



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

2026 POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

School of Psychological and Social Sciences

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1.0 WHAT IS CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY?

Clinical psychology is a discipline and profession grounded in psychological science, with a strong empirical foundation and an emphasis on objective data to guide assessment and treatment. Training in clinical psychology involves developing academic knowledge, practical competencies, and interpersonal skills within emotional, social, and cultural contexts. The programme emphasises the integration of science and practice: research informs clinical work, practical challenges shape meaningful research questions, and individualised assessment and intervention are strengthened through the systematic application of the scientific method.

2.0 PRACTICING AS A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

Research plays a central role in clinical psychology. The assessment and treatment of clients often raise new questions that inform theory and guide the development of future research. For this reason, clinical psychologists must be trained in research, practice, and theory, as well as in the integration of these domains.

Clinical psychology work can involve situations that are complex, challenging, and at times confronting. During clinical training and professional practice, students may encounter clients experiencing:

- significant impairments in mental health and wellbeing, including self-harm and suicidal behaviour
- challenging or aggressive behaviour, including interpersonal violence
- criminal offending and severe antisocial behaviour
- sexually harmful behaviour towards adults and/or children
- experiences of sexual victimisation in childhood and/or adulthood
- substance misuse and addictions

If these types of behaviours or experiences bring particularly strong emotional reactions for you, please take time to work through these with a mental health professional before applying for this programme.

It is important that applicants are aware of what your 'triggers' maybe, to practice safely and ethically, as well as to ensure quality service delivery to clients.

3.0 QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED TO PRACTICE AS A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST IN NEW ZEALAND

To practice as a clinical psychologist in Aotearoa New Zealand, individuals must be registered with Te Poari Kaimātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa The New Zealand Psychologists Board. The Board prescribes the qualifications required for registration under the Clinical Psychologist Scope of Practice. To be eligible for registration, applicants must hold:

A minimum of a master's degree in psychology from an accredited educational organisation and an accredited Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology, or equivalent qualification.

Eligibility for a Clinical Psychologist scope of practice shall require a Board approved practicum or internship involving 1500 hours of supervised practice.

Please note that the master's degree must include a research-based thesis of at least 90 points, and most programmes require a 120-point thesis. Applicants who have completed a taught master's degree or a master's degree with only a 60-point dissertation will need to enrol in a research-based master's thesis programme to meet registration requirements.

Applicants must also provide character references and undergo Police vetting prior to commencing a clinical psychology programme. A full record of any criminal convictions must be disclosed. If an applicant has a conviction, the New Zealand Psychologists Board will assess eligibility for registration on a case-by-case basis, considering the information provided about the conviction history.

Prospective students with criminal conviction are strongly encouraged to consult with the Psychologists Board before applying to any clinical psychology training programme to ensure they will meet registration requirements.

4.0 CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAMME STAFF



Armon Tamatea, Programme Director and Associate Professor

PhD (Massey), PGDip(Clin)Psych (Waikato)

Armon was the Senior Advisor (Psychological Research) for the Department of Corrections and has worked extensively in the assessment and treatment of violent and sexual offenders. His research interests include institutional violence, personality disorders (especially psychopathic and antisocial patterns), New Zealand gangs, and general criminal justice and forensic issues.

Simone Mohi, Senior Lecturer

MPsych (Clinical) Wollongong, Doctor of Psychology (Clinical) Wollongong)

Simone is a clinical psychologist with 12+ years practice experience working across the lifespan in both public community mental health and hospital settings, as well as in the private sector. Simone is a board approved supervisor trainer for psychologists in Australia and is interested in their development, well-being and promoting sustainability within the profession. Simone is currently doing research in this context investigating the potential relevance of personal therapy for psychologists.



Andre Mason, Lecturer

PhD (Otago), PGDipCIPs (Otago)

Andre is a clinical psychologist who has experience working with children, teens, whānau, and university students in private and Kaupapa Māori settings. His research interests include suicide and psychiatric epidemiology, with a particular focus on tertiary students and young adults. Andre is currently working on ways to better understand how mental health problems and suicide emerge in students so that we can more effectively and efficiently identify and support those who may be struggling.

Dennis de Jong, Senior Clinical Tutor and Teaching Fellow,

PhD (Waikato), PGDipPsych(Clin) Waikato

Dennis has six years clinical experience in a Kaupapa Māori mental health organisation working with adults, adolescents, and children. More recently Dennis has been involved in the supervision of clinical psychology trainees in Student Health Services along with providing pastoral care for clinical psychology students. Dennis' areas of interest in clinical psychology include family therapy, parenting issues, autistic spectrum disorder and gender dysphoria amongst others. Prior research interests include road safety and participatory design.



Chellie Keenan, Clinical Programme Administrator

Chellie provides programme support for clinical staff, students and clinical programme enquiries.

A new staff member position is currently vacant and will be filled this year.



The Psychology Centre: Teaching and Guest Lectures are also provided by The Psychology Centre (TPC) who are based at our Hamilton campus. The TPC staff are all registered clinical psychologists. Joshua Myers, the Director, Jayne Hartstone, Julia Davis, and Shaun Neville provide supervision for the year 2 placement students and guest lecture. Natalie Parkes, Dawn Willix- Payne, and Tracey Irving along with supervision also teach into the year 1 programme.

Natalie Parkes, Clinical Psychologist and Teaching Fellow,

M.Soc.Sci (Waikato) PGDip.Clin.Psych (Waikato), MNZCCP, MNZPsS
Natalie is Ngāti Apa (Whanganui) and brought up in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. Her clinical psychology training was completed at the University of Waikato in 2003. Natalie's clinical experience is within child development, health behaviour change, weight management, anxiety and depression. Much of her experience has been working with child development and disability, young people and families and more recently working with adults experiencing distress related to anxiety and depression. Natalie runs weekly workshops for first year clinical students and provides supervision to year 2 students.



Dawn Willix Payne, Clinical Psychologist and Teaching Fellow

M.Soc.Sci (Waikato) PGDip.Clin.Psych (Waikato), MNZPsS
Dawn qualified as a clinical psychologist in 2017. She joined TPC after two years of clinical experience in child development and disability, and child and adolescent mental health. She continues to enjoy working with children and their families, to help them overcome difficulties and reach their full potential. Dawn runs weekly workshops for first year clinical students and provides supervision to year 2 students.

Tracey Irving, Clinical Psychologist and Teaching Fellow

M.Soc.Sci (Waikato) PGDip.Clin.Psych (Waikato), MNZCCP, MNZPsS
Tracey qualified as a clinical psychologist in 2020, joining the TPC team in early 2021. She has interests in adult psychotherapy (individual & groups), including treating a range of mental health problems, emotion regulation difficulties, and trauma. Tracey supports members of the Rainbow community to access gender affirming treatment and she is an approved ACC provider for Sensitive Claims. Her preferred treatment modalities draw from CBT, ACT, and DBT-informed approaches. Tracey is involved with the weekly workshops for first year clinical students and provides supervision to year 2 students.



The programme is also supported by clinical psychologists from several organisations who provide supervision for placement and internships along with guest lectures.

5.0 POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY - PGDIPPSYCH(CLIN) PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The mission of the clinical psychology training programme at the University of Waikato is to collaborate with the professional community to train culturally and clinically competent, thoughtful, and reflective clinical psychologists who will contribute to the health and well-being of their communities.

Students enter the Clinical Psychology Training Programme after completing either an Honours degree or a Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology, which provides the required academic preparation for clinical training. Once accepted into the PGDipPsych(Clin), students complete the coursework and clinical components of the programme alongside their Master's research thesis during the first two years of training. Applicants who have already completed a Master's degree by thesis or a PhD in Psychology only need to apply for the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme.

To be eligible for registration with *Te Poari Kaimātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa The New Zealand Psychologists Board*, students must pass the PGDipPsych(Clin) examinations, and graduates must hold at least a Master's degree in Psychology. Students who have fast-tracked from an Honours degree into a PhD must submit their PhD prior to beginning their internship to allow sufficient time for the completion of oral examinations.

5.1 INTEGRATION OF RESEARCH AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING

The integration of research and practice is one of the hallmarks of a professional clinical psychologist and of a clinical psychology training programme. Research activities should be thought of as an integral part of clinical training, not as an add-on or hurdle that you must overcome to obtain the clinical diploma.

Developing the ability to critically evaluate research literature is a key outcome of clinical psychology training. Students are expected to apply empirical and theoretical evidence in their clinical work and in written case studies. Strong research literacy provides a significant advantage throughout training and professional practice. Students are encouraged to disseminate their research beyond the programme, including at hui, symposia, and national conferences.

5.2 RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

All students are required to engage in research during their training. For most, this begins at the postgraduate level (e.g., a directed study or Honours thesis) and continues at the master's level through the completion of a thesis. Some students may also undertake a PhD. For students who have not completed their research degree prior to entering the programme, the research topic must be clinically relevant. Clinical relevance is broadly defined and includes

most research conducted within the School of Psychological and Social Sciences. Students may be supervised by any staff member in the School, provided the project meets this requirement.

5.3 MASTERS BY THESIS PATHWAY OPTION

Students who have not yet completed a Master's research thesis undertake this work part-time across the first two years of the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme. After completing the Master's research degree in Psychology, students progress to the third and final year of the programme. This final year involves supervised clinical work in an internship setting for four days per week, with one day per week dedicated to university-based classes and meetings.

The programme is structured so that the Master's degree and the PGDipPsych(Clin) are normally completed within three consecutive years. An exception applies for students who enrol in a PhD in place of the Master's degree, in which case the overall timeline may differ.

5.4 PHD PATHWAY OPTION

Students interested in pursuing the PhD pathway must discuss their proposed programme of study with a member of the Clinical Psychology Programme team before applying. Students who choose this option start their PhD alongside Years 1 and 2 of the PGDipPsych(Clin) before applying for a deferral from the clinical programme to undertake their PhD, which typically requires one to two years.

After submitting their PhD, students reenter the clinical programme to complete Year 3, the internship year. The PhD must be submitted by December of the year prior to returning to the internship year. All requirements for both qualifications must be completed within a five-year timeframe.

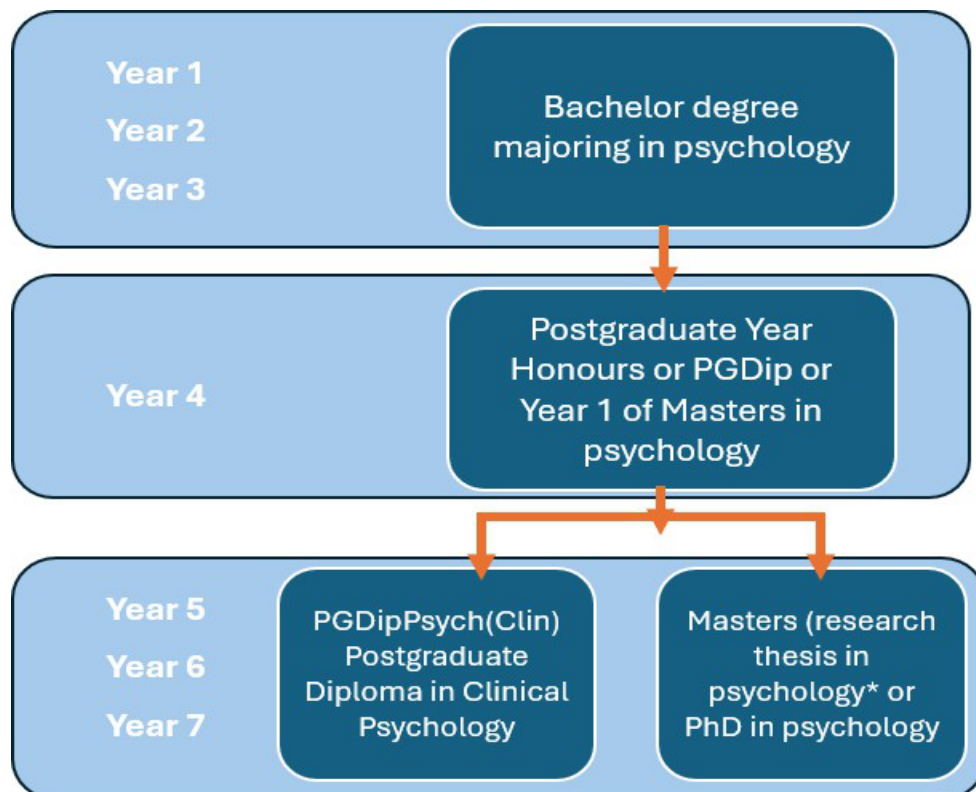
5.5 APPLICANTS WHO HAVE ALREADY COMPLETED A MASTERS OR PHD OPTION

Students who already hold a Master's or PhD in Psychology are still required to complete the full three-year PGDipPsych(Clin) programme. For these students, the first two years of the programme are undertaken on a half-time basis, with the third year completed full time to meet clinical internship requirements. Because the initial years are not full-time enrolment, students should be aware that this structure may affect eligibility for student financial assistance, including student allowances and other forms of support that require full-time study status.

5.6 MANAGING THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Research projects often involve unexpected challenges (e.g., recruitment difficulties, equipment issues). Given the demands of completing a thesis alongside clinical training, students must work closely with their supervisor to develop a feasible project and timeline. The research degree needs to be submitted prior to the internship year. Students who are not able to meet this deadline will NOT be able to start their internship. Students need to plan their time carefully to avoid delays that could impact eligibility for the final-year internship.

5.7 CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY PATHWAY OUTLINE



*The Masters research thesis will be completed part time over Years 1 and 2 of the PGDipPsych(Clin)

** A PhD will add a minimum of two years to the PGDipPsych(Clin)

If you have completed a Masters or PhD you would still be enrolled in the

6.0 ACADEMIC AND MINIMUM GRADE REQUIREMENTS

Candidates for entry into the clinical psychology programme need to have achieved a high standard of academic performance in psychology, particularly at 500-level. A minimum of a 6.0/B+ grade average in Honours or Postgraduate Diploma courses in psychology is required to be considered for shortlisting for entry into the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme.

Applicants need to be able to manage and sustain high academic workloads alongside placements and internships and have a high standard of written and oral communication skills.

If you do not meet the minimum grade average, your application will not be considered.

7.0 RECOMMENDED AND REQUIRED COURSE WORK

7.1 UNDERGRADUATE COURSE WORK

The following papers (or papers on similar topics) are required in your undergraduate degree as they are prerequisites for core postgraduate papers:

- PSYCH211 Understanding Psychological Research (required)
- PSYCH307 Psychological Research Methods (required for entry into postgraduate study)
- PSYCH337 Individual Differences and Measurement
- PSYCH338 Mental Health and Wellbeing

The following papers (or papers on similar topics) are recommended but not essential in your undergraduate degree:

- PSYCH202 Mauri Ora: Social Psychology of Human Flourishing
- PSYCH203 Cognitive Neuroscience
- PSYCH204 Behavioural Psychology and Perception
- PSYCH302 Community, Culture and Diversity
- PSYCH314 Behaviour Analysis
- PSYCH319 Infant and Child Development

7.2 GRADUATE COURSE WORK

The following core papers are required for the PGDipPsych(Clin) and are usually completed in either an Honours or a Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology:

- PSYCH562 Theories of Psychotherapy
- PSYCH564 Developmental Psychopathology
- PSYCH575 Kaupapa Māori Psychology
- PSYCH581 Psychological Assessment * *(limited entry paper, if you have not completed this paper, and are offered a place in clinical programme, you will complete this in first year of clinical programme)*
- PSYCH539 Graduate Research Methods or equivalent *(required for Masters thesis)*

Students who have completed a postgraduate degree but are missing one or more of the required papers must complete those papers during their **first year of enrolment** in the programme. These papers form essential foundational training for clinical psychology, and applicants from other universities must demonstrate that their previous coursework is equivalent in content. Where equivalence cannot be shown, students will be required to enrol in additional courses to meet the required standard.

Applicants who have not completed a Master's research thesis and who still need to complete more than two required papers are unlikely to be shortlisted for entry as the workload would be considered too high.

In special circumstances—such as when a required paper was not previously offered—an alternative but relevant paper may be approved as a substitute. Such decisions are made case by case in consultation with programme staff. Because University of Waikato papers have been restructured in recent years, course numbers and names may differ.

7.3 RECOMMENDED COURSES

We are often asked what other papers might be taken during the postgraduate year. The following papers are recommended but not required for preparation for clinical training:

- PSYCH539 Graduate Research Methods in Psychology * *This paper or similar is required for entry into a Masters research thesis*
- PSYCH561 Behaviour Analysis: Concepts and Principles
- PSYCH560 Applied Behaviour Analysis - Theory and Issues
- PSYCH580 The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*** *This paper has a prerequisite of FPSYC502 The Psychology of Crime and Criminality: Theories and Approaches for students who do not have a background in Forensic Psychology*

Additionally, it is strongly recommended that applicants complete at least basic training in te reo Māori and tikanga before applying to the clinical psychology programme. Bicultural competence is an important component of working as a clinical psychologist and is integral throughout the clinical psychology training process. Many students continue to study te reo Māori throughout their clinical training.

8.0 THE PSYCHOLOGY CENTRE (TPC)

The Psychology Centre (TPC), previously an independent charitable trust which has a longstanding relationship with the University of Waikato, is now part of the University and is based at our Hamilton campus. The Centre is staffed by experienced clinical psychologists who conduct psychological assessment and treatment for clients throughout the Waikato and also takes other medical professional (ie. GP) and self-referrals.

TPC is a core part of the clinical training programme, and students will experience several activities at TPC across all the years of their training.

- Year 1 students attend weekly workshops
- Year 2 students complete a two day a week placement during one trimester
- Staff also provide specialist teaching and supervision for placement students.



9.0 COURSE OUTLINES AND PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Clinical training is designed as a gradual progression from foundational coursework to advanced supervised practice. Over the three years of the programme, students move from a substantial academic component in the first year to predominantly supervised clinical experience (internships) in the final year.

Training follows a deliberate developmental sequence. The first essential building block is the acquisition of specialist knowledge about psychological difficulties. As this knowledge base grows, students begin developing the applied skills required for clinical practice. Throughout the programme, emphasis is placed on building both knowledge and skills—such as assessment and intervention—and on integrating these competencies. By the time students reach the final diploma examination, they are expected to draw on their knowledge and adapt their skills flexibly to meet the needs of diverse clients and dynamic professional environments.

9.1 WORKLOAD AND EXPECTATIONS

The combination of coursework, clinical placements, and research means that students are often managing a demanding workload. Success in the programme requires a high level of commitment, strong organisational skills, and the ability to balance multiple responsibilities.

The structure and intensity of the programme may make it challenging to maintain regular employment alongside study, particularly for students who are still completing a thesis. Students should anticipate a significant workload and consider carefully how programme demands will fit alongside personal, financial, and other life commitments.

In our experience, the workload expectations are often grossly underestimated. Applicants are strongly advised to think through life, family and work commitments - especially child care arrangements, travel (whether travelling to and from Hamilton and/or overseas trips), and employment. While there is no getting away from the stress of training, we do not encourage burnout - so applicants are advised to plan and manage programme demands in their lives.

9.2 CASE CONFERENCE – ALL YEARS

In addition to the classes outlined below, all clinical students are required to attend Case Conference seminars, which are held on Monday mornings. Case Conference involves practitioners and students presenting current clinical cases in which they discuss their assessment, conceptualisation, and treatment approach. Each student presents one case each year. The purpose of the case conference is to provide experience in presenting and discussing clinical cases and related issues in a team setting. In addition, two or three times per trimester there may be special sessions or workshops that start earlier on Monday and run through part or all day.

9.3 PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

All classes are held at the University of Waikato's Hamilton campus. There will occasionally, be additional activities that will be offered to those enrolled in the programme. Involvement in these activities is mandatory. Where possible, considerable advance warning will be provided. Such activities may include wānanga, local and national conferences, workshops, and seminars.

9.4 CORE TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Students in the clinical psychology programme are expected to participate fully in a range of learning activities designed to develop clinical competence and professional identity. These activities extend well beyond traditional coursework and are essential components of training.

- **Group case discussions**, where students analyse clinical material, consider alternative formulations, and learn from peers.
- **Role-play exercises** to practise assessment, interviewing, and intervention skills in a supported environment.
- **Video-recorded client sessions**, used for supervision, reflection, and skill development.
- **Presentations**, including contributions to the joint case conference and other academic or clinical forums.
- **Observation of clinical practice**, both within placements and through structured observation opportunities.
- **Ongoing reflective practice**, supporting the development of self-awareness, ethical decision-making, and professional growth.

These activities are integral to the programme and are designed to help students integrate theory with practice, develop confidence in clinical skills, and meet the professional standards expected of trainee clinical psychologists.



9.5 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The outline below describes the programme structure for 2026. Specific days, schedules, and time allocations may vary from year to year.

YEAR 1	
Papers	Students are required to attend two days of classes on Monday and Friday. Monday classes focus on Professional Issues in Clinical Practice and Bicultural Approaches to Clinical Practice while Friday classes based at TPC focus on assessment and therapy skills.
Practica	All students complete an observed assessment which will be written up a case study and present this to the joint case conference during the year. Other activities include observation of clinical practices and site visits to local clinical psychology services. Students have two oral examinations which are based on competencies on a pass /fail basis.
<p>Time Commitment – Year 1: The anticipated time commitment for Year 1 students is 2 days of classes plus 1 day of readings and course work.</p> <p>For students who have not completed a Masters thesis or PhD, you will need to allow at least 2 days per week for the first two years of the clinical programme to work on your research thesis.</p>	

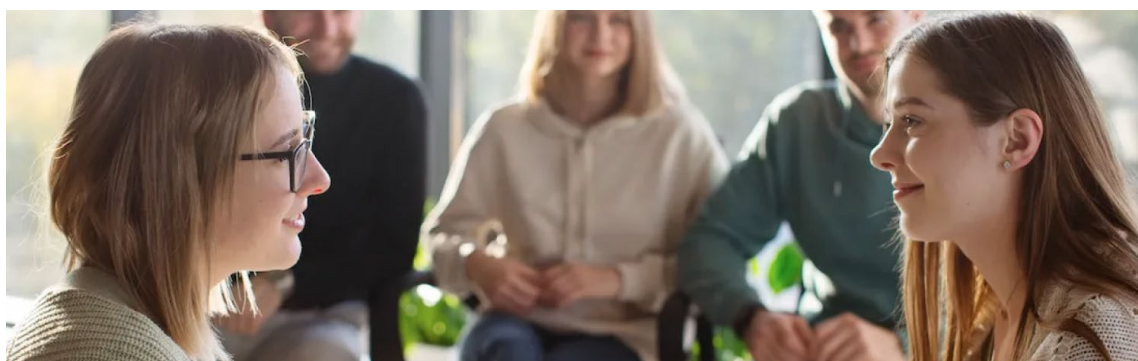
YEAR 2	
Papers	One clinical paper each trimester Clinical Practicum 1: Fundamental Clinical Skills and Clinical Practicum 2: Advanced and Specialist Skills These run for four hours each Monday afternoon during term time throughout the year.
Practica	Students complete two 13-week placements, one in Trimester A and one in Trimester B. You will spend two full days per week at your placement, one of which will be at The Psychology Centre at the Hamilton campus. Placements are usually in the Waikato region, it is possible that some may be in other regions (Taranaki, Bay of Plenty) and would therefore require significant travel. All students are required to present a case at case conference during the year. Students have two oral examinations which are based on competencies on a pass /fail basis.
<p>Time Commitment – Year 2: The anticipated time commitment for Year 2 students is three days per week: 1 day of classes and 2 days of placement. You will also need to allow time for readings and course work.</p> <p>For students who have not completed Masters thesis or PhD, you will need to allow at least 2 days per week for your thesis in addition to the three days of clinical class and placements. Your thesis needs to be ready to submit by 5 January in the year of your internship.</p>	

YEAR 3/ INTERNS	
Year 3 Interns Papers	One clinical paper each trimester runs for four hours each Monday afternoon during term time throughout the year. Interns attend the joint case conference each week with all clinical students. All students are required to present a case at case conference during the year.
Year 3 Interns Practica	Students complete either one 46- week (12 month) internship or two 23-week (6 month) internships of four full days per week. Internships are usually in the Hamilton/Waikato region, however some may be in other regions (Thames, Bay of Plenty, Taranaki) requiring significant travel, depending on funding.
<p>Time Commitment – Year 3/Intern: The anticipated time commitment for Year 3/Interns is five days per week made up with 1 day of classes and 4 days of internships plus readings and course work. Internships start in week 3 (January) and end in December.</p>	

9.6 EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS – PASS/FAIL

Each year group has two examinations conducted annually, occurring at mid-year and end-of-year. These exams are designed to comprehensively assess students' practical and theoretical knowledge. The assessment components include case studies based on client sessions, a paper case for discussion and corresponding questions.

All examinations are conducted orally and are administered by the paper convenor and a clinical psychologist from TPC or the community. Intern exams are administered by the paper convenor, a clinical academic from another university and a clinical psychologist from a local organisation. The examinations are graded on a Pass/Fail basis.



10.0 PLACEMENTS – YEAR 2

All Year 2 students complete two clinical placements, which are organised by the programme's Senior Tutor. Students do not arrange their own practicums. Each student undertakes one placement at The Psychology Centre and one within a community mental health service. In Year 1, students are asked to rank their placement preferences in Trimester B. While student preferences are taken into account, the final placement decisions are made by the programme.

These placements provide structured opportunities to apply clinical psychology knowledge in supervised settings. Throughout the year, students extend the interviewing, assessment, and psychometric skills developed in Year 1 while beginning to take on more direct intervention work. Activities commonly include observing clinical psychologists, participating in supervised psychotherapy, and preparing professional clinical documentation.

Students also develop core competencies in psychological assessment by conducting structured and semi-structured interviews, administering and scoring standardised assessment tools, and integrating assessment data into coherent case formulations. They learn to produce clear, professional reports and to present cases within supervision and multidisciplinary team meetings. Across all placement tasks, students are expected to demonstrate culturally responsive practice, ethical awareness, and accurate documentation consistent with professional standards.

By the end of the course, students should be able to integrate assessment findings with appropriate intervention strategies in their clinical work, meeting the expectations of both community supervisors and University of Waikato clinical staff. Possible agencies include Te Whatu Ora services in child and family, adult mental health, forensics, eating disorders, and older persons, as well as Ara Poutama Department of Corrections, private practice settings, and Kaupapa Māori services. Placement availability depends on agency capacity and the availability of suitable supervisors.

11.0 INTERNSHIPS – YEAR 3

In order to begin an internship, students must first obtain Intern Psychologist registration with the New Zealand Psychologists Board. Registration must be completed before the internship start date, and students are required to provide evidence of their registration to the clinical programme. Students cannot commence their internship until this has been confirmed. The registration process involves submitting several documents, including a CV, photographs, referee reports, police vetting, and official confirmation from the clinical programme regarding enrolment and expected internship dates. At least one referee must be a registered psychologist who can comment on the student's character and professional suitability.

Internships typically consist of either one full-year placement or two half-year

placements for a total of 46 weeks. They begin in Week 3 of January, with interns working four days per week (Tuesday–Friday). Mondays are reserved for university requirements and related study. Internship opportunities are offered across a range of services, including Te Whatu Ora Adult Mental Health, Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health (ICAMHS), Hauora Waikato, Ara Poutama Department of Corrections, Oranga Tamariki, private practice, and other community agencies.

Internships are organised by the programme’s Senior Tutor. The number and type of internships available each year depend on funding. In Trimester B of Year 2, students are informed of the available internship options and receive guidance from programme staff. Internships are competitive, and students apply and interview with organisations offering internships. Students may not receive their preferred internship, and not all positions can be guaranteed to be paid.

The internship year is designed to provide the breadth of clinical experience required for generalist training. Students are expected to gain exposure across adult mental health, child and family work, and forensic contexts, even if their primary placement focuses on only one of these areas. With support from supervisors, students are encouraged to seek a wide range of clinical experiences within their placement settings.

The primary goal of the internship year is for students to consolidate and extend their clinical skills and confidence. End-of-year examinations assess competency across a broad range of clinical situations and content areas.

A full draft of the Master’s or PhD thesis must be completed before applying for internships—usually by mid-September of Year 2—and the thesis must be submitted by 5 January prior to starting internship. Students who have not completed these requirements will not be eligible to apply for registration or to start their internship.



12.0 CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE APPLYING

12.1 THREE-YEAR COMMITMENT

As has been outlined in this document, clinical psychology training is intensive. Therefore, applicants are expected, prior to selection, to have considered their commitment to at least *three consecutive years* of intensive study and practice.

At the present time, up to twelve places are offered each year with the expectation that unless formal dispensation is provided by the Programme Director, each student will proceed through each year in sequence, contingent on passing each year's examinations. Permission may be granted to deviate from this norm where a student is enrolled in a PhD. Consideration of other matters, such as ill-health and family commitments, is at the discretion of the Programme Director and is dependent on the resources and needs of the programme.

Any leave of absence from the programme in any year of training will need to be approved in advance by the Director of Clinical Training. Extended absences beyond one year will only be approved in exceptional circumstances and return to the programme will require a demonstration of competence to the satisfaction of the Director of Clinical Training.

12.2 REGIONAL FOCUS

The clinical psychology programme at Waikato is regionally focused; this means that placements, internships, agency visits, and other programme activities predominantly take place in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions.

Attendance at classes is mandatory, and in the first and second years, students may have class and programme activities on three or more days per week. In the internship year, students will have classes at the University one day per week, and four days per week of supervised clinical work. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that students plan to live in Hamilton or nearby or be prepared for significant expenditures of time and money for travel.

If you have commitments or obligations outside of the Waikato area, and would find it difficult to attend these classes, placements and internships, you may like to consider applying to a clinical psychology programme closer to your home

12.3 AGE, GENDER, AND ETHNICITY

There is no upper or lower age limit. All applications will be evaluated based on the applicant's previous academic and personal experience, bicultural responsiveness, commitment to training, and understanding of the profession.

We are committed to training a workforce that reflects the diversity of Aotearoa's population. We welcome applications from groups that are underrepresented in the current workforce, particularly Māori as well as Pacifica and LGBTQIA+ applicants.

12.4 FINANCIAL AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLICANTS

Applicants should carefully consider how they will fund their training, including:

- Living costs
- Travel and accommodation
- Vaccinations and other placement-related expenses
- Reduced ability to work during study

Clinical placements and internships are an essential part of the programme, but they can involve significant personal costs. It's important that applicants understand these commitments before applying.

- Students are responsible for all travel and accommodation expenses, including situations where placements are located outside the Hamilton area. This may require temporary relocation.
- Placement requirements are set by external agencies and can change. The programme cannot predict or control these requirements.
- The programme endeavours to find paid internships however this is not guaranteed.

Your ability to work alongside study will depend on your academic pathway:

- Students who have already completed a Master's degree will have more available time in Years 1 and 2, as the programme is part-time during these years.
- Students completing both the PGDipPsych(Clin) and an MSc (Research) will have limited capacity for paid work, especially in the first two years.

Many agencies now require students to have up-to-date vaccinations before beginning any clinical work. These costs can be over \$900 depending on your current vaccination status.

The University of Waikato does have several scholarships on offer; information on these can be found here <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/scholarships>.

STUDYLINK INFORMATION:

Under current StudyLink guidelines an enrolment must be 0.8EFTS to be considered full-time. A student enrolling in the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme who has already completed their Masters/PhD in Psychology will be studying less than 0.8EFTS and therefore, not meeting the full-time requirement. Students are encouraged to explore their options with StudyLink directly.

12.5 POLICE VETTING

Under the Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014, anyone working with children in state-funded organisations—or engaging with children as part of an educational or training programme—must complete a full government safety check. This includes police vetting.

Because clinical psychology students may work with children during placements, all students offered a place in the University of Waikato Clinical Psychology Programme are required to complete police vetting before they can begin any clinical training.

This process is mandatory and helps ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable people in the community

12.6 WHAT ISSUES MAY I FACE AS A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST?

The work of clinical psychologists can involve experiences that are complex, challenging, and confronting. Applicants are advised that issues commonly encountered with clients during clinical training and professional practice can include:

- a. severe compromises in mental health and wellbeing, such as self-harm and suicidal behaviour
- b. challenging behaviour, such as interpersonal aggression and violence
- c. criminal offenses and severe antisocial behaviour
- d. sexually harmful behaviour towards adults and/or children
- e. sexual, violent, and emotional victimisation as a child and/or adult
- f. substance misuse and addictions

If these types of behaviours or experiences bring up particularly strong emotional reactions for you, please take time to work through these with a mental health professional before applying. It is important that applicants are aware of what their ‘triggers’ may be to practice safely and ethically as well as to ensure quality service delivery to clients.



13.0 APPROACHES TO PRACTITIONERS

If you think that clinical psychology is the career choice for you, but you are not certain about what the job entails, it is helpful if you approach someone who is practising to find out about this pathway.

Clinical psychologists are employed in many different sectors, including the psychological services in Ara Poutama Department of Corrections, Te Whatu Ora, specialist services in Oranga Tamariki, Group Special Education, private practice, disability services, and at The Psychology Centre (TPC), which is the clinic based at the University of Waikato.

You may wish to talk to someone at one or more of these agencies to gain more information, but please remember that clinical psychologists are busy people and may not be able to see you within a short timeframe.

14.0 AREAS CONSIDERED FOR SELECTION FOR INTERVIEW

Entry into the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme is highly competitive. The number of places available is limited by the number of practical clinical placements and internships available. 12 places were offered for places starting in 2026 from over 150 applicants.

Please note: ***This qualification has a limited number of places available. Meeting entry requirements does not guarantee acceptance into the qualification.***

The main criteria for selection for interview are based on:

14.1 ACADEMIC RECORD

We need to see evidence that you can perform very well in academic tasks such as critical reading of literature and written communication and have a solid background in the concepts and methods of psychology. Postgraduate grades must be a minimum of a B+ average across your postgraduate psychology papers.

14.2 PREREQUISITE PAPERS COMPLETED

You will need to provide evidence that you have completed the prerequisite papers or similar paper. Applicants who need to complete more than two prerequisite papers alongside the first year of the clinical programme would need to demonstrate outstanding academic capacity as this would be a challenging workload, especially if you are also enrolled in a Masters research thesis degree.

14.3 RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

Applications should highlight relevant work experience, including employment in areas such as agencies alongside clinical psychologists, social work, nursing, drug and alcohol services, occupational therapy, or other helping professions. Voluntary work with individuals facing psychological or social challenges is equally valuable. Examples of organizations where previous applicants have gained experience include Lifeline, Youthline, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Community Living Trust, Hospice, Emerge, Explore, Autism New Zealand, the Department of Corrections, HAIP, and Hauora Waikato.

This experience demonstrates an applicant's ability to appreciate, understand, and empathise with the challenges faced by people from diverse backgrounds. It can also help applicants clarify their career goals and assess their comfort with the roles clinicians may undertake. A solid understanding of clinical psychology's role and practice is critical. Engaging with experienced clinical psychologists and discussing their professional activities can further strengthen an applicant's insight.

14.4 PERSONAL ESSAY

You will be asked to write a one-page essay (approx. 500 words) outlining your reasons for considering clinical psychology as a career. You should include a brief overview of your major interests within psychology and what you might hope to accomplish in your training.

14.5 REFLECTIONS ON CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

You will be asked to answer questions with your personal reflections about working with people from a different cultural context to yourself, your cultural background and experiences, the relevance of Te Tiriti in clinical practice.

14.6 REFERENCES

TWO recent references are required for all applicants.

Referee 1: Your first referee must be able to comment on your academic performance and skills, ideally an academic staff member familiar with your work in psychology courses.

Referee 2: Your second referee should be someone who can speak to your interpersonal abilities and suitability for clinical psychology, including qualities such as communication, responsibility, reliability, and honesty. It is particularly helpful if referees have some understanding of clinical psychology and can comment on your potential in this field.

References must come from people who know you well in a relevant professional context, such as paid employment or volunteer work. Referees will be sent a confidential form to complete by the stated deadline.

References from relatives or whānau will not be accepted.

14.7 SUITABILITY FOR TRAINING

The selection committee consider the applicants demeanor, self-awareness, relevant experience, maturity, capacity for critical thinking, motivation to complete a three-year programme, and fitness for registration with the [New Zealand Psychologist Board](#).

Registration carries with it various rights and responsibilities and is required in New Zealand to practice clinical psychology. All psychologists practising in New Zealand are expected to meet the standards of practice that are outlined in the Board's [Core Competencies for the Practice of Psychology in New Zealand](#) and the [Code of Ethics for Psychologists Working in Aotearoa New Zealand 2002](#).

Fitness to Practice requirements are set by the NZ Psychologist Board. The principal purpose of the Act is to protect public health and safety by ensuring health practitioners are competent and fit to practice. The Board is charged with ensuring that psychologists are competent and fit to practice when they apply for registration and on an ongoing basis. Areas considered include effective communication, proficiency in English, criminal conviction, mental and physical conditions, disciplinary proceedings or a risk of endangerment to the public.

15.0 CAREER OPTIONS

A degree in clinical psychology opens many different doors in terms of career development, such as:

- **Te Whatu Ora**, including work with young children who have developmental and/or behavioural problems, children and adolescents with mental health difficulties, adults with mental health difficulties who live in the community and/or who may be inpatients for a period, clients in crisis, older people, rehabilitation for those with neuropsychological impairment, clients who experience pain, in forensic psychology, and so on.
- **Ara Poutama Department of Corrections** (Psychological Service) employs clinical psychologists throughout the country. In this setting, psychologists work with offenders who are on probation or in prison, sometimes in specialist units such as the Youth Offenders Unit or units that provide treatment for sexual offending.
- **Hauora Waikato** employs clinical psychologists to provide a range of community and hospital-based Kaupapa Māori, bicultural, pan-cultural, and mainstream services for people in the Tainui rohe who are experiencing mental health and other difficulties.
- There are a growing number of agencies around the Motu who employ clinical psychologists and emphasise Kaupapa Māori approaches to psychological intervention.
- The **Oranga Tamariki** Service employs clinical psychologists in some cities. These clinicians work with children, caregivers, and families by providing assessments and sometimes treatment.
- Others work with people with disabilities (physical and intellectual) in specifically developed settings.
- Many clinicians eventually become self-employed in private practice after extensive experience and work with clients who self-refer as well as those who are referred by other individuals and agencies.

16.0 PROFESSIONAL BODIES/NETWORKS

Students may be interested in the following professional organisations or networks for clinical psychologist/psychologists in New Zealand. They often offer free student membership and access to professional training opportunities.

- The New Zealand Psychological Society: www.psychology.org.nz
- New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists: www.nzccp.co.nz/
- He Paiaka Totara: Māori Psychology: <https://hepaiakatotara.org/>
- Pasifikology: <https://pasifikology.co.nz/>

The New Zealand Psychologists Board (<http://www.psychologistsboard.org.nz>) is the government constituted body that oversees the registration and practice of registered psychologists. The Psychologists Board was established by the Psychologists Act 1981, and was subsequently appointed as an authority in respect of the practice of psychology under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (HPCA) Act 2003.

17.0 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following are some commonly asked questions of both staff and students in the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme. The list is not meant to be exhaustive but does cover some of the main issues.

1. Why choose the University of Waikato clinical programme?

All programmes have individual characteristics that allow trainees the opportunity to follow their interests. At Waikato, we focus on the application of the scientist-practitioner model through training in understanding and implementing the cognitive-behavioural theoretical model. There is a strong focus on clinical skill development and the training of practitioners for a wide variety of service settings. Because our School is fortunate enough to have strong Māori representation, we can offer a Kaupapa Māori framework and a bicultural approach to research. The clinical psychology programme has a commitment to a bicultural focus and encourages students and staff to incorporate bicultural perspectives in clinical practice.

We also consider the community of students and staff in the programme to be a crucial part of our training and the experience of developing a professional role. We encourage students to create positive, supportive networks within the programme, and to come to see peers and staff as colleagues and resources for personal and professional growth.

2. What is the difference between a clinical psychologist, a counsellor, and a psychiatrist?

As mentioned above, clinical psychologists specialise in the application of psychological knowledge and theory to the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural problems affecting adults, children, couples, and families. They may work with an individual client, or with couples, families, or groups. Clinical Psychologists are registered with the New Zealand Psychologist Board.

Counsellors provide help and support for a range of matters, including problems with relationships, mental health, and lifestyle. Counsellors offer their clients an opportunity to express their feelings and discuss what is happening in their lives, while listening, responding, and reflecting. Counsellors use a variety of techniques and theoretical frameworks, and they may work in private practice or agency settings.

Psychiatrists have a medical degree and additional specialist medical training. Their specialty is the provision of medical treatments for psychiatric disorders and the evaluation and treatment of mental disorders within a medical model.

3. Is the diploma available via distance learning?

No. This is a taught postgraduate qualification, and students need to attend classes at our Hamilton campus and placements and internships within the Waikato region.

4. How many people are accepted each year into the programme?

In the 2025 selection round, 12 students were offered a place in the programme. The number of practical clinical placements and internships available during the programme limits the number of students accepted each year in to the training programme.

5. Does it really take 7 years of university training to become a registered clinical psychologist?

Yes. The minimum steps to registration (based on full time study) are:

Bachelor degree (BA, BSc, BSocSc) in Psychology 3 years

Honours year or Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology 1 year

PGDipPsych(Clin). Maybe completed concurrently with 3 years

Masters research thesis degree in Psychology

6. I have come straight through university after leaving secondary school, would I be considered for selection?

There are no age barriers or preferences to selection. Applicants with well-rounded life experiences and well-developed interpersonal skills are likely to be preferred. The selection committee will consider an application based on academic preparation, life and work experiences and exposure to clinical issues, commitment to psychology as a career (which includes really understanding what a career in psychology entails), and the social skills and maturity that are necessary to work with people in distress. It is possible to develop this kind of knowledge and experience base during undergraduate and honours study, but it does go beyond the typical purely academic programme.

7. I have studied clinical psychology overseas; can I just complete the internship component?

No, the PGDipPsych(Clin) qualification is a three-year programme. Internships available are only available to students who have been accepted into the PGDipPsych (Clin) programme and have completed the first two years of training.

8. What experience should I have had before I apply?

Experiences that include interacting with people and finding ways of assisting them are generally useful. Some applicants have worked previously in related fields such as nursing, teaching, social work, and occupational therapy. Others have been involved in volunteer organisations. Working alongside a clinical psychologist in an agency is a good way to learn what the role entails. Previous students have obtained valuable experience by volunteering at organisations such as Lifeline, Youthline, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Hospice, Emerge, Explore, and Autism New Zealand.

9. How can I complete my Masters and PGDipPsych(Clin) at the same time?

Year 1 and 2 of the PGDipPsych(Clin) is considered a part time qualification and is usually completed concurrently with the Masters degree which is completed part time over two years. Students cannot start their internship until their thesis has been submitted.

10. Will my internship be paid?

While we aim to arrange paid internships for students, we cannot guarantee that every placement will be paid employment. Internship opportunities may be offered in the Hamilton or wider Waikato region, depending on the funding available from providers. Options in the Bay of Plenty and Taranaki regions may also be available from time to time, subject to funding.

11. I want to do a PhD as well. Is that OK?

You may be able to undertake a PhD alongside the clinical programme, provided you meet the entry requirements for PhD study, can manage the additional workload, and have sufficient funding for the extended period of training. Your PhD research must have a clear relationship to clinical matters. In most cases, you would need to take a two-year deferral from the clinical programme after Year 2 to work full-time on your research, while still maintaining an association with the programme.

Please note that completing both pathways would result in a PGDipPsych(Clin) and a PhD in Psychology. It does not lead to a PhD in Clinical Psychology. If you intend to apply for a PhD, you will need to discuss this with the Selection Committee at the time of your application. The Committee will consider whether your proposed research can realistically be integrated with the demands of the clinical programme, and how your timeline aligns with the availability of placements and internships.

12. How much does it cost?

Information on current fees can be found on our website. <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/study/costs/>

13. Will I get a job at the end of the programme?

There is a high rate of employment throughout New Zealand for students who graduate with the Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology. You will likely gain references in the practical components of your internship that will assist you in gaining employment.

14. I am only interested in working with a certain population of clients. Why do I have to do three years training?

The programme is structured to allow students to build and develop their clinical skills. Students will complete generalist training in the understanding and application of sound, empirically informed psychological principles. Once students graduate, they should have a knowledge base and sufficient practice skills to allow them to work in a range of relevant workplaces. Successful completion of our training programme or one of the other University-based programmes leads directly to registration as a clinical psychologist.

15. I am an international student, can I apply?

Applicants must be a New Zealand or Australian citizen or a New Zealand permanent resident. Once international students have gained permanent residency and they meet the entry requirements for the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme, they are welcome to apply.

16. How do students juggle the programme, whānau, work commitments, and have a life as well?

It is recognised that the programme is very demanding. It is important that students in the programme realise the need to balance their academic life with their personal life. It is also important that students have good organisational skills and clear boundaries, as well as enlisting family and whānau support and understanding. There will be busy times, but the staff are there to help if you feel you are under too much pressure.

17. I already have a Master's research thesis degree in psychology, can I still apply?

If you have already completed a master's degree in psychology with a significant research component (minimum of 90pts) or a PhD in psychology, you won't need to complete another one. You will just need to apply for the PGDipPsych(Clin) qualification. You will be asked for details of your qualifications as part of the application process.

18. Am I able to apply for a scholarship?

Information on scholarships available at the University of Waikato can be found here: <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/scholarships>.

19. Can I register as a psychologist after completing the clinical psychology programme?

Yes. Graduates can apply for registration under the Clinical Scope of Practice with the New Zealand Psychologists Board once they complete the PGDipPsych(Clin) and their Masters degree. The New Zealand Psychologist Board states:

“The following qualifications have been prescribed for registration as a psychologist in the Clinical Psychologist scope of practice:

A minimum of a Masters degree in Psychology from an accredited educational organisation and an accredited Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology, or equivalent qualification. Eligibility for a Clinical Psychologist scope of practice shall require a Board approved practicum or internship involving 1500 hours of supervised practice.”

The New Zealand Psychologists Board’s website provides further information on registration as a psychologist, scopes of practice, cultural competence and other professional issues relevant to practising in New Zealand.

20. What happens if I am applying to other University programmes, and I get more than one offer?

All the University programmes have an agreed date by which time applicants must respond to the programme to accept an offer (and decline other offers). No programme should pressure you to respond before that date, and you should have responses from all programmes before that date, unless you are waitlisted.

21. I am an older student and have been told you take only young students. Is that true?

Definitely not. Again, age does not constitute an advantage or disadvantage. Applicants are selected based on what they have to offer the discipline of clinical psychology.

22. Can I work overseas as a clinical psychologist once I have completed training?

There is mutual recognition of psychologist registration between Australia and New Zealand, but the registration must be transferred to the relevant Board prior to commencing work as a registered psychologist. You would need to check with other countries regarding their registration requirements.

23. I have studied at another university and believe I meet the equivalent to the pre-requisites.

If you have completed papers you believe to be equivalent to the University of Waikato papers, you will need to provide an official course outline from the institution you attended, detailing the content of the course. These details can then be added into the application form for the selection panel to assess. If there are papers that are equivalent, you may be given a waiver.

24. I have studied at another university, and I don't think I have completed the equivalent pre-requisites, can I still apply?

It may still be possible for you to apply for entry into the first year of the clinical programme. All our pre-requisites do need to be completed, but it may be possible for some students to do this alongside the clinical training. We will assess your application and determine how many pre-requisites you would need to complete (and whether any of your existing courses could be considered an equivalent). If you already have a Masters or PhD, then taking additional pre-requisites alongside the first clinical year may be feasible. If you would like advice on this before applying, please contact us.

25. I have studied at the University of Waikato, and I don't have all of the prerequisites, can I still apply?

As outlined above, it may be possible to complete pre-requisites alongside the first year of clinical training. This could be manageable for students who have already completed a Masters or PhD and/or who have demonstrated strong academic capability. It may also be possible for a student to complete 1-2 pre-requisites alongside the first year of clinical training and research, and this would be considered by the Selection Panel. However, the training is demanding, and student wellbeing is an important consideration.

26. I meet all the entry criteria, have a Masters degree and work experience, can I just apply for the internship year?

No, the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme is a three-year programme. If you are only looking for an internship year, you will need to look at other options. The University of Waikato offers a PGDipPracPsych internship programme specialising in Behaviour Analysis. Information can be found [here](#).

27. I am still completing my Honours or PGDip but will complete this year, can I still apply?

We are aware that some students may not have completed their Honours degree or Postgraduate Diploma by the closing date of 15 September. You can still apply. However, offers of admission are contingent upon the satisfactory completion of the Honours/PGDip degree prior to enrolment in the programme.

28. I want to be a clinical psychologist, but my degree does not have a psychology major.

All applicants need to have a background in psychology. If you do not have a degree with a psychology major, you would need to complete a Graduate Diploma in psychology, which will give you the equivalent to a major in psychology. The GradDip would be followed by one year of post graduate study (Honours or PGDip). You would then be able to apply for the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme. Please check earlier information for prerequisite paper requirements and entry requirements. You can apply for a Graduate Diploma via the university website.

29. I meet all the entry requirements; can I start the PGDipPsych(Clin) in Tri-B?

No. The PGDipPsych(Clin) has one intake per year, and all students begin the programme in Trimester A. There is no option to start in Trimester B, regardless of whether you meet the entry requirements.

30. Can I apply for clinical training if I have a criminal record?

All applications are considered on their individual merits, but candidates must understand that a criminal record can affect admission, training, and future registration as a psychologist.

Police vetting is required for:

- The PGDipPsych(Clin) programme — All students undergo routine Police vetting throughout their enrolment because placements involve working with vulnerable populations.
- The New Zealand Psychologists Board — Police vetting is required for registration as an Intern Psychologist and for registration as a Psychologist. The Board assesses “fitness to practise,” and any convictions may influence its decisions.

If you have a conviction, we suggest you contact the New Zealand Psychologist Board and ask if your conviction would allow you to meet the fitness-to-practise standards; some convictions may prevent registration.

31. What issues may I face as a clinical psychologist?

The work of clinical psychologists can involve experiences that are complex, challenging, and confronting. Applicants are advised that issues commonly encountered with clients during clinical training and professional practice can include:

- a. severe compromises in mental health and wellbeing, such as self-harm and suicidal behaviour
- b. challenging behaviour, such as interpersonal aggression and violence
- c. criminal offenses and severe antisocial behaviour
- d. sexually harmful behaviour towards adults and/or children
- e. sexual, violent, and emotional victimisation as a child and/or adult
- f. substance misuse and addictions

If these types of behaviours or experiences bring up particularly strong emotional reactions for you, please take time to work through these with a mental health professional before applying. It is important that applicants are aware of what their ‘triggers’ may be to practice safely and ethically as well as to ensure quality service delivery to clients.

18. INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS

18.1 FOR APPLICANTS WHO ARE NEW TO THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO:

If you have gained academic qualifications at a university outside of the University of Waikato, you must first meet the criteria for admission to the University of Waikato before applying. You will need to apply for admission to the University of Waikato before you can apply for the PGDipPsych(Clin). You can apply via the My Waikato portal on <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/>

Please apply as early as possible to prevent delays in the assessment of your qualifications.

This programme is only available for permanent residents of New Zealand and Australia.

18.2 PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU MEET ENTRY REQUIREMENTS BEFORE APPLYING

To be considered for shortlisting for interview, you need to have completed:

- An Honours bachelor's degree in psychology - BA(Hons), BSc(Hons), BSocSc(Hons) or a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) majoring in Psychology from a New Zealand university, or an equivalent qualification acceptable to the University and approved by the Head of Department with a minimum of a B+ average.
- Students who are in the process of completing their Honours or PGDip year may still apply; however, offers of admission are contingent upon the satisfactory completion of the Honours degree or Postgraduate Diploma prior to enrolment in the programme.

18.3 CORE PAPERS

- The following papers are core papers or pre-requisites:
 - PSYCH338 [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)
 - PSYCH337 [Individual Differences and Measurement](#)
 - PSYCH562 [Theories of Psychotherapy](#)
 - PSYCH564 [Developmental Psychopathology](#)
 - PSYCH575 [Kaupapa Māori Psychology](#)
 - PSYCH581 [Psychological Assessment](#) – limited entry paper. *If you have not completed this paper and are offered a place, you would get automatic entry in the first year of the clinical programme*
- If you have not completed one or more of these papers at University of Waikato, but believe that you've completed a similar paper at another university, please look at the outline of the paper(s) and note the details - <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/study/subjects/psychology> or links above. You will be asked for information on these papers in the School Selection Form.
- If you have one or two core courses outstanding, you may still apply. If you are selected for the programme, a plan for completion of your outstanding papers will be arranged with the clinical team.

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS

Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology (PGDipPsych(Clin))

- If you need to complete more than two prerequisite papers in addition to the first-year PGDipPsych(Clin) workload and a Master's thesis, you will need to demonstrate exceptional academic capacity, as this represents a demanding workload. In such cases, your application is likely to be considered less competitive.

18.4 MASTERS RESEARCH THESIS

- If you have already completed or are in the process of completing a Masters (90 to 120pt thesis) or PhD in Psychology, you will only need to apply for the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme.
- The Masters research thesis degree is considered a separate qualification, and students will need to apply for this qualification via My Waikato. Please apply for a **MSc(Research)** (120pt) thesis if you haven't completed a thesis. **DO NOT apply for any other Masters qualification.** This application is in addition to applying for the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme.
- Your academic transcript would need to include [PSYCH539 Graduate Research Methods](#) or a paper similar to show you have an understanding of the skills needed to complete a research thesis. Entry to the Masters programme is subject to supervision availability.

18.5 POLICE VETTING

Government safety-checking regulations under the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014 require all individuals who work with children in state-funded organisations, or who engage with children as part of an educational or vocational training programme, to undergo a full safety check. All students offered a place in the clinical psychology programme at the University of Waikato must therefore complete police vetting as part of this process. If police vetting identifies information suggesting a potential risk to children or vulnerable clients, the matter will be reviewed by the Programme Directors and relevant clinical staff. In such cases, an offer of place may be withdrawn.

Students are required to complete the necessary vetting documents after accepting an offer. Enrolment in the programme cannot be confirmed until clear police vetting result has been received. Students must also confirm annually that they have no convictions or pending convictions.

Police vetting is also required by the New Zealand Psychologists Board when applying for Intern Psychologist registration, and again when applying for registration as a Psychologist, as part of the Board's assessment of fitness to practice. Employers may also conduct their own independent vetting processes.

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS

Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology (PGDipPsych(Clin))

18.6 RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE HEALTH PRACTITIONERS COMPETENCE ASSURANCE ACT

Universities have responsibilities under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (HPCA) Act to ensure that students entering clinical placements are appropriate and safe to work in health environments. During the selection process, the programme reviews any disclosed criminal history or convictions, especially where these may limit access to clinical placements or raise concerns about professional suitability.

This review is supported by mandatory police vetting for core workers under the Children's Act.

If any information from this process suggests potential risks regarding safety or fitness to practise, it may impact an applicant's ability to enter the programme.

Applicants who are unsure about how past or current legal issues might affect their future registration are strongly encouraged to contact the New Zealand Psychologists Board before applying. The Board is responsible for determining fitness for registration, including during the internship year, and conducts its own checks and declarations at that stage.

Failure to fully disclose relevant legal matters during the selection process will result in any offer of admission being withdrawn.

18.7 IMMUNISATION REQUIREMENTS

Students accepted into the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme are required to complete full immunisation and infectious-disease screening. Many clinical placement providers have health and safety policies that mandate vaccination against specific Vaccine Preventable Diseases, so students must supply verified vaccination records to the School before beginning any placement or whenever requested. Meeting these requirements is essential for accessing practicum opportunities and ensuring safe professional practice.

Because some vaccination schedules can take up to three months to complete, students are advised to book an appointment with their GP as soon as they accept an offer of place. Students who have not submitted the required immunisation documentation by the deadline will not be permitted to attend the first clinical practicum.

The costs associated with screening and vaccination can be significant—sometimes approaching \$900—and students are responsible for all related expenses.

Students must provide evidence of immunity to the required diseases. If you do not have current immunisation records, or if screening shows you are not immune, you will need to complete the necessary vaccinations.

18.8 DEMANDS OF THE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING

This is a **three-year** Waikato based training programme. Applicants need to be aware that some Year 2 placements and Year 3 internships will be in Hamilton City and the Waikato region. This year, for example, some students were placed in Rotorua, Tauranga. Applicants need to seriously consider this prior to applying for this programme.

Please take time to consider whether there may be issues that may limit your ability to complete the training at this time. These may include:

- High academic demands – completing a Masters degree concurrently with the clinical psychology classes and placements
- Client issues or behaviours that may be challenging and confronting.
- Family commitments, financial issues and other personal circumstances – you may need to study during semester breaks to complete your thesis. You will need to work longer than regular hours.
- Financial issues, if you have already completed a Masters degree, you would be considered part-time study by StudyLink and may not be eligible for a student allowance. We suggest you contact StudyLink to check your eligibility prior to applying for the programme.
- While we endeavor to find paid internships for students, this cannot be guaranteed.

19.0 KEY AREAS TO CONSIDER BEFORE APPLYING?

Clinical psychology training is academically rigorous, emotionally demanding, and professionally accountable. Readiness is about developing capability, insight, and openness to learning. The following areas summarise the core domains students are encouraged to reflect on prior to application.

Students who are broadly ready to apply typically demonstrate:

- **Clear and informed motivation**
A realistic understanding of what clinical psychology training and practice involve, and why this pathway aligns with their interests and values.
- **Capacity to manage emotionally challenging material**
The ability to engage with distress, trauma, and complexity while remaining present, reflective, and emotionally regulated.
- **Openness to supervision and feedback**
Willingness to receive, reflect on, and learn from feedback, recognising supervision as central to professional development.
- **Understanding of ethical responsibilities and boundaries**
Emerging awareness of professional ethics, confidentiality, boundaries, and scope of practice, with readiness to seek guidance when unsure.
- **Commitment to culturally safe practice**
Respect for diversity, awareness of one's own cultural positioning, and commitment to ongoing learning, including Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- **Effective stress management and self-care strategies**
Recognition that wellbeing is essential to safe practice, with strategies in place to manage workload, stress, and emotional demands.

Students are unlikely to feel equally confident across all areas. Identifying strengths and areas for growth is an expected and valued part of preparing for clinical psychology training.

20.0 WHAT CAN I DO IF I DON'T GET AN INTERVIEW

In recent years we have received over 150 applicants each year. Given we can only fill a small number of spaces means that a lot of people will miss out.

Not being offered a place or not feeling ready does not mean clinical psychology is unattainable. Many successful applicants take time to further develop readiness before applying and apply more than once. Due to the competitiveness for entry, we do recommend students apply to all universities offering a clinical psychology pathway. The following pathways are commonly recommended.

20.1 APPLY FOR A MASTER'S DEGREE (IF YOU DO NOT ALREADY HOLD ONE)

For students without a relevant Master's qualification, completing postgraduate study is an important step in building readiness. A Master's degree can support:

- Development of advanced academic and research skills
- Deeper engagement with psychological theory and evidence-based practice
- Opportunities for research supervision and reflective work

A strong postgraduate academic foundation is a key requirement for entry into clinical psychology training.

20.2 BUILD RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

Experience in people-focused roles helps develop many of the skills required for clinical training. Useful experiences may include:

- Mental health, disability, or community support roles
- Health, education, or social services settings
- Research or assistant roles involving supervision and feedback

The focus is less on the job title and more on what you learn about yourself, your responses to challenges, and how you work with others in complex contexts.

20.3 BUILD ON LIFE EXPERIENCE AND REFLECTION

Life experience can significantly contribute to readiness when paired with reflection. This includes:

- Experiences that develop empathy, resilience, and perspective
- Learning to balance responsibility, wellbeing, and relationships
- Reflecting on how personal experiences shape values, assumptions, and boundaries

Clinical psychology training values applicants who demonstrate thoughtful integration of life experience into professional awareness.

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS

Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology (PGDipPsych(Clin))

20.4 **SEEK FEEDBACK AND GUIDANCE**

Students are encouraged to discuss readiness with:

- Academic advisors or programme coordinators
- Supervisors or managers in relevant roles
- Mentors with experience in psychology or health professions

External perspectives often provide clarity about strengths and next steps.

20.5 **CONSIDER TIMING AS PART OF PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT**

Choosing to delay application intentionally can be a positive and ethical decision. Applying when preparedness is stronger—academically, emotionally, professionally, and financially—may support greater sustainability across the three-year clinical psychology training period and beyond.

Readiness for clinical psychology is developmental, not fixed. Taking time to build academic strength, professional experience, and personal insight is a common and respected pathway into the profession.

20.6 **APPLY TO ALL UNIVERSITIES**

Applications for the PGDipPsych(Clin) are open to New Zealand permanent residents, and clinical psychology programmes attract applicants from across Aotearoa New Zealand. Entry into all programmes is highly competitive, with a limited number of places available each year.

For this reason, students are strongly encouraged to apply to as many New Zealand clinical psychology programmes as they are eligible for. Applying broadly increases the likelihood of progressing into training and reflects realistic engagement with the competitive nature of clinical psychology selection.

All New Zealand universities offering clinical psychology training have different entry criteria, selection processes, programme structures, and areas of emphasis. Students are therefore encouraged to carefully review the requirements and characteristics of each programme to identify the options that best align with their academic background, experience, and interests.

Exploring and applying to multiple programmes allows students to:

- Widen potential pathways into training
- Identify programmes that best match their strengths and development areas
- Demonstrate flexibility and informed decision-making

Applying to several programmes is a common and advised approach and should be viewed as a practica.

21.0 HOW TO APPLY

The deadline for applications for entry in 2027 is **15 September 2026, midnight (MDT)**

Incomplete applications or applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

There is a **TWO-STEP** application process for the Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology - PGDipPsych(Clin). It is important that you complete **BOTH** applications before the deadline, as without confirmation of both applications, the selection panel cannot review your application.

STEP ONE: MY WAIKATO APPLICATION:

If new to the University please apply for entry the University via the My Waikato portal at <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/>. Once your application has been accepted you can then follow the steps below:

Apply for the PGDipPsych(Clin) qualification via <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/study/apply>

Your enrolment will be assessed and if you meet basic entry criteria, you will be contacted by the Clinical Psychology Administrator and asked to complete the School of Psychological and Social Sciences Selection form. If you do not meet the minimum grade average of a B+ or a 6 GPA, your application will be declined.

Please **DO NOT** attach personal documents relating to this application to your MyWaikato portal. If you meet the basic entry requirements, you will be asked to upload documents to your selection form.

STEP TWO: SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE PGDIPPSYCH(CLIN) SELECTION FORM

In this selection form, you will be asked to provide or upload the following documentation:

- **A copy of your academic transcript:** Attach certified transcripts of your relevant academic transcript to this application.
- **Prerequisite papers:** Confirmation of completion of prerequisite papers, or information on papers you believe are similar. A list of papers is outlined in the Selection form. You will be asked to provide brief paper details including the paper name and content of papers you believe are similar to the University of Waikato prerequisites.
- **A Curriculum Vitae:** Please upload a copy of your most recent CV, which relates to your clinical experience, degrees obtained, accomplishments, work experiences, and other professional kinds of activities. Please do not include general letters of recommendation from past employers.

HOW TO APPLY FOR 2027

Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology (PGDipPsych(Clin))

- **Personal Essay:** Outline your reasons for considering clinical psychology as a career, a brief overview of your major interests within psychology and what you might hope to accomplish in your training.
- **Reflections on cultural responsiveness:** Short questions asking about your personal reflections of working with people from a different cultural context to yourself, your cultural background and experiences, the relevance of Te Tiriti in clinical practice.
- **References:** You must provide names and contact info for two referees: one academic (to comment on your psychology coursework) and one professional (a line manager, not a colleague, to comment on your clinical/work experience). The School will email them a form to complete, which must be returned by 1 October 2026. Please inform your referees to expect an email from the University.

21.1 SELECTION CRITERIA

Entry into the programme is highly competitive. The number of places available is limited by the number of practical clinical placements and internships available. 12 places were offered for places starting in 2026 from over 150 applicants. The main criteria for selection for interview are based on the material provided in your selection form.

21.2 DEMANDS OF THE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING

This is a **three-year** Waikato based training programme. Applicants need to be aware that some Year 2 placements and Year 3 internships will be in Hamilton City and the Waikato region. This year, for example, some students were placed in Rotorua, Tauranga. *Applicants need to seriously consider this prior to applying for this programme.*

Please take time to consider whether there may be issues that may limit your ability to complete the training at this time. These may include:

- High academic demands – completing a Masters degree concurrently with the clinical psychology classes and placements
- Client issues or behaviours that may be challenging and confronting.
- Family commitments, financial issues and other personal circumstances – you may need to study during semester breaks to complete your thesis. You will need to work longer than regular hours.
- Financial issues, if you have already completed a Masters degree, you would be considered part-time study by StudyLink and may not be eligible for a student allowance. We suggest you contact StudyLink to check your eligibility prior to applying for the programme.
- While we endeavor to find paid internships for students, this cannot be guaranteed.

21.3 SELECTION PROCESS

- The Selection Committee consists of staff from the clinical psychology team and psychologists from The Psychology Centre or community.
- Full and complete applications must be received by midnight on 15 September 2026. Late applications will not be accepted. Please be aware that the application is a two-step process and both the My Waikato and the internal School of Psychology applications must be received by this deadline.
- Incomplete applications will not be shortlisted.
- Shortlisting of applications will take place in late October. Applicants who are being offered an interview will then be contacted.
- Interview Dates will be in November 2026 (TBC). The interview process requires all shortlisted candidates to attend interviews over two days. Day 1 involves group activity and two assessments in the morning, followed by individual 20-minute interviews. We will work to place applicants from outside of the Waikato region into an individual interview space on the afternoon of Day 1. On Day 2 individual interviews will continue for those who did not have an interview on Day 1.
- Interview dates cannot be changed, and applicants MUST be able to attend in person.
- The final decision on who will be offered a place in the programme will be based on your performance on the selection day, your application material, and references.
- Candidates will be advised of their application status by the end of November. If you are not successful in the first instance, you may be offered a place on the waitlist.
- Any offers will be conditional on meeting entry requirements, a clear police vetting, reference checking, vaccination status and whether you need to complete further course work in the first year of training.
- Successful candidates will start on 1 March 2027, at the Hamilton campus.
- The Selection Panel decision is final, and no correspondence can be entered into.

22. CONTACT INFORMATION

Enquiries can be made by emailing or phoning the Clinical Programme Administrator in the first instance.

Enquiries:

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Clinical Psychology Programme Director:

Associate Professor Armon Tamatea
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THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

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