

Frequently Asked Questions
Howard University
APA Accredited Clinical Psychology PhD Program

1. Is the program APA Accredited?

The American Psychological Association has accredited our doctoral program in Clinical Psychology. Our next site visit is 2021. Questions related to the program's accreditation status should be directed to the Commission on Accreditation

APA Contact Information:

American Psychological Association

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation

750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC. 20002-4242

Phones: 202-336-5979. TDD/TTY: 202-336-6123. Fax: 202-336-5978

2. Who is the Director of Clinical Training (DCT) your program?

Dominicus So, PhD (a licensed clinical psychologist) is the DCT of the Clinical Psychology Program at Howard University. He is one of the eight core clinical faculty. The core clinical faculty work in tandem with seven College of Medicine faculty to train students. Clinical is one of the five areas in the psychology department. The other four areas in the department are separate programs and have their own admission processes and leadership.

3. How competitive is your program?

Quite competitive! We are highly selective and look for 6 pillars: exemplar recommendation letters, strong GRE scores, quality research experiences, competitive GPA, a coherent personal statement and strong interpersonal skills. We are a mentor-based program, thus the admissions committee and a potential research mentor must agree on your admission. Research lab availability varies each year. We strongly advise that you contact the faculty mentor (should be core clinical faculty) you are interested in working with to check for lab availability for the year you are applying.

4. How are admissions decisions made?

THE APPLICATION DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 1st. *Unfortunately, due to the competitive nature of the program, there is no rolling admission process.* Each year, there are typically more applicants than slots available for Howard University's Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology. Admissions decisions are made by a committee, which is comprised of faculty members from the Department of Psychology including the Director of Clinical Training. The committee considers a number of things in making these decisions, including GRE scores, undergraduate GPA, recommendation letters, applicant interests and goals, research experience, "fit" with the program and whether the applicant's research interests match with specific faculty members' research interests. Applicants work closely with a research advisor his/her tenure in the program. We are a mentor-based program, thus the admissions committee and a potential research mentor must agree on your admission. Research lab availability varies each year. We strongly advise that you contact the faculty

mentor (should be core clinical faculty) you are interested in working with to check for lab availability for the year you are applying.

Note: Along with the Clinical Supplementary Application form (see details below), you must also follow Graduate School's application process, deadlines, and fees. Please go their correct websites. www.howard.edu. Please be clear that there is a two-step application process to have a complete application packet. The Clinical Supplemental Application form should only be sent to the DCT of the psychology department or his/her email address. Please do not attach/upload your clinical supplemental materials to the graduate school.

5. Is Howard University's Clinical Psychology graduate program a PhD or Master's program?

Howard University's Clinical Psychology program is not a terminal Master's program. All students receive their PhD and their Master's in en route.

6. What if I only want a Master's degree?

You should not apply to the Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology at HU if you want a terminal Master's degree.

7. Do I need a Master's degree before I can gain admittance into the Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology?

No. Students in the Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology can obtain a Master's Degree en route to the PhD. Candidates are accepted into our program with only a bachelor's degree. *Please remember that a Master's degree in any discipline including psychology will not preclude you from taking doctoral courses at HU.*

8. Do I have to take the GRE? Do you except New GRE exam scores?

Yes. The GRE is *required* for every applicant. The Psychology subject GRE is *optional*. Your application will not be evaluated without GRE scores. In addition, the GRE must have been taken within the last five years. If the GRE is taken more than once, the highest score will be considered. With regard to new GRE exam scores, ETS has an pdf of the relationship btw old and new scores. New versions of GRE scores are accepted.

9. How important are GRE scores, and what GRE scores do I need to get into the program?

GRE scores are important, but as indicated above, many other things also are considered in admissions decisions. In general, higher GRE scores are viewed more favorably than lower GRE scores, but high GRE scores do not guarantee admission.

10. How important is my undergraduate GPA, and how high does it have to be for me to get in?

The undergraduate GPA is important. However, we understand that GPAs vary depending upon the particular institution attended, the particular courses taken, etc. Undergraduate GPAs are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, but our successful candidates typically have very high GPAs (over 3.5 on a 4.0 scale).

11. Do I need to have an undergraduate degree in Psychology?

An undergraduate degree in psychology is highly preferred to provide basic foundations for graduate level psychology coursework. Also, because the program has a strong research emphasis, which includes a quantitative component, college-level math and statistics courses also can be helpful.

12. Do I have to have previous research experience with a clinical psychologist?

No. The research experience can be with psychologists in other disciplines (e.g., biopsychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology). Experience can also be with professionals in disciplines other than psychology (e.g., psychiatry, public health, social work).

13. Will you accept my Master's degree?

Depends. Acceptance of a previously earned Master's degree (from a different department at Howard, different institution, or different discipline) is judged on a case-by-case basis. Most applicants that apply to our program may have a Master's degree in the social sciences that *may* parallel clinical psychology theories and practices. We typically accept empirical (i.e., research-based) Master's thesis. For example, Master's theses have included primary or secondary quantitative analyses, or a quantitative meta-analysis. Furthermore, your empirical thesis has to be approved by the graduate school director. These decisions are made after an applicant is accepted into the program.

14. Is my tenure in the program shorter if I have a Master's degree?

This will be judged on a case-by-case basis. Upon acceptance and enrollment to the program, it will be decided which credits you may transfer. In some cases, 1-3 classes *may* transfer from a Master's Program in the social sciences.

15. Can the program be completed in less than 5 years, provided that some of my credits transfer and I take summer courses?

Required clinical courses are not offered in the summer. Typically students do not finish in less than 5 years (before Internship) because of other obligations aside from coursework including practica/externship experience, research milestones, comprehensive examinations and internship. Training is sequential.

16. Can I work full-time or part-time while in the program?

No. We do not advise students to work because the program with classes, research, and eventually clinical work can add up to 40+ hours per week. All students must complete various research projects, including at least a thesis (if prior one is not approved) and dissertation.

17. Can I be admitted in the spring semester?

No. All admissions decisions are made during the spring semester for students beginning in the fall semester.

18. Is the program focused on research?

Yes. The program trains students to be competent practitioners and researchers. We expect ALL students to present at a conference and/or submit a paper for publication each year.

19. Do I have to take courses in Statistics and Research Methods?

If you have a Master's degree that is not approved by the graduate school director or if you do not have a Master's degree you must *take and pass* Statistics I, Statistics II and Research Methods.

20. I am also interested in specializing in Neuropsychology. I was trying to find more information about the requirements. Will it take longer to have this minor?

All "adult track" clinical psychology graduate students will minor in neuropsychology. Please refer to the psychology department's website for the typical trajectory for "adult track" students. It does not take longer to complete this minor if you are on track with all program milestones. "Child track" students will minor in developmental psychology. The psychology department's website also has a sample trajectory for "child track" students.

21. Are classes offered during the day, at night, or both? How many times per week do you attend each class?

Howard University is a traditional program. Classes are offered during days and occasionally in the evenings. Your class schedule depends on the course and instructor. Courses are typically 2.5 hours once per week. However, it is not unusual that a course requires shorter meetings twice per week. Some courses have a lab component that requires additional weekly meetings. Students are expected to have 100% attendance. In addition to classes, twenty hours per week should be devoted to your research.

22. Is there an orientation for incoming students in the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program?

Yes. There is a five-day orientation hosted by the department the week before the fall semester starts.

23. Do clinical psychology graduate doctoral applicants have to interview?

Applicants are required to interview usually in early February. If an applicant is not invited for an interview, it likely means they were no longer under consideration for acceptance to the program. We believe interviewing is a very helpful experience for applicants in deciding whether HU is the right place for them. The application deadline is in December 1st.

24. Can I ask a faculty member or the Director of Clinical Training to do a cursory review of my application materials?

The DCT would be honored to meet and/or talk with each applicant prior to admissions season, but s/he cannot before interview day. A pre-interview may put you at unfair advantage. We are a mentor-based program, thus the admissions committee and a potential research mentor must agree on your admission. Research lab availability varies each year.

We strongly advise that you contact the mentor (should be core clinical faculty) you are interested in working with to check for availability for the year you are applying.

25. How many credits are needed to be considered a full time graduate student? Are students allowed to enroll on a part-time basis and if so, how many credits are considered part-time?

Howard University is a full-time program. Full-time graduate student status is 9 credit hours. Some semesters you will be required to enroll in more than 9 credit hours (e.g., first year which is heavier on coursework). The maximum number of credit hours allowed for graduate students is 15. When you are in PhD candidacy or on internship, fewer credit hours are required.

26. Where can I find a copy of the Clinical Psychology Student Handbook?

The handbook is available to applicants upon interview day. Please visit the psychology department's website for a list of courses required of clinical psychology graduate students.

27. Should I review all available materials online before emailing the DCT or other clinical faculty questions?

Yes. It is preferred that you only ask questions that have been left unanswered after reviewing the psychology department's website.

28. How many faculty members must serve on a Master's committee?

The Master's examination committee is made up of three faculty members from the psychology department including your research advisor.

29. How many faculty members are necessary on a Dissertation Committee?

The dissertation committee is made up of a minimum of four faculty members from the department of psychology including your research advisor. The fifth member must be from outside of the department and attain graduate faculty status from the College of Arts and Sciences graduate school.

30. What can I do to determine if the HU Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology is a good match for me?

Prospective applicants should carefully review the information found on this website. Consider whether or not our mission statement matches your training goals and whether the research of at least one of our faculty members matches your own interests. There is extensive research training and applicants with little or no interest in developing research skills or conducting research will not find our program good "fit."

31. What is the timeline for making admissions decisions?

The application deadline is December 1st for those seeking admission in the fall of the next year. We begin reviewing applications shortly after the deadline and make decisions about which candidates we wish to interview in late January or early February. Interviews are conducted in February, and admissions decisions are made a couple weeks after all of the interviews are complete.

32. How many students are admitted each year into the program?

We plan to admit between 3 and 6 students each year.

33. Where do you expect your graduates to be employed after obtaining their PhD?

We expect graduates from our program to seek employment in a variety of academic and applied settings including universities and colleges, research institutes, hospitals, clinics, and government organizations.

34. Where can I find out about graduate schools in psychology in general?

Useful information is available on the Internet about specific doctoral programs in clinical psychology. It is useful to review the programs' training emphases and research interests of faculty. Psychology professors at your university or college can provide useful information as well. Books on graduate schools in psychology are also good tools (the American Psychological Association publishes books on this topic). Familiarize yourself with relevant research literature in your area of interest and pay close attention to authors who might potentially be a good research mentor for you.

35. I know Howard University is a historically Black University? Are majority of the students and faculty Black?

Howard University has a diverse and multicultural faculty and student body. Howard enrolls more than 11,000 students who come from virtually every state and from nearly 200 foreign countries, speaking a wide variety of languages. Its faculty is comprised of international and interracial women and men who have distinguished themselves not only as educators, but also as researchers, practitioners, authors, consultants and activists. We invite applications from all interested students.

36. Are there practica/externship opportunities on campus?

Yes. Howard University offers opportunities to gain clinical hours at the Mental Health Clinic and the University's Counseling Center. There are also future possibilities at the Howard University's Cancer Center.

37. Are there opportunities to collaborate within the department and across campus on research projects?

Yes. Howard values interdisciplinary training and research. Currently faculty and students have collaborations with other psychology areas including Social, Personality and Neuropsychology. Faculty members also have productive relationships and research collaborations with HU Hospital, Cancer Center, Genome Center, Surgery and Nephrology, Psychiatry, School of Divinity and Biology, along with other departments.

38. Are there separate application processes for the Graduate School and Psychology Department?

Please comply with Graduate School's fee and application process requirements (including transcript instructions). There is no additional fee required by the Psychology Department.

The Psychology Department does require a research writing sample, CV, and supplemental form (found on Department's website). These materials should be sent directly to the Director of Clinical Training in the Psychology Department NOT the Graduate School. More specific instructions on how to send these materials by email or in a hard copy version are on the supplemental form.

39. I do not have a lot of research experience. Can I still apply?

Research experience is one of 5-6 factors that we look at when selecting applicants. Some of our applicants have more research than others. Each year we look at all applicants and our 5-6 factors. Thus, I cannot say what this cohort of applicants' research experience will be and how that will affect the selected list of interviewed students. We have an high expectation of research (and clinical) productivity, however, in our program as it is a PhD program. Each faculty member has the final say of who they select from the list of interviewed students. Thus, I would submit your application and see what happens with the process.

40. Who can communicate with the DCT about my application?

The DCT can only speak with the applicant regarding their application. If family members, friends, and colleagues contact the DCT on behalf of the applicant, no information regarding the application status or content can be disclosed.

41. When should I contact the DCT for application updates throughout the months of December, January, and February?

Please contact the graduate school directly about their portions of the application process. The DCT will **be unable** to provide information about this portion. We make every attempt to give a confirmation when we receive the Clinical Supplemental Application form. After this confirmation is received, please do not contact the DCT regarding an update of your status (e.g., Will I get an interview?). We understand this is a stressful time for you, but we will update as often as necessary throughout the process.