Trinity College Dublin
School of Psychology & Health Service Executive

Doctorate in Clinical Psychology
Applications for September 2022 Intake.

Note: The criteria for selection are reviewed annually. The selection criteria in place this year have been adjusted to take account of COVID-19 contingencies and may not apply next year.

The Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (D. Clin. Psych.) is a three-year (36 month) postgraduate professional training course. The programme is currently accredited with the Psychological Society of Ireland. The course is based in the School of Psychology at Trinity College Dublin and placements are undertaken in a variety of clinical settings throughout Leinster and adjoining regions. The Programme is under an obligation to send trainees to all HSE locations within this area once supervisor availability and accommodation have been secured. All HSE Community Health Organisation (CHO) providers across these counties (CHO Areas 6, 7 & 9) contribute to the funding of training. As a result, trainees are required to undertake significant journeys to some placements. Trainees are expected to make their own arrangements for all travel. This normally necessitates the use of a car. However, it should be noted that the mode of travel used will not influence placement allocation except in exceptional circumstances, for example, where a trainee is unable to drive because of a disability. Travel expenses incurred in getting to and from the placement base and home are not reimbursable.

The Course Selection Committee reviews all completed applications.

Please note the application is made in two stages. Each of these stages involves the completion of separate and distinct application forms. These forms are amended annually, and you may not use a saved version of either form from previous years.

**Stage 1:** The College application, which can be found at [www.tcd.ie/courses/postgraduate](http://www.tcd.ie/courses/postgraduate), should be submitted online as directed. As part of this process you will be asked to nominate one academic referee and one clinical referee. Once you initiate your online College application, the two nominated referees will be contacted through the application system. As part of this process you will be allocated an individual application number. To access the college application you should follow these steps:

1. Go to [www.tcd.ie/courses/postgraduate](http://www.tcd.ie/courses/postgraduate), then
2. Click on Postgraduate on menu to the left of the page
3. Click on Doctoral Programmes on menu to the left of the page
4. Click on School of Psychology on main menu
5. Click on Clinical Psychology on main menu
6. To apply Click on Apply Now.
7. To upload the clinical documents onto your TCD application go to ‘Add additional documents to application’ or ‘other documents’.
**Stage 2:** The Course Application Form is available on the Clinical Psychology web page at [https://psychology.tcd.ie/postgraduate/d-clin/](https://psychology.tcd.ie/postgraduate/d-clin/). Click on this link and scroll down to the end of the page and click on the ‘Apply’ button. You will be required to include the individual Application Number issued at Stage 1 when completing this form.

**Please Note:** The Course Selection Committee consider only applications completed on the most recent (2022) version of the Course Application Form. Late and incomplete applications will not be considered.

**To complete the application process in time for acceptance and review by the selection committee, both Stages 1 & 2 must be completed by 12th December, 2021.**

**Entry Requirements**

- Applicants must, at the time of application, hold at a minimum of an upper second-class honours degree in psychology.

- The degree qualification must be such that the applicant is eligible for Graduate Membership of the Psychological Society of Ireland. A list of PSI accreditation of undergraduate courses is available on www.psihq.ie. The College cannot arbitrate on other qualifications.

- As trainees are employees of the Health Service Executive (HSE) or other approved Health Care Provider, we require that applicants have the right to work in Ireland without restriction. Non-EEA applicants are therefore not considered unless they have a pre-existing right to work in Ireland for the duration of the course and the required three years after completion.

- Willingness and an ability to travel to placement sites across the Leinster region is a requirement after any reasonable adjustments to compensate for disability to comply with the Equality Act.

- Applicants whose first language is not English or whose previous education and examination qualifications have not been in the English language will need to provide evidence of English language competence on the college application form.

- Each applicant must demonstrate, six months full-time or equivalent postgraduate paid or voluntary employment within mental health, disability or related service providers (excludes research) in the five years prior to this application. This employment must involve direct contact and provision of care to individuals who comprise the population associated with using clinical psychology services.

**Note:** Here, ‘postgraduate’ is defined as the period extending from the date of publication of qualifying degree results. In cases in which a person has been
out of the workforce to care for a child or other dependent, this period may be extended.

- Clinical experience, module completion and research conducted in the context of a qualification that was either failed or not completed, will not be considered as contributing to the entry requirements specified above.

- Successful applicants are offered a contract of employment as a Trainee Clinical Psychologist with the Health Service Executive or other approved Health Care Provider. **Applicants must agree in accepting this contract that they will undertake work in the Irish public health services for a three-year period following completion of the course.**

All applicants who possess the above minimum entry requirements will be called to first round selection. Applicants are rated on the following competencies on the basis of the evidence presented in the application form and later at the practical assessments and interview stages.

- **Academic Ability:** this is a judgement of the applicant’s ability to cope with the intellectual demands of training. Other competencies also inform this domain and these include critical reflection, ability to synthesise information succinctly, ability to draw inferences from information, psychological knowledge, ability to apply psychological theories and research to clinical scenarios, research skills, etc, and these are rated in the practical assessments and final interviews.

- **Psychological Knowledge and Skills:** this is a rating based on the applicant’s knowledge and understanding of major theories and approaches relevant to clinical psychology and its practice. It is also a judgement of the applicant’s ability to apply psychological knowledge and to make theory-practice links. Also relevant is the applicant’s ability to understand ethical issues in practice and their awareness of current issues in the profession.

- **Personal Development Competencies:** This is based on evidence (shown through experience, and verification of referees’ accounts) that suggest attributes relevant to clinical psychology and the applicant’s readiness to commence clinical training. These include, for example, empathy, initiative, capacity for insight and personal awareness and reflection, efficiency, time management, resilience and capacity for growth and development.

- **Research Competencies:** this is a judgement based on the applicant’s ability to cope with the research demands of clinical psychology training and beyond. Competencies rated under this heading are those such as knowledge of design and analysis, ability to critically evaluate research and awareness of ethical issues. These are rated in the practical assessments and at interview.

- **Clinical Competencies:** this is a rating based on the quality and extent of an applicant’s ability to apply their experience gained from working in a direct care capacity with individuals within mental health, disability or related settings who comprise the population associated with using clinical
psychology services. There is also an evaluation of the comments and ratings of referees.

- **Interpersonal Skills:** This involves the applicant’s ability to listen and communicate effectively, as well as their ability to work in a team and the clarity and coherence of their presentation.

**References**

The panel reserve the right to seek additional references (e.g., from a current employer if not submitted). Such requests will be made through the applicant. In addition, verbal clarification (i.e., telephone reference) may sometimes be sought in the event of unsatisfactory or ambiguous references.

**Equal Opportunities**

The College, along with the Health Service Executive and other employers of trainees, have equal opportunities policies and are concerned to implement fair selection procedures. Applications are invited from candidates regardless of gender, marital status, dependency, age, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, perceived religious affiliation or political opinion. If applicants have reason to believe they may be entitled to additional time in the assessment stages, they should alert the course. It is not a mandatory requirement for an applicant to disclose information about any disability if they do not wish to do so. However, if the nature of the disability requires accommodations to be made during the assessment day, this can only be done if a disclosure is made. If such an accommodation is necessary, you should let us know in writing by contacting the course at dclinpsych@tcd.ie. Such an application should be accompanied by the Learning Educational Needs Summary from your original University. Every effort will be made to make reasonable adjustments to training requirements for those successful applicants who have a disability that may impact on training. Selection policies and procedures on the Course are formally reviewed on an annual basis.

**Police Clearance**

We ask all applicants who are interviewed to complete a ‘General Declaration Form’ and declare any convictions. An enhanced police check will be carried out by the Garda Vetting Office on behalf of the Health Service Executive. Candidates invited to the final interview stage will be required to complete the application for Garda Clearance. A discrepancy between what has been declared and the subsequent Garda check could be grounds for non-appointment. When an applicant declares a conviction, this does not automatically mean they will not be appointed. A judgement, taking into account the nature and context of the offence and our duty to protect the public, will be made by the selection panel and the employer. In general, we would not consider an applicant as suitable if they have a conviction or caution for any crime against children or a vulnerable adult. There is no exhaustive list of offences that provide grounds for non-appointment and all convictions and cautions would be carefully considered by the panel and the risks to the public considered. University vetting is carried out and an offer of a course place is subject to satisfactory clearance.
Financial Aspect

- Selected applicants are recommended to the Human Resource Department of the Health Service Executive or another approved health care provider for appointment as Trainee Clinical Psychologists. The minimum salary is in accordance with HSE pay scale for Trainee Clinical Psychologist. The minimum salary is €37,850 (October 2021). The appointment is for three calendar years, conditional on satisfactory progress in training. Your employment site will be considered as follows - the University on academic days and placement site on clinical days across CHO Areas 6, 7 & 9. Trainees should, however, be prepared to move both between local psychology services and adjoining regions for some placements.

- As stated above, trainees on the course are paid a salary of €37,850 from which they must pay 40% of their fee with the employer paying the remaining 60%. Currently the annual fee is €13,953; however, this is subject to an annual review.
Selection Procedures

Screening

- Each completed application is assessed by two members of the Selection Committee independently.

- The screening panel is made up of members of the Course team.

Round 1 – Written Work:
Eligible candidates will complete a series of academic tasks which are submitted to a secure online portal. Later in the selection process, some of the competencies evaluated in these written tasks will be re-evaluated at interview.

These tasks will require you to demonstrate competency in -
- the extraction of relevant information
- accuracy in the description of methodological detail
- critiquing an academic paper
- construction of a well-written and balanced series of arguments

Performance on these tasks is used to select candidates for interview.

Round 2: Interviews

- The clinical, academic and personal suitability factors used for scoring have been developed by the Course and are reviewed annually by the Selection Committee. Ratings are made of each applicant according to these factors. These include the ability to link theory and practice and the capacity to reflect on one’s own experience and learn from it. The panels, comprised of course staff and clinicians from sponsoring agencies, look for confirmatory and non-confirmatory evidence to fully explore suitability for training in the context of previous educational and employment history.

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• Candidates are informed of the possibility of follow-up interviews and the possibility of telephonic references being sought of the referees listed.

• The candidates are then ranked according to their score and places are offered to the most suitable candidates according to the rankings.

• These offers are provisional and are subject to candidates satisfying the Garda Vetting procedures with the HSE or another approved health care provider and verification of claims made by candidates in the selection process.

• We provide feedback on the selection process in a standard format. This is provided when the selection process has been completed by all courses in Ireland.

**Appeals Procedure**
Candidates may make a request for a review of decisions or make a complaint regarding any part of the recruitment process that they feel is unfair or has been applied unfairly. Such requests should be made via email to the Course Administrator at DCLINPSYCH@tcd.ie. Requests should be made within two working days of the initial shortlisting decision and/or the dates of the communication of the outcome of each of the selection stages outlined in the Guidance Notes.
Recruitment

- The Chair of the Selection panel writes to the Head of Primary Care, CHO Area 9, HSE and to the Dean of Graduate Studies informing them of the outcome of the Selection Panel.

- The Dean of Graduate Studies then writes to successful candidates making a conditional offer of a place, subject to satisfactory appointment and employment contract with the HSE or another approved health care provider.

- Confirmation of acceptance of the conditional offer by the candidate is sought within one week. All candidates who have confirmed their acceptance of a conditional offer will be referred to the HSE for recruitment and pre-employment processing.

  - Recommendation for Hire Forms
  - Set up forms including Paypath, PPS/P45 information
  - Arrangements for the Payment of Course Fees

Completing and Submitting Course Application

- The College Application Form is completed online, and all relevant fields must be completed. A current version of the Course Application Form must also be uploaded and submitted as an additional document within the online application. The Course application form can be found at https://psychology.tcd.ie/postgraduate/d-clin/. Click on this link and scroll down to the end of the page and click on the ‘Apply’ button. Please do not edit or reformat the headings on this form as this can lead to the deletion of vital information that could render your application incomplete.

- Please ensure that you complete all aspects of the form and append additional pages as necessary. Incomplete application forms will not be considered.

- Any inaccuracies in completing this form may result in rejection. Therefore, it is in your own interest to ensure that the information supplied in all sections is correct.

- Please ensure the email address you provide for your referees is correct and will remain active for the duration of selection.

- Candidates applying to the Course must be in possession of an honours degree in psychology or equivalent that confers eligibility for membership of the Psychological Society of Ireland. The degree must be at the level of 2:1 or above.

- Academic transcripts, i.e., the official outline of course modules and grades received, must be scanned and submitted. If you are a past student of TCD...
you are not required to attach course transcripts. You must provide your TCD student number and year of entry.

• All applicants to this course must be eligible for full employment within the European Union.

• Candidates must demonstrate eligibility for membership of the Psychological Society of Ireland by the closing date of application.

• Overseas candidates or Irish citizens who complete undergraduate degrees in psychology outside of the Republic of Ireland may be required to apply for membership of the Psychological Society of Ireland in order to prove eligibility. For further clarification see www.psihq.ie.

• Two references must be submitted with your application, one academic reference and one clinical reference. As previously referred to, referees will be contacted by the course when you fill in your online college application.

• The academic reference must be from an academic psychologist familiar with your academic and/or research competencies. The person should hold an academic post and be involved in either teaching you on a taught undergraduate/postgraduate course or in supervising you as a research student (not as employers of research assistant positions held).

• The other reference should preferably be from a person involved in a supervisory role, or your line manager, in a clinical setting, ideally a psychologist, who is familiar with your clinical competencies.

• In both instances, referees should complete the relevant reference, which the university will request once the relevant referee information is supplied by the applicant.

• Throughout the selection process, the Selection Committee reserve the right to contact any named supervisors or employers that you have mentioned on your application form.

**Dates of Assessment and Interview**

• Stage One: the online assessment will take place in January 2022. Candidates are advised to frequently check the website for updates in regard to this.

• Stage Two: The two interviews as described above will be scheduled within the period of February/March 2022. Candidates are advised to frequently check the website for updates in regard to this.

• Candidates should be aware of the possibility of additional follow-up interviews following second round assessments.
• Enquiries about the application process may be made to the Course Administrator, at email DCLINPSYCH@tcd.ie.
Specific guidance on completing Course Form Sections 2 & 6.

- Start by completing the self-declaration on page 1 of the course application form.

- It is important that specific details are provided as to the number of hours per week and the overall duration of time spent in each of the clinical settings listed. For the purpose of calculating whole-time equivalence, the course requests that you calculate 1 day = 7 hours, and 1 week = 35 hours.

- A minimum six months post-graduate full-time paid or voluntary employment (or its equivalent) in a clinical environment involving direct client contact is required. You should detail how you have achieved this minimum requirement and, having done so, proceed to provide an account of experience in excess of this minimum.

- Clinical experience relates to experience gained within a clinical environment involving direct contact with, and the provision of care to client groups, that is, individuals who comprise the population associated with using clinical psychology services (i.e. service users and/or people in distress or people with psychological difficulties) within mental health, disability or related settings.

- Only clinical experience gained in the five years up to the closing date of application to the course, may be considered in evaluating the essential minimum criterion of six months whole-time postgraduate clinical experience (‘postgraduate’ here being defined as the period extending from the date of publication of qualifying degree results). In cases in which a person has been out of the workforce to care for a child or other dependent, this period may be extended.

- Please be advised that contact with participants as part of a research role/post does not qualify as clinical experience. Such experience should be entered in Section 6 as research experience.

- If you are combining experience from a number of settings, you must demonstrate how each individual element contributes to the overall minimum criterion of six months full-time work (130 days).

- Experience via online or telephone support services may be considered as contributing to the required hours.

Feedback

Written feedback to candidates is given in a standard format. This will contain scores obtained in the various assessment components. A formal record of ratings is filed after selection is complete and relevant sections from this are sent to candidates who request further feedback under the Freedom of Information Act.
Unfortunately, each year we receive many excellent applications but are only able to offer places to a small number. This means there is a chance that you will not be selected this year. Here is some information that may be helpful to you if you are not selected this time around.

Throughout the selection procedures, candidates are rank-ordered in terms of suitability for the programme. Candidates who are not successful in obtaining a place on the programme one year should not interpret that they will be judged to be unsuitable if they reapply. Rather, failure to be selected one year means that the candidate was assessed as not as suitable as the candidates selected on that particular year.

Should you fail to be selected this year, our advice is for you to enhance your portfolio of relevant clinical experience and relevant clinical research over the coming year and re-apply for the programme next year. Many successful graduates of the programme make more than two unsuccessful applications.