



Training in Clinical Psychology

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4th March 2017

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/>
 - Queen’s University
 - Deadline is February
 - <http://www.psych.qub.ac.uk/ProspectiveStudents/PostgraduateStudies/D ClinPsych/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!