finish their proposal then, few actually do. Steady work in small bits is crucial.

Students switching from the Thesis option to Nonthesis will not be able to count any Psy 599 hours toward the electives required for the Nonthesis option. Students switching in the other direction, from Nonthesis to Thesis, may not count Psy 590 toward the required thesis hours. Those extra hours would count toward the LPP hours, however, if passed.

Students in the thesis option receive a passing grade in all enrolled sections when the thesis has been successfully defended in front of a committee of three and corrections are completed.

Evaluation and the M.A. Program

Evaluation of Graduate Students occurs continuously throughout the program with a summative report of the faculty assessment at the end of each semester. See Appendices for the form.

Maintenance of a B average is required to continue an assistantship.

Professional (clinical psychology) courses (PSY 541, PSY 560, PSY 562, PSY 660, PSY 662, PSY 641, and PSY 640) with a **grade below B do not count toward completion of the program** and will need to be re-taken until such a time as the student earns a B grade or is advised that success is unlikely.

Traditional examinations over coursework are only one aspect of the total evaluation. The faculty recognizes that the practice of clinical psychology requires more than simply applying academic knowledge. Consequently, students are evaluated every semester broadly on aspects of behavior that are essential to the functioning of a clinical psychologist. Such factors as

- time management
- communication skills
- attitudes/values appropriate for clinical work
- professionalism
- personal stability
- adherence to ethical standards, and
- cooperation with peers and
- response to supervision

will be considered in the overall evaluation conducted by the entire faculty based on observation in classes, clinical work, assistantships, thesis progress and other settings.

Most students progress as expected with occasional need for remediation in a particular area and occasional need to re-evaluate career paths.

If a student is found deficient in academic or professional areas, a program of remediation may be required. Remediation may include, but is not limited to, additional applied work, readings, and/or receiving psychotherapy. Students who do not complete the program of remediation will not be allowed to continue in the clinical psychology master's program. Our first ethical obligation is to protect potential clients. We do want everyone to succeed (hence this manual and more helps) but we cannot drag someone across the success line if it will result in malpractice down the road.

Failure to adhere to ethical standards is adequate cause for dropping a student from

the clinical psychology master's program, following procedures outlined in University publications.

Please view the Common Policies for more details about evaluation.

Before the gates of excellence the high gods
have placed sweat.

Long is the road thereto, and rough and steep at
the first.

But when the height is achieved,

Then there is ease,

Though grievously hard in the winning.

--Hesiod

Suggested Checklist for the M.A.

Prior to the First Semester.

- Connecting.** At least a week before the term begins, start using your [WKU email address](#) and check it daily. The WKU systems are set up to work most effectively with that email.
- You will have a **mailbox** that you will need to check daily. Enter the Psychology Department and go past the front desks and turn to your right. The mailbox shelves are down the hall on your right.
- Memorize your WKU [800 number and NetID](#). You will use them to access many campus resources. Part of your professional responsibility will be keeping them private as confidential client material will be accessible through them. If you have not changed your passwords in a while, do so. Start using a secure password manager, such as LastPass, so you use sufficiently complex passwords. Experts now are saying that the old advice to use a highly secure, nonsensical phrase with numbers and punctuation has not worked as humans cannot create sufficient complexity. Do not use the password in any other setting. Do NOT store the password on any device in a manner read by someone else. **Do NOT share your password with loved ones who do not have a right to view confidential material.** If you have already shared it, it is your ethical responsibility to change your password.
- Enhance your keyboarding and word processing skills. The better you are, the more efficiently you will produce your papers. The university supports Microsoft Word, [offers online training, and has a purchasing program for students](#) I recommend learning [Heading Styles](#). Do not trust APA style plug-ins. They are often outdated or incorrect.
- Purchase and study the most current edition of the [APA Publication Manual](#) and the [guide to electronic references](#). (Join APA for discount.) Every moment spent learning the details will pay off in time saved on papers.
- Learn software that enables you to organize references. After a recent review of options Dr. Kuhlenschmidt recommends [Zotero](#). It is free and relatively easy to learn.
- For those planning on engaging in research, complete your [CITI human subjects research ethics training](#) (which is good for 3 years) so you don't have to do that in the middle of a term. CITI training "follows" you from school to school, you'll just match it to WKU when the time comes.
- Create a professional credential file and vita. A professional credential file is where you keep documentation of your professional experiences, such as practicum hours, which you will need when you apply for a license. Remember this is a folder you will keep for 20 to 30 years. Don't keep it in a single location or electronic device. A [vita is how you present those credentials to others](#). A vita is always a work in progress and you may have several for different jobs (therapy, doctoral program) based on the single credential file. The sooner you begin, the easier it is to update it. At a minimum, be kind to your future self and toss a handwritten note about activities in this folder so you have some place to start. Review this [advice for presenting yourself professionally](#). And this for [do's and don'ts of vitas](#). Ask the faculty for help with your vita.
- On the other hand, we strongly discourage you from using a computer to take notes in class...so strongly we are discussing forbidding them unless it is for a disability accommodation. We have found that those who use computers do noticeably poorer than those taking notes by hand. We suspect it has to do with attention management. Maybe someone would like to do a research project on that question. Test yourself and see how long you can go without checking a computer

or mobile device. Build your tolerance toward 3 hours without looking. That will help your attention span as well as client interactions. And above all, do not wake up to check email in the night. You will just be undercutting your sleep cycle, attentional capacity, tolerance for change, and capacity for learning which you will need in graduate school. There are few events demanding attention in the middle of the night.

- The week before classes begin (typically that Thursday/Friday) there are orientations to attend.

First Semester.

- **Complete the [Program of Study form](#).** Do this immediately after Orientation when we have talked. Once you have this done, submit it to the M.A. Coordinator.
- **Find the important places in Gary Ransdell Hall.** These include, but are not limited to: graduate student office (3052—note that you share with another department so only some desks are for you; the lock code is handed out at orientation), clinical faculty offices and research laboratories, the Psychology Training Clinic (GRH 1035), your classrooms, and the computer laboratory (GRH 2055/56).
- **Find the libraries.** [Helm-Cravens](#) is up the hill and the [Education Resources Center](#) is on the 1st floor of Gary Ransdell Hall. Professionals use a wide variety of resources, particularly including primary (original) sources. Many important documents are NOT available online.
- When scheduling assistantship hours or other activities, students enrolled in practica are advised to retain several 3 hour segments of time for working with clients.
- **Adjust studying and time and priority management to graduate-level classes.** See Handbook Welcome for description.
- **Join [KPA](#) and [APA](#) as a student member.** This is the least it will ever cost to join so this gives you a chance to check out the

organizations for less and build professional networks. There are some discounts available on resources to members. [Think ahead to your first job.](#)

- **Obtain malpractice liability insurance before Christmas break.** You will need to show proof of malpractice insurance before you will be allowed to see therapy clients in the second semester.

Winter.

- **You will need to take PSY 541** (Introduction to Professional Psychology). Do not skip this class as it is only offered in the winter. If you skip it, you will be behind.

Second Semester.

- **Coordinate your internship.** Work with the Internship Supervisor during this semester to identify your internship site. Your goal is a place that will accept you for two semesters. You will get more details around spring break.
- **Update your vita.** Be sure to keep current so that you do not forget anything.

Summer.

- **Take appropriate summer courses.** You will need to take: PSY 520 (Individual Differences). Do not skip this class as it is only offered in the summer. If you skip it, you will be behind.
- **Seriously work on your capstone project.** Research shows that people are more productive when they do a tiny bit (e.g., 15 minutes) every day rather than when they try to binge write. **You aren't going to get hours in sequence very often. Learn to write "short."**
- **Apply for graduation.** Do this in the summer or a [hold will be placed on registration](#). (See TopNet/ Student Services/ Student Records/ Application for Graduation). You must apply even if you are not planning on participating in commencement.

- ❑ **Celebrate!** You're over halfway through.

Third Semester.

- ❑ **Begin your internship.** You will do approximately 20 hours (14 hours on site and 6 hours at WKU) of internship work a week in this semester.
- ❑ **Update your vita.** Be sure to keep current so that you do not forget anything.
- ❑ **Be aware of upcoming deadlines to graduate on time. (Dates announced in email)**
 - **Date to Apply for Graduation**
 - **Thesis Option: Thesis due to Graduate School at least 3 and as much as 4 weeks before next item...**
 - **Completion of all degree requirements by the last day of the semester.**

Fourth Semester.

- ❑ **Complete your internship.** Again, self-explanatory, but necessary.
- ❑ **Update your vita and credential file.** Be sure to keep it current so that you do not forget anything.

- ❑ **Graduate if you have kept up on your capstone project.** At the commencement ceremony, please find the clinical faculty afterwards, so we can take a group picture together. We are proud of your accomplishments and want to celebrate with you.

- ❑ **If you are still working on your capstone project, you need to register for Psy 600 Maintaining Matriculation in the term you will graduate.**

- ❑ **Seeking employment? Apply to the [State Board of Examiners of Psychology](http://www.apapracticecentral.org/update/2018/07-12/examination-professional-practice.aspx).** Do the paperwork shortly after graduation so that you can take the Written Exam (the EPPP) as soon as possible. Locate a job and a clinical supervisor. Students finishing in 2020 will be able to take the EPPP as soon as their coursework is finished but will have 2 parts to complete. See <http://www.apapracticecentral.org/update/2018/07-12/examination-professional-practice.aspx>

- ❑ **Attending a doctoral program?** Finish your work here, get some quality rest in, and start orienting yourself to the new program.
- ❑ Consider options for capstone project publication.
- ❑ Write to us periodically and let us know how you are doing. Congratulations!

Appendices

Clinical Class Schedule

Year 1 Fall Semester	Hrs	Year 1 Winter Term	Hrs	Year 1 Spring Semester	Hrs
EDFN 501 Statistics	3	PSY 541 Professional Issues and Ethics in Psychology	3	EDFN 500 Research Methods	3
PSY 560 Assessment of Individual Intellectual Functioning: Theories and Issues	3			PSY641 Theories of Psychotherapy	3
PSY 562 Practicum in Psychological Assessment	3			PSY 660 Assessment of Personality and Socio-emotional Functioning	3
PSY 640 Psychopathology	3			PSY 662 Practicum in Psychology	3
	12		3		12

Year 1 Summer Term	Hrs	Year 2 Fall Semester	Hrs	Year 2 Spring Semester	Hrs
PSY 520 Individual Differences and Human Diversity	3	PSY 511 Psychology of Learning	3	PSY 599 Thesis Research OR Nonthesis: Psy 590/one elective (see explanation in handbook)	3
		PSY 592 Psychology Internship	3	PSYS 552 Advanced Social Psychology	3
		PSY 599 Thesis Research OR Nonthesis: one elective/Psy 590 (see explanation in handbook)	3	PSY 651 Clinical Neuropsychology for the Applied Psychologist	3
		1 optional elective	(3)	1 optional elective	(3)
	3		9 (3)		9 (3)

Total Hours: 48 (54)

Behaviors Leading to Success

Successful Graduate Students	Unsuccessful Graduate Students
Keep electronic devices off in class.	Attend to the device, rather than the instructor and miss directions.
Complete projects early.	Wait until the last minute to do things.
Do more than is necessary to complete projects and assignments.	Do the minimum amount of work necessary to “get it done.”
Attempt to determine the expectations of professors/supervisors and modify their behaviors accordingly.	Expect to be told what to do.
Understands that tasks will prepare students to be professional psychologists.	Assume that tasks are meaningless or arbitrary.
Examine their challenges to determine what worked and what did not work. They continue with what worked and modify what did not.	Blame others for their challenges and want others to adjust to them.
Welcome and accept criticism (even unfair criticism) with equanimity and sometimes ask for more feedback.	Feel threatened by criticism and become angry when given feedback.
Have a desire to learn and become better students and people, regardless of the grade attached to the project.	Want only to get through graduate school the least effortful way possible.
Put in as much time as is necessary to do a complete and thorough job on a project.	Try to complete projects as quickly as possible without regard to quality.
Persevere through setbacks.	Give up when things get tough.
Are courteous to all colleagues—peers, faculty, staff, clients.	Behave as if some persons are not worth time or attention.

WKU Clinical Psychology Graduate Handbook

Opportunities for Licensure at the Master's Level

The following states have some sort of licensure recognition for individuals with a master's degree in psychology.

State	Title
Alabama	Psychological Technician
Alaska	Psychological Associate
Arkansas	Psychological Examiner
California	Registered Psychological Assistant
Delaware	Registered Psychological Assistant
Indiana	School Psychologist
Kansas	Registered Masters Level Psychologist
Kentucky	Psychological Associate Licensed Practicing Psychologist
Maine	Psychological Examiner
Maryland	Psychological Associate
Michigan	Masters Limited License in Psychology
Minnesota	Psychological Practitioner
Missouri	Psychologist
Nebraska	Psychological Associate
New Hampshire	Registered Psychological Assistant
Nevada	Licensed Psychological Assistant
New Mexico	Psychological Associate

State	Title
North Carolina	Psychological Associate
Ohio	School Psychologist
Oklahoma	Psychological Technician
Oregon	Psychological Associate
Texas	Licensed Psychological Associate Licensed Specialist in School Psychology
Utah	Registered Psychological Assistant
Vermont	Psychological Master
Virginia	School Psychologist
West Virginia	Psychologist School Psychologist I School Psychologist II
Wisconsin	Private Practice School Psychologist

[The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards](#) (ASPPB) governs the state licensing boards and can provide you with more details on each state. This board can be reached at:

400 S. Union St.
Montgomery, AL 36104
(334) 832-4580