

**Trinity College Dublin**  
**School of Psychology & Health Service Executive**

**Doctorate in Clinical Psychology**  
**Applications for September 2024 Intake.**

Note: The criteria for selection are reviewed annually.

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 awaiting the result of a recent accreditation visit by the Psychological Society of Ireland. A limited number of places are available for the 2024-2027 course. 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.

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 **Course Application Form** is available on the Clinical Psychology web page at <https://psychology.tcd.ie/postgraduate/d-clin/>. Click on this link and scroll down to the end of the page and select the 'Apply Here' button. Download, complete and save the Course Application form for adding/uploading to your official College application which happens in Stage 2.

**Stage 2;** The **College application form** is an online process.

You will be asked to nominate one academic referee and one clinical referee. The two nominated referees will be contacted automatically through the application system via the contact information supplied.

1. Visit <https://www.tcd.ie/courses/postgraduate/courses/clinical-psychology-dclinpsych/>
2. Select 'APPLY' from the 1<sup>st</sup> November to complete the College Application Form
3. Upload your already completed & saved 'Course Application form' to your college application **by the 21st November 2023**.

**Please Note: The course selection committee consider only applications completed using the 2024 Course Application Form (previous years completed and saved versions are not acceptable). Late and incomplete applications will also not be considered.**

**To complete the application process in time for acceptance and review by the selection committee, both Stages 1 & 2 above must be completed by 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2023. A completed Clinical Application Form must be uploaded to your official College application.**

If you indicated on the college application form that you would like assistance with the application process, you should bear in mind that this undertaking does not apply to completing the course application form and associated documents.

### **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 <https://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/accredited-courses>. 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.**

- Currently postgraduate students on this course are employed by the Health Service Executive on the Trainee Psychologist salary scale and in addition have a contribution towards fees paid on their behalf. This funding is not available to those wishing to upgrade their existing training/qualification in clinical psychology. The course does not accept self-funded applications. Graduates of the course will undertake to work in the Irish health services for a three-year period following completion of the course.
- If you have an existing qualification in clinical, counselling, or educational psychology (in or outside of Ireland) please let us know. Please also include details of any such courses in which you enrolled but did not pass/complete or are still enrolled.
- If, based on a qualification obtained overseas, you are eligible to apply or are in the process of applying to the Department of Health validation process, you may not apply until this process is complete. If the outcome of that application is to confer eligibility on you to work in Ireland, you may not apply for the course.
- If you have an existing qualification which qualifies you to work as a clinical psychologist in the HSE, you may not apply for a position on the course associated with a contract with the HSE as a trainee clinical psychologist.

All applicants who possess the above minimum entry requirements will be called to first round selection. Applicants are rated on their performance at the practical assessment stage and on the following competencies based on the evidence presented in the application form and later at the interview stage.

- **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. The programme aims to create an accessible curriculum and foster an inclusive community that supports the engagement, representation and action of all students, including those from diverse worldviews, cultures and identities, and with different learning backgrounds, abilities and strategies.

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 process, this can only be facilitated if a

disclosure is made. If such an accommodation is necessary, please let us know in writing by contacting the course at [dclinpsych@tcd.ie](mailto: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 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 National Recruitment Service 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 €40,673. 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 €40,673 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.

This funding is not available to those wishing to upgrade their existing training/qualification in clinical psychology.

Please note that those offered places may be required to furnish additional information at point of acceptance of a place on the course.

## Selection Procedures

### Screening

- The screening panel is made up of members of the Course team.
- Completed applications are assessed by two members of the Selection Committee independently.

### Assessment

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

### 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.

<b>Interview 1 - Interview Domains</b>	<b>Interview 2 - Interview Domains</b>
Clinical Fluency	Theory-Practice Linking as a Scientist-Practitioner
Reflectiveness on self, client and the relationship	Reflectiveness on self in a Learning Context
Adaptability	Research Competencies
Caring presence	Caring presence
Readiness for training	Readiness for training
Congruence between verbal and nonverbal responding	Congruence between verbal and nonverbal responding
Active listening within interview	Active listening within interview
Respectfulness for others	Respectfulness for others

- 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.
- Feedback in the form of numerical grades is provided following the selection process.

### **Appeals Procedure**

Candidates may make a request for a review of decisions on procedural grounds. Such requests should be made via email to the Course Administrator at [DCLINPSYCH@tcd.ie](mailto:DCLINPSYCH@tcd.ie). Requests should be made within two working days of communication of the relevant decision.

## 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 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 offer by the candidate is sought within one week. All candidates who have confirmed their acceptance of an 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 your Application

- The College Application Form is completed online, and all relevant fields must be completed.
- An up-to-date version of the Course Application Form must also be uploaded and submitted as a supporting document within the online college application system. 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 the Course Application Form as this can lead to the deletion of vital information that could render your application incomplete.
- Please ensure that you complete all sections of the Course Application 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 and grades received in the degree that confers on you graduate basis for membership of the Psychological Society of Ireland



must be submitted as a supporting document within the online college application system. 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.
- 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](http://www.psihq.ie).
- The names of two referees must be provided with your application, **one academic reference and one clinical reference**. As previously referred to, referees will be contacted 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 clinical 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.
- 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 on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- Stage Two: Two interviews as described above will be scheduled within the period of February 19<sup>th</sup>, 20 and 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024.
- Candidates should be aware of the possibility of additional follow-up interviews following second round assessments.

## 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.
- In describing your clinical experience, start with your most recent experience and work backwards.
- 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 web support or telephone support services may be considered as contributing to the required hours up to a maximum of 25% of the total experience. In the context of the COVID pandemic, therapy or clinical services provided over Zoom, Attend Anywhere or similar video platforms will be considered as being equivalent as face-to-face contact.

## **Feedback**

Feedback in the form of numerical grades is provided following the selection process.

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. The feedback provided applies only to our own application process and is not intended as guidance for other course applications.

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.