Information for Students interested in applying for admission to the PGDipPsych (Clin) programme 2021

School of Psychology
Te Whatu Oho Mauri
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1.0 Introduction

1.1. What is Clinical Psychology?
Clinical psychology is a discipline and a profession characterised as an applied science, with a firm empirical foundation, and an emphasis on objective data to support assessment and treatment. Training in clinical psychology involves learning academic, practical, interpersonal, and emotional skills. An integration of science and practice is emphasised so that research informs practice, practical understanding and issues guide meaningful research, and individualised and unique clinical work is strengthened by the systematic application of the scientific method.

1.2. What does this mean to a practising Clinical Psychologist?
Clinical psychologists base their assessment and treatment on the evidence generated through research. Assessment and treatment with clients raise new questions which inform theory and help design research. For these reasons, clinical psychologists need to be trained in research, practice and theory as well the integration of these.

1.3. What qualifications are needed to practise as a Clinical Psychologist?
To practice as a clinical psychologist in New Zealand, it is necessary to become registered with the New Zealand Psychologists Board. Registration typically requires completion of either a Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology (clinically-focused training) and a Master’s degree or PhD in psychology (research training), or a Doctor of Clinical Psychology (which incorporates both research and clinical training in one degree). The University of Waikato offers the Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology. The Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology programme is half-time in the first two years, and is often completed alongside a half-time Master’s thesis during that period; the third and final year is a full-time.

### Diagram

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Undergraduate Degree Majoring in Psychology

Postgraduate Year (Honours or PGDip) Majoring in Psychology

Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology

Plus

MA or PhD in Psychology (concurrent)

Professional Doctoral Programme in Clinical Psychology
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Applicants for registration must complete the appropriate academic programmes and provide character references. A record of criminal convictions must be supplied with the application to the clinical programme, and Police vetting must be completed prior to commencing the clinical programme. If an applicant does have a criminal conviction, registration must be considered individually by the New Zealand Psychologists Board, based on materials the applicant submits regarding the criminal history. If you are considering training as a clinical psychologist and do have a criminal conviction, we recommend that you consult with the Psychologists Board before applying to any programme in order to be certain you will be eligible for registration.

1.4. Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology at the University of Waikato

The mission of the clinical psychology training programme at the University of Waikato is to collaborate with the professional community to train culturally and clinically competent, thoughtful, and reflective clinical psychologists who will contribute to the health and well-being of their communities.

The Postgraduate Diploma in the Clinical Psychology programme at this University is a three-year programme, whereby students typically complete their Master in Social Sciences (MSocSc) in addition to coursework and practical clinical experience for the diploma. Normally, it is expected that these are completed in three consecutive years. Students complete their honours or postgraduate year (including the prerequisite papers for the clinical programme) and then undertake the coursework and clinical work for the diploma programme concurrently with their Masters for the first two years of the clinical programme. Following completion of MSocSc or PhD, the third and final year of the programme involves supervised clinical work in an internship setting four days per week and one day per week of university classes and meetings.

However, the Diploma can be taken subsequent to a previously-earned MA or PhD in psychology, provided the appropriate clinically-relevant coursework has been completed. In these cases, the coursework and practical clinical experience required for the Diploma are still spread over three years, but the first two years are half-time, and students should be aware that this may limit their eligibility for student assistance grants. Of course, since the programme is half-time, the student may work part-time, but needs to be clear with the employer about the schedule and requirements of the programme.

Enrolment in a PhD instead of the Masters is feasible; however, the Postgraduate Diploma cannot be awarded until after the PhD has been completed, unless the student has already completed a Master’s degree. Once selected for the programme, students interested in this option should discuss their programme of studies with one of the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme team. This usually involves taking a year or more of deferral from the clinical programme to complete the PhD.

The Diploma programme is made up of coursework, academic research, and supervised clinical practice. There is a gradual transition over the three years from a substantial coursework component in the first year to mainly supervised clinical experience (internships) in the final year.

The clinical programme at Waikato is regionally-focused; this means that placements, internships, agency visits, and other programme activities predominantly take place in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions. Attendance at classes is mandatory, and in the first and second years, students may have class and programme activities on three or more days per week. In the internship year, students will have classes at the University one day per week, and four days per week of supervised clinical work. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that students plan to live in Hamilton or nearby, or be prepared for significant expenditures of time and money for travel.

An important goal of the clinical programme at Waikato is to produce clinical psychologists who are able
to implement the most current and effective methods of assessment and treatment in a socially-relevant and sensitive way. Scientific and technical knowledge is not sufficient to have an impact on social problems if the professional clinician does not have the social and interpersonal understanding to recognise the needs of contemporary New Zealand society and the many cultures and varied individuals who make up that society. Thus, professional responsibility, high ethical standards and practice, and a dedication to resolving societal needs are all considered essential parts of the development of a well-rounded clinician.

2.0. Clinical Programme Staff

The programme staff consist of the Programme Director, Associate Professor Carol Choo, Senior Lecturer Carrie Barber, Senior Lecturer Armon Tamatea, Lecturer Amy Bird, and Senior Clinical Tutor Kyle Smith. The clinical staff are responsible for all curriculum and policy developments. There is also the Programme Administrator to the clinical programme Chellie Keenan, who can be consulted for administrative assistance.

Carol C.Y. Choo, DPsy (JCU), Associate Professor, Programme Director
Carol has accumulated professional experience in various sectors e.g. mental health, crisis counselling and youth work. She has worked in a diverse range of settings, e.g. as senior psychologist on the psychiatric ward, clinician on the crisis assessment and treatment team, case manager in community mental health, and as a consultant psychologist. Carol’s current research interests are in the area of suicide prevention, e-health, and clinical psychology.

Carol Cornsweet Barber, PhD (Vanderbilt University), Senior Lecturer
Carrie’s clinical experience is with assessment and treatment of children and adolescents, as well as perinatal mental health and issues relating to parenting. Her research experience includes evaluation of the outcomes of intensive mental health services to children and adolescents, as well as social services to homeless youth. Her current research focus is on perinatal mental health and transition to parenting.

Armon Tamatea, PhD (Massey), PGDip(Clin)Psych (Waikato), Senior Lecturer
Armon was the Senior Advisor (Psychological Research) for the Department of Corrections and has worked extensively in the assessment and treatment of violent and sexual offenders. His research interests include personality disorders (especially psychopathic and antisocial patterns), New Zealand gangs, and general criminal justice and forensic issues.

Amy Bird, PhD (Otago), PGDip(Clin)Psych (Otago), Lecturer
Amy has over 15 years clinical experience in both public and private mental health settings with adults, adolescents and children. Amy’s main clinical and research interests are in early prevention of mental health difficulties, particularly the role of early parent-child interactions and attachment relationships. Amy has a particular interest in longitudinal research and the intersection of physical and mental health during development.

Kyle J.H. Smith, MSocSci (Honours), PGDip(Clin)Psych (Waikato), Senior Clinical Tutor
Kyle maintains a small private practice and has clinical experience in adult mental health. She specialises in the assessment and treatment of anxiety disorders and group treatment approaches. Her research interests include post-natal depression, anxiety, and supervision.

In 2019 and 2020, we have been extremely fortunate to have Dr Dennis de Jong (PhD (University), PGDip(Clin)Psych (Waikato)) in fixed-term positions teaching in the programme. Dennis also works for a local agency, Hauora Waikato, four days per week.
3.0 Recommended and Required Course Work

In special circumstances, or where a paper was not offered previously, an alternative but relevant paper may be substituted. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis after discussion with programme staff. University of Waikato papers have been restructured in recent years, so numbers and names may not match exactly; for required papers, the important matter is that the content of the paper is equivalent to the content of the paper indicated here.

3.1.1. Undergraduate course work

In the second year, the following papers (or papers on similar topics) are recommended:

- PSYCH202 Mauri Ora: Social Psychology of Human Flourishing
- PSYCH203 Brain, Cognition and Development
- PSYCH204 Behavioural Psychology and Perception
- PSYCH211 Understanding Psychological Research

In the third year, the following papers are required, as they serve as prerequisites for subsequent requirements:

- PSYC307 Research Methods
- PSYC337 Individual Differences and Measurement
- PSYC338 Abnormal Psychology

Recommended Courses:

- PSYC301/302 Community, Culture and Diversity
- PSYC314 Behaviour Analysis
- PSYC319 Infant and Child Development

Applicants from other Universities will need to demonstrate that they have completed courses that are similar in content to the required courses or be prepared to enrol in some additional courses to reach the required standard in these topics.

3.1.2. Grades

There are no entry criteria based solely on grades. Better grades will be useful, but are not the only criterion on which applicants are assessed. However, a minimum of a B+ average in Honours courses typically is required for entry into the programme. Students with less than a B+ average would need to provide compelling evidence of academic preparation and capability.

3.2. Graduate course work

In order to start the programme, students should have completed an Honours or a Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology, including the following required prerequisite papers:

- PSYCH556 Advanced Topics in Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing
- PSYCH562 Theories of Psychotherapy
- PSYCH564 Developmental Psychopathology
- PSYCH575 Indigenous Psychologies
- PSYCH581 Psychological Assessment

If you have completed your postgraduate degree but have not completed one or more of the required papers, and you are accepted into the programme, you will be required to complete the papers you have
not completed during your first year of study.

These papers are considered fundamental in the training of clinical psychologists. Applicants from other universities will need to demonstrate that they have completed courses that are similar in content to the above or be prepared to enrol in some additional courses to reach the required standard in these topics.

### 3.2.1. Recommended courses

We are often asked what other papers might be taken during the postgraduate year. The following papers are recommended but not required for preparation for clinical training:

1. PSYCH511 Evaluation Research Design
2. PSYCH539 Graduate Research Methods in Psychology
3. PSYCH560 Applied Behaviour Analysis - Theory and Issues
4. PSYCH580 The Psychology of Criminal Conduct

Additionally, it is strongly recommended that applicants complete at least basic training in te reo Māori and tikanga before applying to the clinical programme. Bicultural competence is an important component of working as a clinical psychologist, and is integral throughout the clinical psychology training process. Many students continue to study te reo throughout their clinical training.

### 4.0. Relevant Experience

Applications should show relevant experience. Relevant experience may include a previous employment history in related areas such as working in an agency alongside clinical psychologists, or working in social work, nursing, drug and alcohol services, occupational therapy, or other helping professions. It may also include voluntary work with people with psychological or social problems. Previous students have obtained valuable experience by volunteering at organisations such as Lifeline, Youthline, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Hospice, Emerge, Explore, Autism New Zealand, the Department of Corrections, HAIP, and Hauora Waikato.

The importance of such experience is that it allows applicants to demonstrate that they appreciate, understand, and empathise with the issues that people from a range of backgrounds may face. This kind of experience can also be valuable to you in clarifying your career goals and seeing how comfortable you are with the kinds of roles clinicians can take.

It is also critical that applicants can demonstrate understanding of the role and practice of clinical psychology. It is often helpful if they have sought out experienced clinical psychologists and discussed professional activities with them.

### 5.0. Age, Gender, and Ethnicity

There is no upper or lower age limit. All applications will be evaluated based on the applicant’s previous academic and personal experience, bicultural appreciation, commitment to training, and understanding of the profession.

Neither gender is considered more appropriate than the other. The selection process is undertaken in a way which seeks to attract the best applicants rather than favouring one gender over the other. However, given that there is a shortage of males in the profession and a shortage of Māori, if two applicants are
equal in all of the aforementioned criteria, then gender and cultural identity may be considered in choosing an applicant.

New Zealand is a bicultural country which also is fortunate to have peoples of many and varied cultures. We welcome applications from a wide range of cultural identities, providing the applicants are competent English communicators.

6.0. References

All applicants are required to have two recent letters of recommendation. It is also very helpful if the referees know something about the practice of clinical psychology and can describe the applicant’s potential strengths in this area. It is suggested that one should be an academic staff member who can report on the applicant’s performance in psychology courses. The other letter should be by someone who can discuss the applicant’s personal strengths as they relate to the field of clinical psychology (e.g., the applicant’s interpersonal and communication skills, responsibility, reliability, and honesty). References need to come from people who know the applicant well, ideally in some relevant professional context such as a volunteer or paid job, but not relatives or whanau.

7.0. Approaches to Practitioners

If you think that clinical psychology is the career choice for you but you are not certain about what the job actually entails, it is helpful if you approach someone who is practising to find out. Clinical psychologists are employed in many different sectors, including the psychological services in Corrections, District Health Boards, specialist services in the Child Youth and Family Service, Group Special Education, private practice, disability services, and at The Psychology Centre (TPC), which is the clinic affiliated with the University of Waikato clinical training programme in Hamilton. You may wish to talk to someone at one or more of these agencies in order to gain more information, but please remember that clinical psychologists are busy people and may not be able to see you within a short time-frame.

8.0. Programme Activities

Currently all of the classes are held at the University. For students who have not completed their Master’s degree before enrolling, the combination of the Masters work and the Diploma is a full-time commitment. There will, occasionally, be additional activities that will be offered to those enrolled in the programme. Involvement in these activities may be mandatory. Where possible, considerable advance warning will be provided. Such activities may include hui, noho marae, local and national conferences, workshops, and seminars.

8.1. Course Outline

The following describes the programme structure during 2020; the days and time allocations may shift from year to year.

Year 1

Clinical papers (PSYC521 and PSYC522) are interwoven in Trimester A and Trimester B, with the classes alternating weeks. The classes run for two hours each Monday afternoon. Fridays are filled all year long with Clinical Skills classes for three hours each morning. On every Friday afternoon in Trimester A, first year students visit local agencies to learn about services that provide clinical psychology in Hamilton. On Friday afternoons in Trimester B, group case discussions using example video-taped sessions with clients are run by TPC staff.
Practica

Clinical observations include significant pre-term reading, culminating in an afternoon training workshop, followed by clinical observation rotations of approximately six days within a two-week period. One of the observed assessments will be written up as a case study and presented to the programme in the Case Conference class.

Year 2 Papers

One clinical paper (PSYC523/PSYC524) runs for four hours each Monday afternoon during term time throughout the year.

Practica

Students complete two 13-week placements of two full days per week, one in Trimester A and one in Trimester B. While one placement is usually at TPC in Hamilton and the other placements are usually in the Waikato region, it is possible that some may be in other regions (Taranaki, Bay of Plenty, Auckland, etc.) and require significant travel, depending on availability. An Interviewing Workshop and other pre-placement trainings are held at the beginning of the first trimester of Year 2, usually comprised of four to five full days during the first week of classes.

Please note that Year 1 and 2 students may also be completing their Masters theses. Please also note that this must be submitted prior to beginning their internships.

Year 3 (referred to as Interns) Papers

One clinical paper (PSYC525) runs for four hours each Monday afternoon during term time throughout the year.

Practica

Students complete two 23-week internships of four full days per week for five to six months for each. While one internship is usually at TPC in Hamilton and the other internships are usually in the Waikato region, some may be in other regions (Taranaki, Bay of Plenty, Auckland, etc.) requiring significant travel, depending on availability.

In addition, for all years

All students are required to attend Case Conference seminars, which are held on Mondays, from 11.15am to 12.30pm at the University. Case Conference involves practitioners and students presenting current clinical cases in which they discuss their assessment, conceptualisation and treatment approach, as well as any safety and ethical issues that arose whilst working with a client. Each student presents one case each year. The purpose of the case conference is to provide experience in presenting and discussing clinical cases and related issues in a team setting.

The activities outlined above ensure that students are extremely busy keeping up with the demands of the programme. Students who enter this training programme need to be committed and well-organised.

8.2. Internships

Internships are offered in a range of work places such as the Adult Mental Health Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Child Development Centre, Explore, Hauora Waikato, Corrections, and private practice, among others. Each year the internships available to us vary. Before the beginning of the third year, prospective interns are advised which internships are available and guided by programme staff on their options. However, there is frequently competition for internships so we cannot guarantee that everyone’s choice will be available, nor can we guarantee that all internship placements will be paid.

Normally, as noted above, the internship year will consist of two internships: one in a field agency and one at TPC. Each of these internships are for approximately six months, with the first one starting the day following Auckland Anniversary Day. Interns spend four days per week (excluding Mondays) in their
internship. Mondays are kept free for University programme requirements and related studies.

Note: Your thesis (Masters or PhD) must be completed prior to applying for internships. No applications will be permitted unless the thesis has been completed.

9.0. The Psychology Centre (TPC)

The Psychology Centre is a charitable trust which receives funding from the Waikato DHB and the University of Waikato to assist in the development of the clinical psychology workforce. Students will experience a number of activities at TPC across all the years of their training. TPC is staffed by experienced clinical psychologists who provide training and supervision for our students, conduct research activities, and who generally involve themselves in a range of clinical endeavours. TPC is situated at 5 King Street, Frankton, Hamilton.

10.0. Research Expectations

As has been mentioned, the integration of research and practice is one of the hallmarks of a professional clinical psychologist and also of a clinical psychology training programme. Research activities should be thought of as an integral part of clinical training, not as an add-on or hurdle that you have to overcome in order to obtain the clinical diploma.

All students, at some point in their training, are required to engage in some research activity. This is most likely to begin at the postgraduate level (e.g., a directed study or honours thesis) and continue at the masters level (i.e. thesis), but may also be in the form of a PhD. For those who have not completed their research degree before starting the programme, the topic of the study is required to be clinically relevant; this is broadly construed, and includes most of the research conducted in the School of Psychology. Clinical students may be supervised by any of the staff in the School, so long as the topic is clinically relevant.

The research process can involve unexpected challenges (e.g., recruitment, equipment). Given the challenges of completing a research thesis alongside clinical training, students should work with their supervisor to develop a feasible project and timeline to ensure they do not need to defer their final year internship.

Students enrolled in the Clinical Diploma are encouraged to present their research findings in forums outside the Programme including hui, symposia, and national and international conferences.

Being an intelligent consumer of the research literature is a key outcome of your university education and training. You will be expected to use the empirical and theoretical literature critically in your clinical work and written case studies during your training. Students who have skills in the critical consumption of research literature will have an advantage.

11.0. Commitment

As has been outlined in this document, clinical psychology training is quite intensive. Therefore, applicants are expected, prior to selection, to have considered their commitment to at least three consecutive years of intensive study and practice. Part-time enrolment generally is not permitted.

At the present time, up to nine places are offered each year with the expectation that unless formal dispensation is provided by the Programme Director, each student will proceed through each year in sequence, contingent on passing each year’s examinations. Permission may be
12.0. Financial Matters

Students are expected to self-fund their training. While internships generally are paid positions in field agencies, there have been times when interns have not been remunerated. Students have to cover their own costs for travel and accommodation, and this should be considered before applying since sometimes placements and internships can be outside the Hamilton area, requiring relocation and significant travel. The programme cannot predict or be responsible for placement or internship requirements; for example, agencies now require all student trainees to have up-to-date vaccinations before any clinical practica can begin, resulting in significant costs (approximately $500) even before students are allowed to attend their first day of classes in the programme.

As with any tertiary course, training is expensive and many students do have to apply for student loans. However, there are a number of organisations that provide scholarships for graduate students. Please make yourself known to the Scholarships Office (scholarships@waikato.ac.nz) as they have up-to-date information on what is available.

13.0. Professional Bodies

There are currently two professional organisations for clinical psychologists in New Zealand. They are the New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists (NZCCP) and the Institute of Clinical Psychology (ICP); the latter is a sub-group of the New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPsS). Each of these offers free student membership and access to professional training opportunities. It is highly advisable that you join both of these professional bodies as early as possible in your psychology training.

The New Zealand Psychologists Board is the government-constituted body that oversees the registration and practice of registered psychologists. It is referred to as an “Authority” in the Health Professionals Competency Assurance Act (2003).

14.0. Web Links

Some useful web links (Psychology Department, Registration Authority, NZ Psychological Society, and the College of Clinical Psychologists) are as follows:

www.waikato.ac.nz/fass/about/psychology
www.psychologistsboard.org.nz/
www.psychology.org.nz
www.nzccp.co.nz/
www.tpc.org.nz

15.0. Registration Matters

Clinical psychology students who satisfactorily complete our three-year training programme can apply to the Psychologists Board for registration. Registration carries with it various rights and responsibilities and is required in New Zealand in order to practice clinical psychology. All successful graduates who wish to practice psychology in New Zealand are required to become registered and maintain an Annual Practising
Certificate as protection for themselves, and under the HPCA Act, their clients. Under the Act, interns need to be registered as Intern Clinical Psychologists. Second year students are advised to complete and submit the appropriate forms ( downloadable from the Registration Board website) before July of the preceding year.

16.0. Career Options

A degree in clinical psychology opens many different doors in terms of career development, such as:

- Health, including work with young children who have developmental and/or behavioural problems, children and adolescents with mental health difficulties, adults with mental health difficulties who live in the community and/or who may be inpatients for a period, clients in crisis, older people, rehabilitation for those with neuropsychological impairment, clients who experience pain, in forensic psychology, and so on.

- Corrections (Psychological Service) employs clinical psychologists throughout the country. In this setting, psychologists work with offenders who are on probation or in prison, sometimes in specialist units such as the Youth Offenders Unit or units that provide treatment for sexual offending.

- The Oranga Tamariki Service employs clinical psychologists in some cities. These clinicians work with children, caregivers, and families by providing assessments and sometimes treatment.

- A less traditional agency for clinical psychology, Group Special Education, is focused on assessing and intervening with children and young people whose behaviour is considered serious in the context of school and sometimes family settings.

- Others work with people with disabilities (physical and intellectual) in specifically-developed settings.

- Many clinicians eventually become self-employed in private practice after fairly extensive experience and work with clients who self-refer as well as those who are referred by other individuals and agencies.

17.0. What You Really Want to Know

The following are some commonly asked questions of both staff and students in the diploma programme. The list is not meant to be exhaustive but does cover some of the main issues.

I have come straight through University after leaving secondary school. Do I stand a chance of being selected?

There are no age barriers or preferences to selection. Applicants with well-rounded life experiences and well-developed interpersonal skills are likely to be preferred. The selection committee will consider an application on the basis of academic preparation, experiences and exposure to clinical issues, commitment to psychology as a career (which includes really understanding what a career in psychology entails), and the social skills and maturity that are necessary to work with people in distress. It is possible to develop this kind of knowledge and experience base during undergraduate and honours study, but it does go beyond the typical purely-academic programme.

What is so special about Waikato?

All programmes have individual characteristics that allow trainees the opportunity of following particular interests. At Waikato, we focus on the application of the scientist-practitioner model through training in understanding and implementing the cognitive-behavioural theoretical model. There is a strong focus on
clinical skill development and the training of practitioners for a wide variety of service settings. Because our Department is fortunate enough to have strong Māori representation, we can offer a Kaupapa Māori framework and a bicultural approach to research. The clinical psychology programme has a commitment to a bicultural focus and encourages students and staff to incorporate bicultural perspectives in clinical practice.

We also consider the community of students and staff in the programme to be a crucial part of our training and the experience of developing a professional role. We encourage students to create positive, supportive networks within the programme, and to come to see peers and staff as colleagues and resources for personal and professional growth.

**What is the difference between clinical and community psychology in practice?**

Clinical psychologists specialise in the application of psychological knowledge and theory to the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural problems affecting adults, children, couples, and families. The practice of clinical psychology focuses on understanding how individuals’ problems have occurred, on identifying strengths and supportive environments, and on finding ways of working with clients to change the ways they function to improve outcomes. This process also involves working with the wider systems, including other professionals and agencies.

Community psychology is characterised by an ecological approach in which social problems are conceptualised as arising from an interaction between people and their environments. Community psychologists pay particular attention to the conditions that give rise to social problems. The practice of community psychology emphasises the application of psychological and social science knowledge to promoting justice and equity, improving the quality of community life, enhancing health and well-being, and preventing psychological or ‘life-style’ problems.

**What is the difference between a clinical psychologist, a counsellor, and a psychiatrist?**

As mentioned above, clinical psychologists specialise in the application of psychological knowledge and theory to the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural problems affecting adults, children, couples, and families. They may work with an individual client, or with couples, families, or groups.

Counsellors provide help and support for a range of matters, including problems with relationships, mental health, and lifestyle. Counsellors offer their clients an opportunity to express their feelings and discuss what is happening in their lives, while listening, responding, and reflecting. Counsellors use a variety of techniques and theoretical frameworks, and they may work in private practice or agency settings.

Psychiatrists have a medical degree and additional specialist medical training. Their particular specialty is the provision of medical treatments for psychiatric disorders and the evaluation and treatment of mental disorders within a medical model.

**What experience should I have had before I apply?**

Experiences that include interacting with people and finding ways of assisting them are generally useful. Some applicants have worked previously in related fields such as nursing, teaching, social work, and occupational therapy. Others have been involved in volunteer organisations. Working alongside a clinical psychologist in an agency is a good way to learn what the role entails.

**I want to do a PhD as well. Is that OK?**

Yes it is, providing you meet the entry requirements for PhD study, can manage the workload requirements, and have sufficient funding for the extended period of training. Your PhD should bear a
relationship to clinical matters. You are likely to need to take two years’ deferral from the clinical programme after Year 2 to work full-time on your research while maintaining an association with the programme.

**I am really only interested in working with a certain population of clients. Why do I have to do three years training?**

All clinical diploma programmes in New Zealand are three years long. This enables each student to complete generalist training in the understanding and application of sound, empirically-informed psychological principles. Once students graduate, they should have a knowledge base and sufficient practice skills to allow them to work in a range of relevant workplaces. Successful completion of our training programme or one of the other University-based programmes leads directly to registration as a clinical psychologist.

**Will I get a job at the end of the programme?**

There is an extremely high rate of employment throughout New Zealand for students who graduate with the Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology. You will likely gain references in the practical components of your intern year that will assist you in gaining employment.

**What issues may I face working as a clinical psychologist?**

The work of clinical psychologists can involve experiences that are complex, challenging, and confronting. Applicants are advised that issues commonly encountered with clients during clinical training and professional practice can include:

- severe compromises in mental health and wellbeing, such as self-harm and suicidal behaviour
- challenging behaviour, such as interpersonal aggression and violence
- criminal offenses and severe antisocial behaviour
- sexually harmful behaviour towards adults and/or children
- sexual, violent, and emotional victimisation as a child and/or adult
- substance misuse and addictions

If these types of behaviours or experiences bring up particularly strong emotional reactions for you, please take time to work through these with a mental health professional before submitting an application. It is important that applicants are aware of what their ‘triggers’ may be in order to practice safely and ethically as well as to ensure quality service delivery to clients.

**How do students juggle the programme, whānau, work commitments, and have a life as well?**

It is recognised that the programme is very demanding. It is important that students in the programme realise the need to balance their academic life with their personal life. It is also important that students have good organisational skills and clear boundaries, as well as enlisting family and whānau support and understanding. There will be busy times, but the staff are there to help if you feel you are under too much pressure.

**I am an older student and am told you take only young ones. Is that true?**

Definitely not. Again, age does not constitute an advantage or disadvantage. Applicants are selected on the basis of what they have to offer the discipline of clinical psychology.
What happens if I am applying to other University programmes and I get more than one offer?

All the University programmes have an agreed-upon date by which time applicants must respond to the programme to accept an offer (and decline other offers). No programme should pressure you to respond before that date, and you should have responses from all programmes before that date, unless you are waitlisted.
Appendix A

National Guidelines for Students Applying to the Postgraduate Clinical Psychology Programme

Introduction:
The six New Zealand Universities offering postgraduate training programmes in clinical psychology have adopted the following uniform acceptance procedures to assist applicants. Competition for clinical training is considerable, and these procedures have been carefully designed to help you in the event that you are applying to more than one programme.

Uniform Acceptance Date:
All programmes will attempt to make offers of admission shortly after their selection interviews; dates for interviews among the programmes are coordinated to avoid significant conflict between scheduled interviews. Offers may be slightly earlier or slightly later because each programme follows different selection procedures. Once admission has been offered to a student, that student has until 5:00pm on the second Friday in December to accept the offer. In other words, the offer will not be withdrawn by the University programme before that date and time, nor can the student be required by any programme to give an answer prior to the second Friday in December. This allows a student who is admitted into one programme but who has a preference for another programme not to feel pressured into accepting the first offer received. However, if your top choice of programme makes you an offer of admission, you should accept immediately (i.e. not wait until the universal acceptance date). Thus, you should not “collect” offers or keep programmes waiting unnecessarily. In fact, once you have accepted an offer from one programme, you should contact all the other programmes to which you applied to relay the information that you have accepted another offer and are withdrawing from further consideration. These procedures are designed to expedite offers to other students who will be waiting to hear about admission.

If a programme that has made you an offer does not hear from you by 5:00pm on the second Friday in December, they will assume that you are not accepting their offer and they have the right to withdraw their offer to you and offer the place to someone else. This means that some students may still be notified of an offer of admission after this date. In that situation, you are advised to accept or decline the offer immediately.

It is important that your acceptance is actually received by the programme. Therefore, you should not simply leave a message on an answer machine or on email. You should obtain some confirmation that the admissions committee received notification of your acceptance or rejection of their offer.

Unpredictable events, such as a health or family emergency, that might preclude you from taking up the accepted position in the programme will typically involve a deferment of admission until you are able to enter the programme or re-application for entry into a subsequent intake. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis after discussion with programme staff.
Appendix B - Application Information

POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PSYCHOLOGY (CLINICAL)

Thank you for your interest in the clinical psychology programme at the University of Waikato. The information below outlines everything you will need to apply for admission to the Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology Clinical Programme. Please read this information carefully. Please also ensure that you have read the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences Graduate Handbook and the Programme Prospectus as these resources provide more information regarding the nature of our programme, its focus, and its philosophy of training. You can also access the School of Psychology’s website for further information.

Eligibility
There are certain minimum academic requirements for entry to the programme. These are an honours or postgraduate diploma in psychology, including courses in abnormal behaviour, psychological assessment, and indigenous psychologies (please see prerequisites listed in the Programme Prospectus).

The School of Psychology has minimum grade requirements for entry into the BSoSc(Hons) and MSoSc degree programmes; applicants to the clinical programme must meet those requirements since they will be simultaneously admitted to the graduate degree programme and the postgraduate diploma programme.

All applicants are expected to have knowledge of and interest in cultural issues; however, this need not be demonstrated by formal course work. You will be asked to comment in your application essays as to what formal or informal experiences you have had relating to cultural diversity. Additionally, it is strongly recommended that applicants complete at least basic training in te reo Māori and tikanga before applying to the clinical programme, and many students continue to study te reo throughout their clinical training.

We are aware that some students may not have completed their honours degree by November of a given year and will not have grades from courses in which they are currently enrolled. Offers of admission are contingent upon the satisfactory completion of the honours degree prior to enrolment in the programme; however, if students have one or two honours courses outstanding, they may still apply. It will then be up to the discretion of the selection panel whether they are considered for the programme. If they are selected for the programme, a plan for completion of honours papers will be arranged with the clinical team.

Please be aware that all students who accept a position in the clinical programme at the University of Waikato must have proof of up-to-date vaccinations submitted before any clinical practica can...
begin. This may require significant costs (approximately $500). The series of vaccinations required may take up to three months to complete, so students are encouraged to make an appointment with their GP immediately after accepting the offer of a place in the programme. Students will not be allowed to attend the first clinical practicum training if they have not submitted their completed proof of vaccination by the due date. Your vaccinations must be completed and you must submit proof of vaccination before the start of Trimester A.

Similarly, please be aware that all students who accept a position in the clinical programme at the University of Waikato must comply with Police vetting requirements. This process may take up to three months to complete, so students are encouraged to contact the Programme Administrator immediately after accepting the offer of a place in the programme to request and complete the required documents as soon as possible. Students will not be allowed to attend the first clinical practicum training if the Police vetting has not been returned by the start of Trimester A.

**Applications for the 2021 Clinical Psychology Programme will open in September 2020 and close 1 October 2020.**

Fill out our online application form here: [https://psyc.waikato.ac.nz/Forms/](https://psyc.waikato.ac.nz/Forms/)