

Planning Your Course Selections

The clinical program is designed to provide (a) solid generalist training in clinical psychology and (b) basic knowledge, skills, and competencies required for licensure as a clinical psychologist. Through the selection of supplementary courses and clinical practica, students can tailor the program to best fit their academic interests and anticipated career path. Both the Clinical Program Director and the Coordinator of Practica and Internships are available to assist students with questions about course and practica selection.

As part of the process of individually tailoring the program to their own needs, there are some general principles in course and practica selection that are important for all students to bear in mind. Students are encouraged to select a range of supplementary clinical courses to ensure a broad perspective on the nature of clinical psychology. Taking a selection of courses and practica that focus on different clinical skills and populations can provide the student with a good sense of the scope of the profession and options for subsequent training and practice. With this in mind, it is useful to remember that students have the option of completing more courses than the number required by the clinical program. Likewise, while students can only complete one 2-day external practicum per term, they have the option of completing additional practica.

Breadth of knowledge and skills must be balanced with considerations about the types of courses and practica necessary for preparation for one's career path. Although maintaining flexibility is generally a good idea, it is also important to develop a detailed plan for one's intended career path. Optimally, this should begin in the second year in the program and include considerations such as research training, clinical knowledge, as well as experience relevant to the types of services one wishes to provide following graduation from the program. The Coordinator of Practica and Internships assists students throughout the program in developing a concrete clinical training plan that guides clinical training placements and ultimately internship site selection. Initial practica are intended to establish core foundational clinical skills rather than prepare for a particular professional profile. Later practica home in on students' specific training goals.

By the end of the third year in the program, students should have a fairly clear sense of the kind of internship and initial post-graduation position they would like to have. This does not mean that a student must have a firm plan in mind to guide all decisions made in the graduate program. It does mean, however, that a student should decide on questions such as what major populations to work with (e.g., child, adolescent, couples, older adults) and what psychological service skills to develop (e.g., specific assessment/diagnostic skills, specific types of intervention skills, program consultation and evaluation skills). Keeping in mind both the importance of breadth of training and the need to develop a profile consistent with attaining an appropriate internship and career aspirations, courses should be selected and practica requested based on these plans. Students wishing to develop a dual profile (e.g., child/family and adult) should anticipate that an extra year prior to internship will be required to attain the combination of practica required to achieve a dual profile. Students pursuing the Concentration in Child, Adolescent, and Family Services (including those doing so as part of a dual profile) will also need to take courses in (a) child psychopathology and (b) evidence-based psychological services with children,

adolescents, and families by the end of their third year at the latest. Students who wish to register as clinical health psychologists in the province of Ontario must take a health psychology course (PSY 6122 Clinical Health Psychology or PSY 7114 Seminars in Professional Psychology: Health and Rehabilitation Psychology) during the course of the program.

Beginning in second year, students meet at least annually with the Coordinator of Practica and Internships to discuss clinical training plans and the types of internships that are most appropriate to their interests and profile. These meetings provide opportunities to discuss changes in one's intended career path and to focus on the requirements for obtaining an appropriate internship. Useful information on the [process of applying to internships](#) can be found at the [Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers \(APPIC\)](#). APPIC is the organization that oversees the internship match process. As per APPIC policy, students need to obtain formal approval from their academic program to apply for internship. Readiness to apply can be discussed with the Coordinator of Practica and Internships and an overview is provided in the Clinical program's [Readiness for Internship](#) Guidance document and the [Policy on internships](#).

Beyond the internship, we encourage students to think about the type of clinical work they want to carry out after graduation. The selection of courses and practica is relevant to the process of registration as a psychologist. The requirements [vary somewhat across provinces/territories](#). However, by virtue of the Mutual Recognition Agreement signed by all psychology regulatory bodies in Canada, there is agreement on a common core set of competencies. Some provinces (e.g., Quebec) have additional requirements. Students should consult the regulatory body of psychology of the jurisdictions of interest to them for details.

In Ontario, all candidates for registration with the College of Psychologists of Ontario (CPO) must declare their competencies with respect to:

- 1) areas of practice (clinical psychology, counselling psychology, school psychology, forensic/correctional psychology, clinical neuropsychology, health psychology, rehabilitation psychology, and industrial/organizational psychology);
- 2) activities (assessment/evaluation, intervention/consultation, research, and teaching);
- 3) client groups (children, adolescents, adults, couples, families, seniors, organizations).

Details on the definitions of these areas of practice can be found in [Appendix C of the CPO Registration Guidelines for Psychologists](#).

We strongly encourage students to review requirements for registration, especially [the requirements for declaring competencies](#). The appropriate selection of supplementary clinical courses and clinical training experiences (both practica and internship) are critical for developing competencies for registration. The period of supervised practice during the initial stage of registration is also central for declaring competencies, as the newly registered psychologist must be providing services consistent with their declared competencies (including areas of practice, activities and services, and various client groups). The CPO Registration Committee, in reviewing applications for registration, expects to see clear connections between an applicant's graduate courses, clinical training (practica and internship), post-

graduation employment/professional activity, and declared competencies. For example, if an applicant declares competency in health psychology, it is essential that the person has taken one or more relevant courses, has training experiences with a range of problems and services relevant to health psychology, and is providing health psychology services during the supervised practice period. As another example, to declare competency in providing clinical and counselling psychology services to children, it is necessary to have relevant coursework and to have worked with children across a range of problem areas during practica and internship training. Additionally, CPO requires that applicants declare competencies in both assessment/evaluation and intervention/consultation for any area of practice selected.

By virtue of the nature of the training received, students graduating from the University of Ottawa Clinical Psychology program should consider declaring competencies in both clinical psychology and counselling psychology. The broad nature of the required courses and clinical training in the program ensure that students have knowledge and skills relevant to these services and areas of practice. Students who are interested in declaring competency in other areas of practice (e.g., health psychology) should ensure that they have appropriate academic course and clinical experiences. Note, however, that Section I of the CPO Registration Guidelines ([Completing the Declaration of Competence](#)) states that normally, applicants should select no more than two areas of practice. Students wishing to declare competency in more than two areas of practice are encouraged to consult with the CPO. Declaring competencies in other services and in other areas of practice should be determined by three elements: completed supplementary clinical courses; specific elements of clinical training; and nature of post-graduation employment/professional service. Sometimes an applicant for registration indicates competencies in an area of practice that is necessary for their post-graduation employment but for which they have little or no knowledge and skills. In such cases, the CPO Registration Committee will require the submission of a retraining plan to develop the necessary knowledge and skills as part of the supervised practice process.

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