



# **Psychology**

**USCA Psychology Department  
MS Degree in Applied Clinical Psychology  
Graduate Student Handbook**

**2025-2026**

## CONTENTS

<b>A. MISSION STATEMENT &amp; PROGRAM GOALS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
PROGRAM HISTORY .....	3
<b>B. CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
ADVISEMENT, ORIENTATION AND SELF-EVALUATION .....	4
COURSEWORK .....	5
PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.....	11
SOCIAL NETWORKING .....	12
APPLICATION FOR DEGREE .....	13
PRACTICUM .....	13
RESEARCH REQUIREMENT .....	14
<b>C. GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS &amp; STIPENDS .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>D. PROFESSIONAL ISSUES .....</b>	<b>20</b>
LICENSING.....	20
INSURANCE COVERAGE .....	21
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	22
<b>E. USCA PSYCHOLOGY CLINIC .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>F. DEPARTMENTAL FACILITIES .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>G. FACULTY .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>H. APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<i>i. Classroom Behavior Evaluation.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>ii. Student Activities Self Evaluation Report .....</i>	<i>277</i>
<i>iii. Assessment of Psychology Trainee.....</i>	<i>311</i>
<i>iv. Registration Forms .....</i>	<i>333</i>
<i>v. Thesis Documents.....</i>	<i>345</i>

The University of South Carolina Aiken does not discriminate in educational or employment opportunities or decisions for qualified persons on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetics, sexual orientation, or veteran status. The University of South Carolina Aiken has designated as the ADA Title II, Section 504 and Title IX coordinator: the Executive Assistant to the President for Equal Opportunity Programs. The Office of the Executive Assistant to the President for Equal Opportunity Programs is located at 1600 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC; telephone 803-777-3854.

The University of South Carolina Aiken is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate and master's degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the status of the accreditation of the University of South Carolina Aiken.

Any person who feels they qualify for special accommodations due to physical, learning or psychological disability should contact the Office of Disability Services at (803) 643-6815 for a free, confidential interview.

## A. MISSION STATEMENT & PROGRAM GOALS

The University of South Carolina Aiken's M.S. program in Applied Clinical Psychology provides students with opportunities to develop the knowledge, self-awareness, and skills needed to become highly competent and ethical scientist-practitioners trained to integrate evidenced-based and multicultural practices into their professional work. Critical thinking and analytic skills are fostered throughout the program, including the completion of an independent research project. The program prepares students for independent practice as licensed professional counselors\* or continued graduate study. The program strives to support students' personal growth and encourages them to extend the use of their skills as engaged members and leaders in their communities.

\* The term licensed professional counselor is used in SC and many states and is dictated by state law. Licensing requirements vary across states; thus, applicants are encouraged to discuss this with the program director if they are interested in becoming licensed outside of SC.

The program is designed to fulfill this mission through a set of seven objectives that students must achieve prior to completion of the program. Prior to graduation, students will demonstrate competence in the following:

1. Understanding and application of ethical principles in clinical and other professional settings
2. Application of multicultural awareness when working with individuals, groups, and communities with diverse backgrounds and characteristics
3. The ability to maintain effective relationships with clients, colleagues and supervisors
4. Development of biopsychosocial case conceptualizations and creation and implementation of treatment plans and intervention strategies to alleviate suffering and promote health and well-being
5. Assessment, including administration, scoring, interpretation, and communication of results
6. The ability to collaboratively conduct research
7. Effective use of research to inform clinical practice

USCA's MS in Applied Clinical Psychology program is committed to recruiting and retaining students who represent the diversity of our society and who possess a variety of identities, experiences, and histories. Additionally, the faculty are dedicated to training multiculturally competent counselors who can meet the needs of our diverse society and community.

### Program History

Since the M.S. degree program was founded, a strong emphasis has been placed on training students in accordance with the scientist-practitioner tradition. Faculty strongly believe that the development of master's-level practitioners is best served by participation in this process and that the critical-thinking skills so essential to sound clinical decision-making is enhanced through research experience.

The Master of Science Degree in Applied Clinical Psychology received full accreditation from the Masters in Psychology Accreditation Council (MPAC) in 2004 and was re-accredited in 2014 by Masters in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council (MPCAC) for another ten years, the maximum period granted. The mission of MPCAC is to accredit academic programs in

psychology and counseling, which promote training in the scientific practice of professional psychology and counseling at the master's level. Accreditation reflects a commitment to science-based training, with goals of enhancing services to the consumer and the public at large.

## **B. CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS**

### **Advisement, Orientation and Self-evaluation**

The Director of the Psychology Graduate Program will serve as academic advisor for all graduate students. Students must work with their advisor in order to initiate the process for enrollment in graduate classes each semester. The Director/Advisor will typically meet with the graduate students as a group to cover general advisement information and will meet individually as needed with students to handle specific concerns. Other faculty members function as unofficial mentors in various ways including addressing research, career and clinical matters. There is a digital Program of Study Form that will be shared with students and housed in their program file that outlines the curriculum. Students should update this form each semester when they complete their coursework so that it is clearly documented as they plan their program of study each semester. Students are ultimately responsible for making sure that they have completed all requirements for graduation, so if a student ever has a question about meeting all requirements, they should consult with the Graduate Program Director.

At the beginning of each academic year, all newly admitted students will be required to attend a graduate program orientation meeting, conducted by the USCA Department of Psychology. During orientation, students will receive information regarding curriculum and program requirements, will be introduced to the Psychology Department faculty members and advanced students who serve on a panel about the transition to graduate school, and have the opportunity to socialize with their new colleagues. The contents of the Graduate Handbook will be reviewed and students will have the opportunity to ask any questions they have.

As a part of the advisement process, students will be required to complete the Student Activities Self Evaluation Report (SASER) at least twice during their time in the program. The primary purposes of the SASER are to inform the clinical faculty of students' progress in all realms of the program, to provide a formal method of giving feedback to students, and to help students formulate plans to meet their career goals. Although the SASER process is necessarily an evaluative one, the emphasis is on students and faculty working together to set appropriate goals and evaluating performance in light of those goals. Regardless of the student's eventual career path, training in the three overlapping domains of Academic, Research, and Clinical/Professional development is crucial. The SASER is an annual assessment of the student's activities, accomplishments, and goals in each of these domains. All students are required to complete the SASER at least twice during their time in the program and submit the completed document to the Graduate Program Director when the request is made (usually at the end of students' second and fourth semesters). The clinical faculty will review each student's report and each evaluation submitted by a supervisor for that student. Then they will write a narrative about the student's progress and performance in each area and provide a rating. One of the clinical faculty will meet with the student to provide them the faculty feedback and rating. This process is designed for the student and faculty to discuss and summarize accomplishments, highlight strengths and areas in need of improvement, and set goals. If a student wishes to appeal the results of the faculty evaluation, their appeal such first be submitted to the Department Chair. The student may then submit their appeal to the USCA Graduate Advisory

Council if the evaluation is not over-turned by the Department Chair. Finally, the student may submit a third appeal to the USCA Provost whose decision is final. Please refer to the USCA Undergraduate and Graduate Programs Bulletin and the USCA Student Handbook for further information regarding appeals and grievances.

## **Coursework**

The MS Degree in Applied Clinical Psychology is a 61-hour degree program. Graduate students in the Master's in Applied Clinical Psychology program have a period of six years to complete the degree requirements. The curriculum is designed so that it may be completed in two calendar years, however, it is a very intensive program and students must expect to dedicate much of their time to the program if they intend to complete the program in that timeframe. Thus, students who are working outside of the program or with many personal responsibilities must understand that it will be very challenging to complete the program in two years. Students can decide to reduce their courseload but should meet with the program director to understand the impact on the completion of the program. In developing the degree requirements, an effort was made to address most state licensing (e.g., Licensed Professional Counselor-LPC) requirements. We suggest that students become familiar with the requirements for licensure in the state(s) in which they desire to become licensed as they do differ. The program will hold annual meetings about the licensure process and will discuss it in various classes. You may also meet with the Program Director with questions you have about licensure at other times.

Students are required to complete the following courses in order to obtain their degree:

1. Core Courses (All required): (15 credit hours)
  - PSYC 610 Developmental Psychology (3)
  - PSYC 620 Psychopathology (3)
  - PSYC 624 Research Methods in Psychology (3) PSYC 625 Statistics (3)
  - PSYC 760 Applied Neuroscience for Mental Health Professionals (3)
2. Applied Clinical Courses (All required): (37 credit hours)
  - PSYC 600 Ethical and Professional Issues in the Practice of Psychology (3)
  - PSYC 630 Career and Lifestyle Development (3)
  - PSYC 680 Cognitive Assessment (4)
  - PSYC 701 Theories and Techniques of Counseling and Psychotherapy (3)
  - PSYC 702 Psychotherapy in a Multicultural and Diverse Society (3)
  - PSYC 710 Assessment and Treatment of Substance Use Disorders (3)
  - PSYC 720 Trauma Psychology (3)
  - PSYC 725 Group Therapy and Counseling (3)
  - PSYC 780 Personality and Pathology Assessment (3)
  - PSYC 790 Pre-Practicum (2)
  - PSYC 791 Practicum in Applied Clinical/Counseling Psychology 1 (3)
  - PSYC 793 Practicum in Applied Clinical/Counseling Psychology 2 (3)
  - PSYC 794 Advanced Practicum (1)
3. Advanced Topics (must take at least one course): (3 credit hours)

PSYC 700 Advanced Topics in Applied Psychology (3)

4. Research (2 semester minimum required): (3 credit hours)

PSYC 699 Independent Research (1-2)\*

5. Professional Electives: (3 credit hours)

PSYC 699 Independent Research (1-3)\*

PSYC 700 Advanced Topics in Applied Psychology (3): On a topic other than the one taken to fill the requirement under #3 above; topics rotate each summer.

PSYC 795 Clinical/Counseling Internship (1-3; may be repeated)\*

PSYC 799 Thesis (1-3; may be repeated; 3 total required)\*

\* Registration for 699, 799 and 795 requires the student to complete an Independent Study contract. See the Appendix for a link to the contract and procedures.

Further information about course descriptions and prerequisites is located in the USCA Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Bulletin found on the USCA website. Courses are generally held during the afternoon hours in an effort to accommodate students' assistantship schedules and applied clinical experiences. A student may not enroll in more than 12 credit hours during a semester without special permission; 12-13 credits are the typical courseload to graduate in two years/six semesters. Provisionally admitted and students with significant personal responsibilities may choose to enroll in 9 credit-hours, or less. A student is classified as a full-time graduate student for academic purposes by enrolling in at least 9 hours during each of the fall and spring terms, and 3 hours during a summer session. In order to be eligible to receive a graduate stipend/assistantship, students must enroll in at least 9 credit hours of Psychology graduate-level courses during each of the fall and spring terms, and in at least 3 credit hours of Psychology graduate-level courses during summers. If there is a need at an assistantship site for a student who is not enrolled full-time, special permission may be granted.

While the schedule of course offerings is subject to change, it is expected that a full-time student can complete the degree requirements in a minimum of two calendar years. The following sequence of courses is an example of a possible enrollment strategy for those who intend to complete the degree requirements within this timeframe:

**Two Year Completion - 6 semesters (example):**

1st Semester (Fall) 12 credit-hour load

PSYC 600 Ethical and Professional Issues in the Practice of Psychology

PSYC 620 Psychopathology

PSYC 624 Research Methods in Psychology

PSYC 701 Theories and Techniques of Psychotherapy

2nd Semester (Spring) 13 credit-hour load

PSYC 610 Developmental Psychology

PSYC 625 Statistics

PSYC 680 Cognitive Assessment

PSYC 702 Psychotherapy in a Multicultural and Diverse Society

3rd Semester (Summer) 5 to 6 credit-hour load

PSYC 699 Independent Research (1 or 2 credits if taking thesis option)

PSYC 700 Advanced Topic

PSYC 790 Pre-practicum (with permission)

4th Semester (Fall) 13 credit-hour load

PSYC 720 Trauma Psychology

PSYC 760 Applied Neuroscience for Mental Health Professionals

PSYC 780 Personality and Pathology Assessment

PSYC 791 Practicum I (with permission)

PSYC 699 Independent Research

5th Semester (Spring) 10 to 12 credit-hour load

PSYC 630 Career and Lifestyle Development

PSYC 725 Group Therapy and Counseling

PSYC 793 Practicum II (with permission)

PSYC 795 Clinical/Counseling Internship

PSYC 699 Independent Research or PSYC 799 Thesis

6th Semester (Summer) 5 credit-hour load

PSYC 710 Assessment and Treatment of Substance Use Disorders

PSYC 799 Thesis (if taking thesis option and not defended yet)

PSYC 794 Advanced Practicum (with permission)

**Three Year Completion - 8 semesters (example; can be altered based on need/situation):**1st Semester (Fall) 9 credit-hour load

PSYC 600 Ethical and Professional Issues in the Practice of Psychology

PSYC 620 Psychopathology

PSYC 701 Theories and Techniques of Psychotherapy

2nd Semester (Spring) 10 credit-hour load

PSYC 610 Developmental Psychology

PSYC 680 Cognitive Assessment

PSYC 702 Psychotherapy in a Multicultural and Diverse Society

3rd Semester (Summer) 5 credit-hour load

PSYC 700 Advanced Topic

PSYC 790 Pre-practicum (with permission)

4th Semester (Fall) 9 credit-hour load

PSYC 624 Research Methods in Psychology

PSYC 780 Personality and Pathology Assessment

PSYC 791 Practicum I (with permission)

5th Semester (Spring) 9-10 credit-hour load

PSYC 625 Statistics  
 PSYC 725 Group Therapy and Counseling  
 PSYC 699 Independent Research  
 PSYC 793 Practicum II (with permission)

6th Semester (Summer) 5 credit-hour load

PSYC 710 Assessment and Treatment of Substance Use Disorders  
 PSYC 699 Independent Research  
 PSYC 794 Advanced Practicum (with permission)

7th Semester (Fall) 7 credit-hour load

PSYC 720 Trauma Psychology  
 PSYC 760 Applied Neuroscience for Mental Health Professionals  
 PSYC 699 Independent Research or PSYC 799 Thesis

8th Semester (Spring) 5 credit hour load

PSYC 630 Career and Lifestyle Development  
 PSYC 795 Clinical/Counseling Internship  
 PSYC 699 Independent Research or PSYC 799 Thesis

It should be noted that the format of a graduate class is generally quite different from what students may be used to at the undergraduate level. Graduate courses are generally taught in a seminar format, and students will be expected to fulfill a much more independent role in their academic experiences. This means that students will be responsible for having completed a comprehensive review of assigned reading materials prior to class and students will have a major responsibility in presenting material and in contributing to the class discussion. Graded assignments will frequently include in-class presentations, paper assignments, applied clinical/counseling assignments when appropriate, and more formal examinations, in addition to in-class participation. As representatives of USCA and as professionals in the field of psychology/counseling/mental health, students will be expected to fulfill their professional roles in a manner that is consistent with the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association and the American Counseling Association. Students will be expected to present themselves in a professional manner in both appearance and demeanor. If a student engages in problematic behavior in the classroom, the professor will complete Classroom Behavior Evaluation form and submit it to the program director. A copy of this form can be found in the Appendix so that you have an understanding of when this form would be completed. It is not typically necessary for faculty to have to complete these forms but it does happen.

It is our belief that the curriculum and training requirements for the Master's in Applied Clinical Psychology program are rigorous and comprehensive. While it is our expectation that all students enrolled in our program will succeed, we must and will maintain high standards of expectation for your performance. Graduate school is a long, difficult journey, with inherent stressors. You will work very hard, be challenged repeatedly, and there will be numerous demands for your time that you must learn to prioritize. Thus, it is imperative that you are certain that graduate school is something you really desire.



## Applied Hours Requirement

To provide students with valuable applied clinical and counseling experiences, several of the Applied Clinical courses will include a requirement of applied experiences, particularly the 4 course practicum series (PSYCH 790, 791, 793, and 794). On occasion, these assignments can be satisfied by performing certain applied activities within the formal classroom setting, though a major portion of these assignments will include working in applied settings outside of the formal classroom setting, including the Psychology Clinic in our department. To fulfill the practicum course requirements, students will be required to devote approximately 10-20 hours per week to applied activities. The hours vary significantly depending on the assistantship a student may have and the number of clients the student is seeing in the Psychology Clinic. The student's clinical and counseling activities in these settings will be supervised by USCA's clinical faculty or adjunct supervisors, as well as by select staff members working in these settings when appropriate. At the end of each semester that a student is enrolled in a Practicum course, each clinical supervisor will complete an evaluation of their performance related to the cases they supervised. The form is called Assessment of Psychology Trainee can be found in the Appendix.

To complete their MS Degree, students must accumulate a minimum of 700 clock-hours of supervised applied experiences, 240 of which need to be direct service (i.e., face-to-face with clients). These hours will be accumulated starting in the third semester through graduation. It is possible that you will need to accumulate more than 700 hours in order to have the minimum of 240 direct service hours. The Program Director will determine which activities will count toward the clinical hour requirement. Students will be required to maintain an electronic activity log starting their third semester as a means of documenting their applied clinical experiences. These logs will be provided to you by the Program Director and kept on SharePoint. They should be updated weekly, at minimum, and shared with the Program Director and any Clinical Faculty Supervisors that you have. In addition to the clinical services you provide and trainings you attend, you will need to document your hours of clinical supervision. You will receive a minimum of one hour of individual supervision per month; clinical faculty will monitor this to ensure you meet the requirement of at least 30 hours of individual supervision (which is defined as no more than 2 students per clinical supervisor) by graduation. The Program Director will review your spreadsheet periodically throughout each semester and will inform you if there are any issues (e.g., counting an activity as direct service that does qualify). Documentation of applied clinical experiences will also be made by completion of the SASER, discussed previously. It is essential that you accurately document your hours (no over-estimating or falsifying the time you spend); accurate documentation of your hours is an ethical requirement of the program and the profession.

## Academic Regulations and Grading

Admission into the Master's program may be granted at one of two levels:

Full admission status: applications with strong relevant references, undergraduate records indicating strong academic performance, and research or clinically-related experience (e.g., volunteering with an agency)

Provisional status: applicants who wish to seek a graduate degree but who lack sufficient requirements (e.g., strong GPA, 3 strong references) for full admission status. To be

considered for admittance all applicants have a minimum of 15 credits in psychology. Provisionally admitted students must attain a 3.0 grade point average during their first 12 credit hours to be eligible for full admission. If after the completion of any semester of the provisional enrollment, it is determined that the student will be unable to achieve a 3.0 grade point average during the course of the first 12 credit hours, the student must withdraw from the program.

International Student Admission. Students who have earned a degree or taken any courses in countries outside the US must have an official transcript evaluated by a professional evaluation service. This evaluation must be forwarded directly to the USCA Graduate Admissions Office from the evaluation service. A list of several professional Evaluation Services can be obtained from the USCA Admissions Office or found on the USCA web site at: [www.USCA.edu/admissions](http://www.USCA.edu/admissions). Students will not be considered for admission until this evaluation is received.

Admission to the graduate program is valid for one year. If an offer of admission has not been acted upon by a student after one calendar year, the student must reapply for admission (this does not allow the student to defer admission until the fall of the following year). Students admitted to the program who have not completed any USCA Psychology graduate courses during a period of three or more years are required to fulfill current admission requirements prior to returning to the University for additional graduate work. Such students become subject to the regulations of the graduate program that are in effect at the time of readmission.

A maximum of 12 hours of equivalent graduate coursework completed at other accredited institutions with a grade of B or better may transfer to the USCA M.S. Psychology degree. However, thesis and practicum work from institutions other than USCA will not transfer into the program. The Department of Psychology will make final determination of transferability of all coursework.

The University reserves the right to decline admission, to suspend, or to require the withdrawal of a student when, for any reason, such action is deemed to be in the best interest of the University.

Graduate students are restricted in the choice of graduation requirements of one specific bulletin. According to USCA regulations, graduate students in master's degree programs have a period of six years inclusive and continuous in which to claim the rights of a specific bulletin. Students are advised that unforeseen circumstances may interfere with the scheduling of any given course or degree offering. Students will be required to take such developments into account as they arise, even if doing so means a delay in the fulfillment of some of their academic goals, or a modification of these goals. The Department of Psychology will work closely with students facing such problems, in an effort to resolve them with a minimum of difficulty.

Graduate students in the Master's Degree in Applied Clinical Psychology have a period of six years to complete the degree requirements. Students who have not completed the degree requirements by the completion of their sixth year will be removed from the program.

After the completion of 9 hours of coursework in the USCA M.S. Psychology program, a minimum grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained to remain in good standing in the

degree program. If the overall grade point average falls below a 3.0 in any semester, a probationary period will begin in which a student must raise this average to at least a 3.0 within the next 9 credit hours of coursework. Failure to attain a 3.0 in this period will result in the student's termination from the degree program. Students may not enroll in practicum courses, thesis, or independent research during the probationary period; students will not be eligible for placement in graduate assistantships during the probationary period.

Required courses other than Psychopathology and the Applied Core Courses may be passed for degree credit with a grade as low as a C, but the student's average on all courses attempted for graduate credit must be at least a 3.0. If the student earns a grade below a C on any course, that course must be repeated in order to earn degree credit (C or better). Psychopathology and the Applied Core Courses must be passed with a grade of B or better. If the student earns a grade below a B, that course must be repeated in order to earn degree credit (B or better). If the student earns a grade lower than a B during practicum coursework (PSYC 790/791/793/794), that course must be repeated in order to earn degree credit. All registrations will appear on the student's permanent record and all grades will be computed in the student's grade point average. Course credit for graduation will be given only once unless otherwise stipulated in the course description (e.g., PSYC 699/799). Students must have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in order to graduate from the degree program. Grades earned on credits transferred from other universities do not count in the grade point average. PSYC 699, 795, and 799 are graded on a pass-fail basis, and these grades are not included in the overall grade point average (see below for more information about thesis requirements). Students must obtain a minimum grade of B on all applied courses that serve as prerequisites for the practicum course prior to enrollment in PSYC 790. Graduate courses may not be audited and no graduate courses can be taken on a Pass/Fail basis (except PSYC 699/795/799).

Appeals and petitions related to programs, regulations, or other academic matters will be reviewed first by the academic unit head (i.e., Chair of the Department of Psychology), then by the USCA Graduate Advisory Council, and finally by the USCA Provost. Please refer to the USCA Undergraduate and Graduate Programs Bulletin and the USCA Student Handbook for further information regarding appeals and grievances.

### **Professional Responsibilities**

Students preparing for careers in mental health services must meet both the academic qualifications and level of personal adjustment (e.g., emotional stability, maturity, understanding of appropriate interpersonal boundaries) and self-awareness deemed necessary to function effectively as professional mental health service providers. This self-awareness includes being aware of needing to speak to the graduate program director and your clinical supervisors if you are unable to complete or handle all your clinical responsibilities (or non-clinical assistantship responsibilities) in a professional manner for any reason. In these discussions, we can help identify a course of action that needs to be taken until you can resume these responsibilities (or perhaps reduce these responsibilities for a period of time). Students may be removed from the program if they do not uphold their professional responsibilities, particularly if they do not address issues that arise with the graduate program director. The faculty will also attempt to provide remediation, when possible. However, there are circumstances in which a student could be terminated immediately – if the behavior or pattern

of behavior is egregious (e.g., academic dishonesty, unethical or illegal behavior). Graduate students in the Applied Clinical Psychology program are expected to adhere to the ethical and professional standards required by the American Psychological Association and the American Counseling Association, in addition to the standards of the USCA code of conduct.

Graduate student performance in the Applied Clinical Psychology program is monitored, in part, by means of semester grades and behavioral evidence of appropriate adjustment and professional conduct. Students conduct a regular formal self-evaluation of various performance criteria by completing the Student Activity Self-Evaluation Report (SASER) at least twice during their time in the program (spring of first year and fall of second year for full-time students). If satisfactory progress is not being made, the department will inform the student and suggest possible steps toward remediation as well as necessary criteria to regain good standing in the program. Unethical behavior as defined in the [American Psychological Association Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct](#) is considered grounds for immediate dismissal from the graduate program in Applied Clinical Psychology. If a student wishes to appeal a remediation or dismissal decision, their appeal such first be submitted to the Department Chair. The student may then submit their appeal to the USCA Graduate Advisory Council if the evaluation is not over-turned by the Department Chair. Finally, the student may submit a third appeal to the USCA Provost whose decision is final. Please refer to the USCA Undergraduate and Graduate Programs Bulletin and the USCA Student Handbook for further information regarding appeals and grievances.

## **Social Networking**

The information presented below was generated by the Council of University Directors of Clinical Psychology to assist you in considering the implications of various forms of electronic information that might be easily accessible to the public. You should seek to identify and manage various forms of unintentional self-disclosure.

- Never post anything about counseling sessions on a social networking site even if personally identifiable information is concealed. Such posts undermine the public's trust in psychologists/counselors and the belief that psychologists/counselors respect their clients' dignity and confidentiality.
- Some employers report conducting web searches on applicants' names before inviting applicants for interviews or giving job offers.
- Clients and potential clients sometimes conduct web-based searches on counselors' names (and, sometimes declining to come to clinics based on what they find).
- Postings to certain listservs, blogs, Twitter/X, Facebook, etc. might reflect poorly on oneself, the program, and mental health professionals in general.
- Although signature lines in emails are ways of indicating your uniqueness and philosophy, one is not in control of where the emails could end up and might affect how others view you as a professional. Quotations on personal philosophy, religious beliefs, and political attitudes might elicit adverse reactions from others.
- Voicemail messages might also be entertaining to your peers, express your individuality, and be indications of your sense of humor. Nevertheless, greetings on voicemail should be thoughtfully constructed. Be thoughtful about your greetings if your cell phone or home telephone might be used for professional purposes (including calls from potential employers or supervisors).

- Trainees are reminded that, if you identify yourself as a graduate student associated with our program, then we have some interest in how you portray yourself. As a preventive measure, be very careful about how you utilize online blogs and websites that include personal information. Before posting something, consider whether there is anything posted that you would not want the program faculty, current/future employers, family, or clients to read or view. Students are advised to be concerned now about professional demeanor and presentations. Thus, we strongly suggest that you review content that you have posted in the past and delete, if possible, anything you would not want program faculty, current/future employers, family, or clients to read or view.

### **Application for Degree**

All candidates for degree must file a formal application with the USCA Office of the Registrar six months prior graduation (the Office of the Registrar will send out emails with deadlines for application to students). All students are also required to complete a graduate exit survey. Students who chose the thesis option will also need to complete two forms related to the publication of your thesis on Scholar Commons, and to email the Graduate Program Director and the Administrative Assistant a copy of the final draft of their thesis before graduation. In addition, a Clearance Recommendation for Graduate Degree Application must also be submitted by the Program Director following an exit interview that confirms all requirements are completed. Deadlines for application are indicated in the Master Schedule of Classes for each term. Diplomas are not awarded retroactively. Additional USCA regulations and procedures are printed in the USCA Undergraduate and Graduate Programs Bulletin and the USCA Student Handbook.

### **Hooding and Graduation Ceremony**

A master's degree hooding ceremony is typically held each May and may also be held in December depending on the number of individuals receiving Master's degrees in December. Given that our students are not eligible to graduate until August, they may participate in the May hooding ceremony if they expect to graduate in August. There are graduation ceremonies held in May and December every year on our campus. Graduate students may also participate in these ceremonies. There are no ceremonies held in August at USCA but students may participate in the ceremony held at USC Columbia if they desire.

### **Practicum**

After completion of approximately 21-24 credit-hours, students should enroll in PSYC 790 if they have completed all pre-requisites. Enrollment in all courses in the practica series (PSYC 790, 791, 793, 794) requires approval by the Psychology Graduate Program Director and the Psychology Department Chair. Students will be expected to participate in 3-6 hours per week of applied clinical/counseling experiences while enrolled in PSYC 790, 6-9 hours (on average) while enrolled in 791 and 793, and about 3 during 794. All of these clinical experiences will take place under the supervision of USCA's clinical faculty, adjunct clinical faculty, and/or appropriate community agency staff. A portion of this weekly contact will include group and individual supervision meetings. Practicum experiences will generally be obtained through ongoing clinical activities being conducted in the USCA Psychology Clinic, contact with local community mental health agencies and

practitioners, and ongoing USCA programs. Students will be exposed to various clinical/counseling populations during their practicum experiences.

The nature of counseling and clinical experiences is such that the total weekly time spent on a particular practicum experience may vary greatly. Students engaged in these practicum experiences must be prepared to remain flexible about their time schedules in order to be able to address particular clinical needs in a professional and ethical manner. Students should recognize that the clinical supervision process is critical not only to their individual professional development, but also an integral part of the success of their efforts in working with clients. Students may be required to complete several assignments outside of their clinical activities (e.g., library research) in preparation for these activities, and will be expected to be prepared for their supervision sessions (which includes watching videos of the session they've conducted since the last supervision). In order to maintain continuity of services for clients that are being served by the graduate clinical program, students will be required to engage in clinical activities during semester breaks; however, there will be times when the Psychology Clinic will be closed between semesters (posted well in advance on the Clinic Calendar by the Clinic Director) so that students and supervisors have time for rest, to spend time with loved ones, travel, etc.

At the appropriate time during their graduate training, graduate students will be provided with a copy of the USCA Psychology Clinic Manual of Clinic Procedures and Policies. It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with this Manual and to follow all Clinic procedures that are documented in this Manual.

Testing/assessment materials and selected reference materials are available for USCA Psychology graduate students and are housed in the USCA Psychology Clinic. These materials are to be used for assessment/treatment and research purposes only.

Students who lose or damage materials will be held responsible for replacing these materials.

No unauthorized persons are to borrow or to remove materials from the Psychology Clinic.

Access to the Clinic and Clinic materials is limited to student trainees contingent upon approval from their clinical supervisor. All assessment materials must remain in the Psychology Clinic unless approval by a clinical faculty supervisor (e.g., to use them at an assistantship site).

As stated previously, students will be required to complete 700 hours of applied clinical/counseling activities prior to graduation, 240 of which must be direct service with clients or consumers. If a student has not met this requirement by the completion of the applied clinical coursework, they must consult with the graduate program director about ways they can complete their hours. This will require that they be enrolled in the program each semester while completing their hours. Students are provided with ample opportunities to complete their hours; thus, students have been able to complete this requirement during the two-year timeframe.

### **Research Requirement**

*(see "The Origin of Thesis" on Thesis OneDrive folder for additional information and direction)*

A major foundation of psychology, and particularly the field of Clinical Psychology, involves formal research. Practicing professionals who are engaged in counseling and clinical activities must have the appropriate training and experience that allows them to critically evaluate their professional activities and guides them toward selecting intervention techniques

that are empirically supported. Toward this end, students will be required to successfully complete a research project or a master's thesis prior to graduating from the USCA Graduate Program in Applied Clinical Psychology (3 credits of PSYC 699 for everyone and an additional 3 credits of PSYC 799 for those selecting the thesis option).

### **Research Projection Option**

If a student chooses the Research Project option, they must secure a faculty member mentor prior to enrolling in PSYC 699 (Independent Research). Students must successfully complete PSYC 624 and 625 prior to enrolling in PSYC 699 or concurrent with 625. Students may ask a faculty member at any time if they would be willing to mentor them on their project. Typically, a student has an area of research in mind before approaching a faculty member. Faculty members also may have projects in mind that they would like to conduct with a student and a student may decide to conduct one of these projects with the faculty member as their Research Project requirement.

Once a student secures a mentor and meets the pre-requisites described above, they can enroll in PSYC 699 for one or two credits over two or three semesters for a total of three credits (e.g., fall one credit and spring two credits). Students must complete the [Independent Study Contract](#) each semester they want to enroll to receive credit for the Research Project, and are required to enroll in at least one hour of PSYC 699 in any semester (including summer) that they student will be using university facilities or receiving faculty supervision for the Research Project. Once the Contract is complete and signed (by the mentor, the graduate program director, and the chair of the department), it must be turned into the Office of the Registrar for registration to occur (it is completed by their staff).

Students who chose the Research Project option must present a poster of their project late in the spring semester prior graduation (regardless of graduation semester - May, August or December). For example, students taking 2 years to complete the program will graduate in August and thus must present their Research Project in the previous Spring semester. The date of these presentations will be identified by the mid-point of the spring semester and announced by the program director.

In summary, completion of the Research Option requirement involves the following activities:

#### **Completion of PSYC 699 (total of 3 credits over at least 2 semesters):**

- ☐ Secure a research mentor
- ☐ Develop an independent research proposal, in consultation with the research mentor
- ☐ Complete the independent research project
- ☐ Present a poster of the research project late in the spring semester of the year they are graduating

### **Thesis Option**

If a student chooses the thesis option, they must work on a thesis proposal with their faculty research mentor while taking PSYC 699 (Independent Research) and must complete the [Independent Study Contract](#) each semester they want to enroll in 699. Students will typically not be allowed to enroll in PSYC 799 (Thesis) until they have successfully

proposed their thesis. If the chair of the thesis is quite certain they will propose their thesis early in the semester (i.e., prior to the drop deadline) they may receive special permission to enroll in PSYC 799. If the student does not propose by the time the drop deadline approaches, they must drop PSYC 799 for that semester. If a student does not do so, they will get an Unsatisfactory grade on their transcript as they cannot receive credit for working on their thesis if they have not yet proposed their thesis.

PSYC 799 (Thesis) comprises a total of three credit hours, during which the student is expected to complete the independent research project, to successfully complete the thesis defense under the direction and evaluation of the thesis committee, and to complete the final written product as approved by the thesis committee. Generally, students will enroll in PSYC 799 for two to three semesters. If a student has not successfully completed the thesis defense and/or final written product at the completion of 3 credit hours, continued enrollment in PSYC 799 is necessary until all thesis requirements are met. Students are required to enroll in at least one hour of PSYC 799 in any semester (including summer) that the student will be using university facilities or receiving faculty supervision of the thesis project.

In summary, completion of the thesis requirement involves the following activities:

**Completion of PSYC 699 (total of 3 credits):**

- ☐ Secure a thesis chair and two additional graduate Psychology faculty to serve with the thesis chair on the thesis committee
- ☐ Develop an independent research proposal, in consultation with the thesis chair and committee members, presentation and defense of the proposal, and formal approval of the written research proposal by the thesis committee

**Completion of PSYC 799 (total of at least 3 credits):**

- ☐ Completion of the independent research project
- ☐ Completion of the written product of the research project
- ☐ Successful defense of the thesis as determined by the thesis committee
- ☐ Completion of final written product of the research project, incorporating any changes required by the committee
- ☐ Print a signature page for all committee members and the Department Chair to sign
- ☐ Submission of two digital copies of the final written product (Word and PDF), that includes the signed signature page (see Appendix for format of signature and titles pages)

Thesis students should plan on enrolling in PSYC 699 as soon as allowed (e.g., the summer session of their first year of graduate school), after successful completion of PSYC 624 and 625. Students should plan on enrolling in PSYC 799 soon after proposing their thesis. The prerequisite for PSYC 699 is completion of PSYC 624 and 625 (may be taken concurrent with 699) and consent of the Department of Psychology, and the prerequisite for PSYC 799 is successful defense of thesis proposal and consent of the Department of Psychology. In order to gain departmental consent to enroll in PSYC 699 and PSYC 799, the appropriate forms must be completed (699 Independent Research Contract, 799 Thesis Enrollment Contract Form).

Successful research tends to be a time-consuming venture that requires considerable



planning and preparation. Accordingly, students should meet with the Psychology Faculty early on in their academic career to learn about various faculty research areas and possible thesis topics and may want to volunteer their time to participate in ongoing research activities. Students should spend this preparation time doing background reading in their field of interest, meeting with select faculty to discuss these readings, and upon enrollment in PSYC 699, formally developing a research design under the direction/supervision of a faculty member who typically would have expertise in that research area. After the completion of PSYC 699, it is expected that it will take at least 2 full semesters to complete the data collection and defense/written portions of the thesis requirements. Accordingly, upon completion of PSYC 699, students must have already completed their research proposal and have received formal approval of this proposal from their thesis committee. Performance in PSYC 699 is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Students may enroll in 1-3 hours of PSYC 799 within a given semester. As noted, it is expected that it will take two semesters to fulfill all the requirements of the thesis (subsequent to the completion of 699). Students may allocate their thesis hours across more than two semesters if desired. PSYC 799 is graded on a pass-fail basis and is not included in the overall grade point average. Students will receive a 'T' letter grade, signifying satisfactory performance for each semester that they are enrolled in PSYC 799 or a 'U' letter grade, signifying unsatisfactory performance, and will not count toward degree requirements. If, at the completion of 3 hours, the student has still not completed the thesis requirements, that student will be required to maintain enrollment in PSYC 799 during subsequent semesters until the thesis requirements are met. Any student who continues to use university facilities or wishes to confer with faculty on thesis work must be officially enrolled in at least one hour of thesis credit.

Before enrollment in PSYC 699, the student must find a faculty member who will function as the director/chair of that student's thesis project. The chair of the thesis committee must be a full-time faculty member in the Department of Psychology. The student must also select two additional faculty members who will function as thesis committee members. Committee members may be any full-time faculty members within the Department of Psychology. Under some circumstances, it may be appropriate to include a fourth committee member from outside the Psychology Department. Inclusion of committee members from outside the Psychology Department is subject to approval by the chair of the thesis committee, the director of the graduate program, and the department chair. The thesis committee will have the role of providing formal approval of the student's research idea, supervising the student's research activity, and providing formal approval of the defense and final written product. All students will be evaluated on 10 performance measures regarding the final thesis project and will be given a final score based on these performance measures. A copy of the USCA Thesis Assessment Form is included in the Appendix.

As noted, the student is required to complete the Thesis Enrollment Contract Form prior to the initial enrollment in PSYC 799 (see Appendix), and during each subsequent semester of enrollment in PSYC 799, the student is required to complete the Thesis Enrollment Contract Form. This form is completed with the student's thesis chair and details the exact requirements that must be fulfilled during any semester in order for the student to receive a 'T' letter grade, signifying satisfactory performance. Failure to meet these course requirements will result in a 'U' letter grade. The student will not receive course credit for any 'U' graded hours. The thesis must be written in APA style, with an approved title page (see Appendix), and contain

appropriate committee approval.

### **C. FIELD PLACEMENTS & STIPENDS**

In an effort to enhance the student's opportunity to gain important practical experiences while at the same time providing a degree of financial support, USCA has agreed to provide stipend support for selected students when available. Each available stipend will be provided on a semester basis. A student receiving a stipend for a 15-hour/week field placement will be required to enroll in a minimum of 9 credit hours for fall and spring semesters and 5 credit hours for the summer, must be in good academic standing in the Department, and will be required to work in a selected setting for a maximum of 15 hours per week for a full-time placement. The total amount of weekly work time will be determined by the amount of funding that is available for the student. Generally, the student's work placement will be in a community agency, in an applied setting at USCA (e.g., Student Counseling Center, Career Services), or a teaching setting at USCA. In addition to the direct financial support that is gained through the stipend, USCA has also agreed to provide tuition assistance (usually around \$1100 for a 15 hour/week placement) for students receiving a stipend. Stipends are generally provided to students during the 9-month academic year. The stipend for a full-time placement pays \$2,500 for both the fall and spring semesters. Some placements are also available in the summer months. The stipend pays \$2,000 for the summer. In an effort to increase the number of placements available and student preference, we often offer ½-time field placements in which the student works 7.5 hour per week and receives half the pay and tuition reduction.

While an effort will be made to provide stipend opportunities for all interested and qualified degree-seeking students, available funding is limited. Accordingly, eligibility for stipends will be determined by the Department through evaluation of the admission criteria for new entering students, and by an evaluation of existing performance criteria for advanced students currently enrolled in the degree program. For eligible students, ongoing participation in this field placement program will be contingent upon satisfactory performance within the setting, as evaluated by USCA's clinical faculty and appropriate agency staff (when applicable), in addition to satisfactory performance within the degree program. Due to limited funding opportunities, not all students enrolled in the graduate program may be eligible for stipends. Receiving a stipend during a particular academic period does not guarantee continued funding during subsequent academic periods.

The Field Placement Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of our field placement program. This will include developing placement opportunities, matching students with agencies, communicating expectations to both students and agencies, managing fulfillment of requirements (e.g., student hours and supervision) with agencies, maintaining contracts and billing, and soliciting feedback from agency supervisors. Field Placements for first year students are termed "assistantships" as students receive stipends for these professional placements but these experiences will not offer the opportunity to accrue direct clinical service hours. Beginning in students' 3rd semester (if they are fulltime students), field placements are termed "internships" as students have progressed sufficiently through the program that they are ready to offer direct clinical services under the guidance of on-site and faculty supervisors. In the rare instance that a student is hired in a non-clinical position (e.g., TA) beyond the first year, the

term assistantship will continue to be appropriate.

Graduate Placement Selection Procedures: When assistantship opportunities are available, all degree-seeking students, with good academic standing, will be eligible for graduate placements. Every effort will be made to 'match' student interest and professional goals with field placement. Students will be responsible for communicating their interests and professional goals to the Field Placement Coordinator. It should be noted that while students may be approved to participate in placements by meeting our selection criteria, that does not guarantee assignment to a placement. Some placement sites may require an interview and subsequent approval by the personnel at the site before officially beginning the placement. Further, placement sites frequently have specific needs that may restrict the selection process. Students participating at particular placement sites may be required to purchase additional liability insurance beyond what the university provides (see below) and also may be required to complete a criminal background check, health screening and/or a drug screening by the agency. Any student who receives a field placement or sees clients in our Clinic (e.g., through PSYC 790) will be required to undergo a criminal background check conducted by USCA. If something is found that puts the student's judgment/behavior into question, the student may be terminated from their assistantship and required to withdraw from courses requiring them to work directly with clients.

The following selection process will be used by the Department to determine awarding of graduate field placements:

**Selection Criteria [order of priority]:**

1. Second-Year/Advanced Graduate Students: Advanced students who currently have a field placement site will have priority for placements sites and will be selected on the basis of the following criteria:
  - Current academic standing
  - Obtained ratings on their supervisor's evaluation form
  - Documented professional growth and faculty ratings on the semi-annual SASER form in all areas
2. Second-Year/Advanced Graduate Students: Advanced students who do not currently have a field placement will receive priority for a placement based upon the following criteria:
  - Current academic standing
  - Documented professional growth and faculty ratings on the SASER form in all areas
3. First-Year Graduate Students: First-year graduate students will receive priority for placement sites based upon the following criteria:
  - Overall/Psychology Undergraduate GPA Admission
  - Letters of Recommendation
  - Undergraduate experiences (e.g., research, clinical setting)

Outstanding first-year graduate students may receive placement priority over second-year/advanced graduate students when admission criteria for first-year students are outstanding, or when advanced students have not demonstrated an acceptable degree of

professional and academic growth in the program, as measured by the SASER.

Involvement in the stipend program at USCA is completely voluntary and independent of the degree-program requirements. While this involvement can be both financially and professionally beneficial, it does represent a major time and professional commitment, above and beyond course and applied clinical/counseling requirements.

While participation in the stipend program is voluntary, once a student agrees to participate, the student is committed to fulfilling the responsibilities associated with the assistantship position. Each student should evaluate this commitment carefully before accepting this responsibility. As indicated above, students will be supervised by USCA clinical faculty and community staff when appropriate. As representatives of USCA and as professionals in the field of Psychology and Counseling, students will be expected to fulfill their professional roles in their field placement activities in a manner that is consistent with the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association and the American Counseling Association. Students will be expected to present themselves in a highly professional manner in both dress and demeanor. Students will be required to complete a contract at the beginning of their placement period, which explains their commitment and responsibilities. Some placements may require attendance at training workshops or orientation sessions that will be required of the student accepting that placement. Assistantships/internships may require students to work during times the university is closed or when classes are not in session. Unsatisfactory performance will result in termination from the placement setting and may result in termination from the degree program if certain professional/ethical standards are violated.

## **D. PROFESSIONAL ISSUES**

### **Licensing**

Students should be aware that licensing regulations are independent of the USCA degree requirements. State law dictates the criteria that must be successfully met before an individual is eligible to receive a particular license. Licensing law determines what title a professional may use when presenting himself/herself to potential consumers of psychological/counseling services, and in most cases determines what type of professional activity the individual may engage in. It is the student's responsibility to be fully aware of existing state licensing regulations. Such regulations usually dictate: a) degree and curriculum requirements; b) performance criteria for demonstration of knowledge in one's field (e.g., successful completion of a standardized examination); and c) requirements for supervision of post-degree professional activity. Students should be aware that specific license requirements may vary considerably from state to state. This is the webpage for SC licensure <https://llr.sc.gov/cou/>.

Many states require as many as 60 graduate credit hours and additional requirements such as credits from a Practicum and an Internship for licensure. While not required for our program, we have added a course that you can take to get formal credit for a clinical placement (PSCY 795 Clinical/Counseling Internship). If this is of interest to you, please see the Graduate Program Director for details.

The American Psychological Association (APA) historically has not approved the provision of a license for masters-level practitioners in the field of Psychology however, APA is in the process of developing accreditation for master's programs in Psychology. Most state licensing boards in Psychology, including the South Carolina licensing board in Psychology, do not provide

for a license for masters-level practitioners in Psychology. However, South Carolina does provide a license for master's degree-level professional counselors (known as the LPC, for Licensed Professional Counselor). South Carolina state law does dictate certain criteria that must be satisfied before the professional is able to gain the LPC license. All of these criteria must be satisfied prior to receiving the license:

#### Degree and Curriculum Requirements for SC:

The student must graduate from a master's-level degree program that includes a curriculum that addresses the following major areas of academic training (each number indicates the content area along with the USCA course that addresses that content):

1. Human Growth and Development (PSYC 610)
2. Social and Cultural Foundations (PSYC 702)
3. The Helping Relationship (PSYC 701)
4. Group Dynamics, Processing, Counseling (PSYC 725)
5. Lifestyle and Career Development (PSYC 630)
6. Appraisal of Individuals (PSYC 680)
7. Research and Evaluation (PSYC 624)
8. Professional Orientation (PSYC 600)
9. Psychopathology (PSYC 620) OR Diagnostics of Psychopathology (PSYC 780)

Each academic program must also have one course that covers Counseling Theories and Techniques (PSYC 701 and 702), which may be included in category #3, and a supervised Counseling Practicum (PSYC 790/791/793/794).

#### Demonstration of Knowledge in the Field:

Following successful completion of the master's degree, a student must demonstrate a knowledge base of content areas by successful completion of the National Counseling Examination (NCE) or the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE). See <https://www.nbcc.org/Exams> for additional information.

#### Post-Degree Supervision of Professional Activity:

The license applicant must receive 1,380 hours of supervised clinical experience of direct counseling client contact. Supervision must be done by a qualified supervisor (pre-approved by the South Carolina LPC board of examiners) and consist of a minimum of 120 hours.

### **Insurance Coverage**

Students and faculty at USCA receive minimal coverage associated with professional liability insurance and workers compensation insurance, as long as they are following University policy and engaging in appropriate professional activities as approved by USCA. It is highly recommended that students purchase additional liability insurance, beyond what the university is able to provide. Certain assistantship sites may also require that the student purchase additional insurance in order to satisfy the professional requirements at that site. Liability insurance is available through the American Psychological Association Insurance Trust for as little as \$35 a year. Information and an application can be found at:

<https://www.trustinsurance.com/products-services/student-liability>

## **Professional Development**

Periodically each semester you may be asked to attend a graduate student event. This gathering will be in the form of either a town meeting, or a professional colloquium presentation. The town-meeting format will generally involve a discussion of various professional issues, in addition to providing students an opportunity to express any needs or concerns that they may have about the graduate program. At various times, professional clinicians from the community will be invited to present research and/or clinical information within their specialty fields. Students will be expected to attend these meetings. The graduate Program Director will also make students aware of professional development workshops in the community and/or webinars that they may attend often for minimal or no cost.

Students are also encouraged to attend regional/national conferences, either to present data or to participate in the professional activities of peers and colleagues. Attendance at professional conferences is also a great way to develop and refine thesis projects. The Department also has a chapter of Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology, and graduate students are encouraged to join and participate.

## **E. USCA PSYCHOLOGY CLINIC**

As a part of the graduate training program, the Psychology Department has developed the USCA Psychology Clinic. This setting provides an opportunity for graduate students to receive important clinical/counseling experiences, under the supervision of licensed mental health professionals. The Clinic Director will oversee all functions of the clinic (including payment, client assignment, and record keeping) and will ensure students are complying with all policies, procedures, and ethical guidelines. Students who are taking a practicum course or who work in the clinic are required to be familiar with the USCA Psychology Clinic Manual and are required to follow all clinic procedures documented in this manual.

The USCA Psychology Clinic will be utilized as a training site for applied clinical course requirements, including practicum training requirements, in addition to providing support for select courses, stipend, and research activities. Graduate students may engage in supervised clinical/counseling activities within the Clinic as a part of their course requirements.

## **F. DEPARTMENTAL FACILITIES**

### Psychology Research Laboratory

The Psychology Department Laboratory is used by faculty and students for research and teaching. The Laboratory includes an animal vivarium and supporting animal research equipment, in addition to a human laboratory that supports physiological, neuroscience, and cognitive research. There is also space that allows for small groups, observational, and survey research. Penland 205 is a larger research room that contains 10 computers available for research projects as well as group testing.

### Psychology Computer Lab

The Psychology Department also houses a computer classroom (Penland 214A). Both undergraduate and graduate students have access to computers that allow for statistical analyses, data management and internet access, in addition to other essential computing capabilities. The Department standard statistical package, SPSS, is installed on a subset of the computers in the computer lab.

#### Graduate Student Mailboxes/Email Addresses

Each graduate student will be assigned a mailbox in the Administrative Assistant's Office (Penland 226). These boxes may be used for any activities related to the graduate program and university activities. On occasion, important announcements regarding class requirements, thesis defenses, colloquium presentations, graduate student town meetings, or graduate program materials may be placed in these mailboxes. It is important that students check their boxes on a regular basis. Students may have access to their mailboxes during normal business hours. In addition to the use of the mailbox for important Department communication, students are also assigned a university email address. This address will be used to communicate both individual class and general program information. Accordingly, students should access their email at least once daily and respond to emails in which they are asked a question within 24 hours or immediately if possible.

#### Graduate Student Offices

One graduate student office is available for all Psychology graduate students. A phone and computer is available in this office for student use. Students will be assigned a key to this office from the Department Administrative Assistant. A student office is also available in the Psychology Clinic, and its use is generally limited to students enrolled in Practica (e.g., PSYC 791; PSYC 793).

### **G. FACULTY**

The USCA Psychology Department is comprised of ten full-time faculty members and 4 clinical associates:

#### Professors:

Jane Stafford, Ph.D. (Chair of Psychology Department)  
Area: Clinical Psychology

Maureen Carrigan, Ph.D. (Director of Graduate Program)  
Area: Clinical Psychology

Laura Jelsone-Swain, Ph.D.  
Area: Experimental Psychology (Neuroscience)

Adam Pazda, Ph.D.  
Area: Social Psychology

#### Associate Professors:

Alexandra Roach, Ph.D.

Area: Experimental Psychology (Neuroscience)

Assistant Professors:

Bridget Cho, Ph.D. (Director of the Clinic)  
Area: Clinical Psychology

Brianne Coulombe, Ph.D.  
Area: Developmental Psychology

Mary Moussa Rogers, Ph.D. (Field Placement Coordinator)  
Area: Clinical Psychology

Clinical Associates:

Todd Bain, M.S.  
Area: Clinical Psychology

Catherine Packer-Williams, Ph.D.  
Area: Counseling Psychology

Kayla Sweet, M.S.  
Area: Clinical Psychology

Elizabeth Willits, M.S.  
Area: Clinical Psychology

Our faculty members are actively involved in teaching, research, and supervision of students. Ongoing research interests of the Psychology faculty include fear and avoidance models of psychopathology, addictive behaviors, parenting and attachment, childhood disorders, interpersonal relationships, post-traumatic stress disorder, mindfulness, social perceptions, and cognitive aging. There are many opportunities for students to become actively involved in research, and it is recommended that students consider volunteering early in their academic career as preparation for their research project/thesis requirement. Students may receive course credit for engaging in formal research activities by enrolling in PSYC 699 (Independent Research). Students who are interested in pursuing an academic experience beyond their master's degree are particularly encouraged to gain valuable research experience beyond their thesis requirements. Students must complete the PSYC 699 Enrollment Consent Form prior to enrollment in PSYC 699 (see Appendix). Students may be involved in research without enrolling in PSYC 699. Often students in their first- year assist students in their second year collect data for their thesis as a way of becoming more familiar with the research process.

**Clinical Faculty Job Duties**



Program Director

Dr. Carrigan

- Accreditation & licensure questions/forms
- Prospective applicant questions & admissions procedures
- New student orientation
- Advisement & course registration
- Alumni communications
- Applied hours log (tracking & approving)
- Capstone poster session
- Graduate handbook & curriculum questions
- Graduation and hooding ceremony
- Professional development opportunities (e.g., trainings)
- Student conduct & remediation plans
- Student evaluations (SASERS)

Field Placement Coordinator

Dr. Moussa Rogers

- Assistantship & internship assignments
- Developing new assistantship & internship sites
- Site payment and billing
- Student conduct, remediation plans, & evaluations

Clinic Director

Dr. Cho

- Case assignments
- Case file management
- Client payment & fees
- Clinic Assistant supervision
- Clinic Manual edits
- Clinic resources (camera, printer, computers, ipads)
- Communication with clinical supervisors
- Clinic Assessment materials
- Management of digital tools (e.g., Qglobal, OQAnalyst, Hushmail)

## H. APPENDIX

### i. Classroom Behavior Evaluation

#### Classroom Behavior Evaluation

Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Professor: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete for any students that are demonstrating difficulties in any of the following dimensions at the conclusion of each graduate course or sooner if concern is significant and submit to graduate program director.

**1** = Demonstrate some difficulties but below a level that requires remediation.

**2** = Frequently demonstrates difficulties, needs continued growth in this area.

**3** = Consistently demonstrates difficulties, needs remediation.

**N/A** = Not applicable.

Dimension	Rating	N/A	Comments: Explain any score of '2' or '3'
1. Respectful Interpersonal Behavior Towards Instructor and Classmates			
2. Punctuality/Attendance			
3. Level of Participation			
4. Level of Preparation for Class (i.e., did readings, other assignments)			
5. Clinical Sensitivity			
6. Appropriate Affect Modulation			
7. Ethical Competence			
8. Professional Values and Attitudes			
9. Openness to Feedback			
10. Written and Verbal Communication Skills			
11. Timeliness in Submission of and Carrying out Course Responsibilities			
12. Appropriate use of technological devices in class (i.e., smart watch, cell phone, laptop, tablet)			
13. Other:			

*ii. Student Activities Self Evaluation Report*

**STUDENT ACTIVITIES SELF EVALUATION REPORT**

**Inclusive Dates:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:**

**Year in program:**

**I. ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

**Semester:**

**Course (Dept & Number)**

**Title**

**Numeric  
Grade**

**Summer:**

**Course (Dept & Number)**

**Title**

**Numeric  
Grade**

**GPA for All Courses Completed  
Cumulative GPA at USCA**

List Courses Waived Based on Work Completed Elsewhere:

Student comments/Goals:

**Overall Academic Rating:**

Needs Improvement; Meeting Expectations; Meritorious

## II. RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

### A. Thesis

Enter your year in the program and the dates of any proposal meetings or final defense for the thesis.

	Proposal		Final Defense	
	Year in Program	Date of Proposal	Year in Program	Date of Defense
Thesis				

### B. Additional Research Activities (beyond thesis):

1. Attendance at colloquia/guest speaker presentations:
2. Regional/national conferences/conventions attended:
3. Completed progress on thesis:
4. Any additional research activity (e.g., involvement in faculty research):
5. Conference presentations submitted or presented: (give full APA citation and indicate date submitted and/or presented). Specify type of submission/presentation (i.e., poster, paper, etc.):
6. Papers submitted for publication/published: (give full APA citation and date submitted):

### C. Quality/Scope/Initiative/Programmatic Nature of Research Project(s):

*The student and has the opportunity to comment on the quality, comprehensiveness and/or scope of the thesis and other independent research projects. Initiative in developing and completing projects or involvement in multiple projects will be noted.*

Student Comments/Goals:

**Overall Research Development Rating:** Needs Improvement; Meeting Expectations; Meritorious

### III. CLINICAL and PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

List practicum/applied clinical activity experiences, and supervisors and briefly describe responsibilities:

Semester	Supervisor	Activities	Responsibilities
----------	------------	------------	------------------

1. Describe assistantship duties and, if obtained, any feedback received from supervisor):

2. List any other professional activity:

Student Comments/Goals:

**Overall Professional Development Rating:** Needs Improvement; Meeting Expectations; Meritorious

#### Additional Activities and Comments:

List and describe any activities that were not mentioned in categories I-V above that you feel should be considered:

*Describe if and how this semester's activities achieved your plans/goals as stated in the previous semester's Student Activities Self Evaluation Report (1st year students can discuss this item in terms of goals set with advisor in beginning of the year). If goals were modified (added, subtracted, changed, etc.) over the course of the year, explain rationale for the modification: State plans and goals for the current or upcoming semester:*

**Overall Faculty Comments:****Academic:****Research:****Clinical/Professional:****Overall Student Rating:** Needs Improvement; Meeting Expectations; Meritorious

---

Faculty Member's Signature

---

Date

---

Student's Signature

---

Date

## iii. Assessment of Psychology Trainee

**Assessment of Psychology Trainee**

**Psychology Clinic**  
University South Carolina Aiken

<b>Date:</b> Click or tap to enter a date.		
<b>Clinical Trainee:</b> Click or tap here to enter text.		<b>Supervisor:</b> Click or tap here to enter text.
<b>Year level:</b> Choose an item.	<b>Semester:</b> Choose an item.	<b>Year:</b> Choose an item.

*Check all that apply:*

Type of Clients:	Phases of Therapy:	Mode of Service Provided:	Mode of Supervision:
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adolescent <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Family	<input type="checkbox"/> New this semester <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing from previous semester <input type="checkbox"/> Transferred from another PT <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Ind Therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Group Therapy	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Group <input type="checkbox"/> Co-therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Sitting in <input type="checkbox"/> Watching videotapes

**Please rate the Clinical Trainee's performance in the clinical competencies listed below, taking into account her/his developmental level in the program (e.g., 1<sup>st</sup> semester practicum, advanced practicum).** If necessary, supplement the ratings with comments at end of survey.

- 1 = **Inadequate Performance** (Below expectations)  
 2 = **Acceptable Performance** (Somewhat below expectations/Meets expectations but not consistently Re. client/time)  
 3 = **Average Performance** (Consistently meets expectations)  
 4 = **Very Good Performance** (Exceeds expectations most of the time)  
 5 = **Outstanding Performance** (Significantly exceeds expectations on a consistent basis Re. client/time)  
 N/O = **No Opportunity**

<b>1. General Professional Ethics and Responsibilities</b> (e.g., <i>punctuality, availability, confidentiality, responsibility, use of available resources, appropriate referrals</i> )	Choose an item.
<b>2. Assessment &amp; Outcome Monitoring</b> (e.g., <i>observational skills, interviewing skills, knowledge and use of appropriate assessment instrument, pinpointing presenting problem(s) in quantifiable and observable terms within a CBT model, monitoring client's progress and response to therapy/outcome in quantifiable terms</i> )	Choose an item.
<b>3. Case Formulation</b> (e.g., <i>presenting a conceptual model for the presenting problem(s) by identifying etiological factors and correlates, pertinent learning history, course, stressors, individual and contextual maintaining factors, contingencies/ consequences, treatment goals and expectations</i> )	Choose an item.
<b>4. Treatment Planning</b> (e.g., <i>formulating treatment goals, strategies and techniques, session-to-session planning and preparation</i> )	Choose an item.

<b>5. Treatment Implementation</b> ( <i>e.g., explaining treatment rationale and process, ability to employ treatment strategies and techniques, directing and managing a session, handling problematic issues</i> )	Choose an item.
<b>6. Quality of the therapeutic relationship</b>	Choose an item.
a. Collaborative Rapport	Choose an item.
b. Empathic Ability ( <i>Warmth, Empathy, Genuineness</i> )	Choose an item.
c. Effective Listening	Choose an item.
d. Control of the session w/o being intrusive	Choose an item.
e. Tolerance of the client's negative affect	Choose an item.
f. Utilization of the client's affect to promote change	Choose an item.
g. Ability to recognize and make therapeutic use of own emotional reactions toward the client	Choose an item.
h. Ability to recognize and repair ruptures in the therapeutic alliance	Choose an item.
<b>7. Incorporates clients' values, beliefs, culture and other characteristics in services provides.</b>	Choose an item.
<b>8. Knowledge of Relevant Research</b> ( <i>e.g., regarding assessment and treatment of a given disorder, indications and contraindications for a given treatment intervention</i> )	Choose an item.
<b>9. Confidence and comfort with the therapist role</b>	Choose an item.
<b>10. Recognition and management of biases or "defenses"</b>	Choose an item.
<b>11. Clinical record-keeping</b> ( <i>e.g., Intake and Assessment Summaries, Progress Notes, Treatment Reports, Closing Summaries, outside letters and reports</i> )	Choose an item.
<b>12. Responsiveness to Supervision</b> ( <i>e.g., providing audio/videotapes of sessions, accepting feedback, implementing supervisors' suggestions, etc.</i> )	Choose an item.
<b>13. Rating of overall potential as a clinician.</b>	Choose an item.

**Please list the clinical trainees' major assets**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Please list below those problem areas that should be attended to by next supervisor**

(Be as specific as possible)

Click or tap here to enter text.

**General comments and/or Recommendations**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Suggested grade based on your supervision:** Choose an item.

**Did you communicate the content of this evaluation to the clinical trainee?**

☐ Yes

☐ No



*iv. Registration Forms*

**Registration for PSYC 699 (Independent Research), 799 (Thesis), and PSYC 795 (Clinical/Counseling Internship)**

Independent Study/Internship Contract Form:

<https://www.usca.edu/media/usca/registrar/forms/Independent-Study-Internship-Contract-2020.08.pdf>

This form must be completed and signed by the student and their research mentor or supervisor and then signed by their advisor and the department chair. The form is then submitted to the Records Office who will register the student for the number of credits indicated on the form (which is typically 1 or 2 for any given semester with a total of 3 needed for graduation).

*v. Theses Documents*

**Master's Degree Program in Applied Clinical Psychology  
Psychology Department  
USCA**

**Thesis Contract (PSYC 799)**

Student's Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Local Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student VIP Number: \_\_\_\_\_ PSYC 799 Hours Previously Completed: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Current 799 Term: \_\_\_\_\_ Credit Hours (1-4): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Thesis proposal completion semester: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis chair: \_\_\_\_\_

The following section is to be completed by the *thesis chair*, who will supervise the thesis project:

Thesis title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Membership: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Goals and objectives of current enrollment:

Method of evaluation:

---

Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Graduate Program: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Master's Degree Program in Applied Clinical Psychology  
Psychology Department  
USCA**

**PSYC 795 Enrollment Consent Form Clinical/Counseling Internship (APSY N795)**

Student's Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

VIP ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Term of 795 Enrollment: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Hours (1-3): \_\_\_\_\_

Site of internship: \_\_\_\_\_

**Goals and objectives of current enrollment:**

To gain additional supervised experience in a clinical setting.

**Method of evaluation:**

Regular supervision with onsite and with faculty supervisors in which clinical work will be discussed and recommendations made.

---

Student's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Graduate Program \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Title of Thesis**

**Student's Name**

**Approved:**

---

**Committee Chair**

---

**Date**

---

**Committee Member**

---

**Date**

---

**Committee Member**

---

**Date**

---

**Chair, Department of Psychology**

---

**Date**

**Title of Thesis**

---

**A Thesis**

**Presented to**

**the Faculty of the Department of Psychology University  
of South Carolina Aiken**

---

**In Partial Fulfillment**

**of the Requirements for the Degree**

**Master of Science**

---

**By**

**Name**

**Month and Year of Defense**

## Graduate Thesis Assessment

Rate each of the following items on a scale from 0 to 10, using the following guidelines:

- 0 - complete absence of the item  
 1 – 3 - limited attention to or understanding of item  
 4 – 6 - Adequate coverage of item  
 7 – 9 - In depth analysis and clear understanding  
 10 - Outstanding achievement on the item with no room for improvement

Be sure to consider both the quality and comprehensiveness of the student's efforts. Items 1 through 8 should be considered with respect to evidence manifest in both students' written manuscript and oral presentation. Numerical ratings will be used to assign overall ratings of unsatisfactory (0 – 50), satisfactory (50 – 75), and notable (75 and above). P = important for thesis proposal; D = important for thesis defense

<b>1. Theoretical foundation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly describes theory (e.g., learning, psychoanalytic, cognitive) being investigated (P&amp;D)</li> <li>Compares and contrasts theoretical perspectives (P&amp;D)</li> <li>Research design addresses theoretical questions (P&amp;D)</li> <li>Integrates thesis findings with theory (D)</li> <li>Understands alternative theoretical interpretations of findings (D)</li> <li>Addresses theory-based questions (P&amp;D)</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Literature review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literature review is detailed, covering the major and significant findings directly related to field of study (P&amp;D)</li> <li>Literature review is comprehensive, covering the significant findings that are indirectly related to field of study (P&amp;D)</li> <li>Demonstrates ability to summarize relevant findings in the literature, providing sufficient detail on relevant designs and outcomes (P&amp;D)</li> <li>Demonstrates ability to critically evaluate existing literature, discussing limits to internal and external validity of findings (P&amp;D)</li> <li>Demonstrates ability to generate hypotheses from existing findings in literature (P&amp;D)</li> </ul>	
<b>3. Development of hypotheses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hypotheses are testable and appropriately conceptualized (P)</li> <li>Hypotheses are logically developed from theory (P)</li> <li>A sufficient number of hypotheses are identified to adequately test the proposed theory (P)</li> <li>Demonstrates an ability to provide a link between theory and practical application of hypotheses (P&amp;D)</li> </ul>	
<b>4. Internal validity of methodology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research design appropriate for hypotheses (P)</li> <li>Appropriate controls are provided in design (control groups or statistical controls) (P)</li> <li>Threats to validity (e.g., confounding, extraneous variable) are acknowledged and addressed as applicable (P&amp;D)</li> <li>Direction of effect is clear from research findings (D)</li> <li>Understands alternative explanations for findings (D)</li> <li>Able to discuss alternative designs to provide better controls (P&amp;D)</li> </ul>	

5.	<b>External validity of methodology</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sampling method is appropriate (e.g., random, representative) (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Sufficient power to provide meaningful effects (e.g., sufficient number of subjects) (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Able to discuss ways to enhance generalizability of findings (P&amp;D)</li> </ul>	
6.	<b>Statistics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates an ability to understand the statistical procedures used (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Utilizes appropriate statistical procedures to analyze data (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Presents results in a clear and appropriate manner (D)</li> <li>• Understands appropriate conclusions that may be drawn from the data (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Able to discuss alternative statistical procedures for future research (D)</li> </ul>	
7.	<b>Significance to field</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates an ability to discuss the contributions of selected constructs to proposed study (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Demonstrates an understanding of study's specific and overall contributions to the field (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Able to distinguish and discuss the statistical and clinical significance of the study to the field (D)</li> <li>• Able to discuss alternative contributions to populations other than the presently identified (P&amp;D)</li> </ul>	
8.	<b>Synthesis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriately integrates theory and results in discussion section (D)</li> <li>• Demonstrates ability to discuss connection between internal and external validity (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Thesis (written product) evidences appropriate connections throughout (lit review, hypotheses, methods, results, discussion) (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Demonstrates ability to adequately answer questions concerning all sections of thesis (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Demonstrates a deep understanding of problem and issue (P&amp;D)</li> </ul>	
9.	<b>Professionalism in conducting thesis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progression in a timely manner (e.g., met deadlines associated with development and completion of thesis) (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Conscientiousness (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Understood and complied with ethical treatment of human and animal participants (P&amp;D)</li> </ul>	
10.	<b>Oral presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization: well-structured – theory, hypotheses, design &amp; methodology, potential stats, etc. (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Clarity: communication style (ability to articulate coherently) (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Flow: structural and communicative (P&amp;D)</li> <li>• Responsiveness: thoughtful and precise response to questions posed during and after presentation (P&amp;D)</li> </ul>	

**Process:**

- Each committee member independently completes assessment prior to or during the thesis defense meeting.
- Following presentation by student, the committee reviews individual responses to arrive at a group consensus. Qualitative judgments of unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and notable will be derived based on quantitative assessments