Training in Clinical Psychology

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Overview

- What is Clinical Psychology?
- How do you get onto Clinical Psychology training courses?
- What does being a Trainee Clinical Psychologist involve?
- What are the benefits and challenges of training to be a Clinical Psychologist?
What is Clinical Psychology

- Application of the knowledge base of psychology (and other disciplines) to promote adjustment, health and well-being.

- Clinical Psychologists:
  - Individuals and groups / organisations
  - Across the age range and specialisms
  - Provide tailored psychological therapies and interventions
  - Direct and indirect work
  - Therapy, research, teaching, training, consultation
How do you get into training?

1. Get a 2:1 degree or higher in Psychology or 2:2 and a relevant postgraduate qualification

2. Clinical / research experience:
   - Work as assistant psychologist
   - Do a PhD related to clinical psychology
   - Other relevant experience
     - Voluntary work with relevant groups
     - Other career experience (e.g. nursing, social work)

3. Develop competencies
   - Academic ability
   - Psychological knowledge & skills
   - Personal development and competencies
   - Research competencies
   - Interpersonal skills
Applications

• Three applications procedures
  ◦ “Clearing House” system (England, Scotland, Wales)
    • Deadline is November/December
    • [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp/](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp/)
  ◦ Queen’s University
    • Deadline is February
    • [http://www.psych.qub.ac.uk/ProspectiveStudents/PostgraduateStudies/DClinPsych/index.aspx](http://www.psych.qub.ac.uk/ProspectiveStudents/PostgraduateStudies/DClinPsych/index.aspx)
  ◦ Republic of Ireland individual pathways
    • NUI Galway, University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, Limerick, University College Cork

• Application forms are similar in terms of content
What is a Trainee Clinical Psychologist?

- Someone who is training to be a clinical psychologist and is not yet qualified
- Currently completing the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsych)
- Official title is “Trainee Clinical Psychologist”
- Used to be “Clinical Psychologist in Training”
What does being a Trainee Clinical Psychologist involve?

- Doctoral course lasts 3 years and made up of:
  1. Academic learning
  2. Clinical placements
  3. Research
  4. Personal and professional development
Academic learning

• Learn about the *nature* and *theories* of different types of mental health difficulties (e.g. anxiety, depression, schizophrenia)

• Learn how to *assess* people with different mental health difficulties using different methods (e.g. interview, tests, observation)

• Learn how to *treat* people with different mental health difficulties using different methods (e.g. cognitive, behavioural, systemic, psychodynamic) and drawing on different knowledge bases

• Learn how to *apply* your knowledge to different settings (e.g. school, work, family) with different age groups and populations (e.g. children, adults, learning disability)
Clinical Placements

- As a Trainee Clinical Psychologist you are student but also an employee of health service “apprentice” – 1 year-long and 4 six-month placements

- Majority of your time in training will be in NHS clinical settings working as a Trainee Clinical Psychologist

- Main duties are to assess/treat clients with a variety of difficulties

- Supervised, observe and be observed by a Clinical Psychologist

- Different placements … different specialties (e.g. adult, child, neuropsychology). Complete a logbook of overall experience.

- Complete other activities related to personal/professional development (e.g. teaching, presentations, courses)
Research

- One of the main areas that separates clinical Psychologists from other practitioners is research competencies and expertise

- As a Trainee Clinical Psychologist, you must complete 2 research projects
  1. Service-Related Project
     - Small piece of research that helps the service you are working in at the time (e.g. service evaluation)
  2. Large Scale Research Project
     - Large piece of research that is to doctoral (publishable) level. Makes an important contribution to general understanding of clinical psychology (e.g. understanding cognitive processes in addictive behaviours / testing efficacy of psychological interventions to promote adjustment in children with chronic illness). Assessed by submitting a paper and viva
Personal and Professional Development

- Reflection … self-awareness and ability reflect on your practice; link own experiences/background to practice

- Management skills, consultation skills, teaching/presentation skills, team-working skills,

- Awareness of professional issues that impact on clinical psychology (e.g. ethics, diversity)
Benefits of training to be a Clinical Psychologist

- Training to be a Clinical Psychologist … caring profession … privilege … helping people help themselves

- *Applied* psychology … using theory and implementing it … not purely academic

- Personal achievement … intense, personal journey … learn a lot both academically and about yourself

- Variety … research, therapy, management

- Reliable, secure career path

- Starts at @£26,000 per year as a Trainee, then starts at £31,000 as a newly qualified clinical psychologist
Challenges of training to be a Clinical Psychologist

- Extremely intense … 9 to 5 job on placement plus coursework and research on top of that

- Lots of evaluation and scrutiny

- Can be stressful … sudden responsibility … power differences … working with mental health difficulties

- Big commitment of time … psychology degree … pre-training as an Assistant Psychologist … 3 years as a Trainee Clinical Psychologist … can be 8 years +!
Bottom line …

Is it worth it?

Yes!

But it’s not for everybody!