THE

MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

IN

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

AT

UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

For Admission Fall 2017
Introduction

The Department of Psychology is one of the largest departments on the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) campus. Offering a B.A., B.S., M.S. and joint UAF/UAA PhD degree, the department has over 600 undergraduate majors, nearly 40 current graduate students, 20 full-time faculty, several term and adjunct faculty, and 2 administrative assistants. In the fall of 2006, with its first cohort of 16 students across UAA and UAF campuses, the Department of Psychology began a joint doctoral program in Clinical-Community Psychology. The M.S. Clinical Psychology graduate program at UAA is a separate terminal degree program from the PhD program. A student may make applications to both programs simultaneously, if interested. The Psychology department is centrally located on campus in two buildings – the Social Sciences Building (SSB) and the Natural Sciences Building (NSB). The department has a psychology laboratory and maintains an in-house mental health clinic -- the Psychological Services Center -- where graduate students gain supervised psychotherapy experience. This clinic utilizes state-of-the-art video and audio equipment; modern individual, child, family and group therapy rooms; and two comfortable, computer-equipped student work rooms.

General Information About Alaska, Anchorage, and UAA

Alaska is the largest and least populated state in the U.S. It contains vast areas of wilderness and many different climates. UAA is located in Anchorage, Alaska's largest city. Anchorage, an international air crossroads and the business center of the state, is metropolitan and culturally diverse. It is home to approximately 330,000 people, which is about 40% of the population of Alaska. Anchorage is surrounded by hundreds of thousands of acres of parkland and provides easy access to a wide range of outdoor activities, including bicycling, hiking, backpacking, boating, fishing, skiing, wildlife viewing, and many other adventures. Because Anchorage is located on an inlet of the Pacific Ocean, the climate is relatively mild, with average winter temperatures in the 20's (-5°C) and average summer temperatures in the 60's (about 15-20°C).

UAA is situated on an attractive wooded campus that serves as a cultural hub for the city, providing theater, music, arts, and sports events. The campus features modern facilities and serves 15,000 students. Careful development has left the campus an urban oasis with resident wildlife populations that include moose, waterfowl, birds, and an occasional bear. You can see pictures and general information at www.uaa.alaska.edu

The M.S. Degree Program

The M.S. in Clinical Psychology has been in existence since 1967. The curriculum follows a practitioner-scientist model, with training that emphasizes research and clinical skills. The program is a “terminal” degree program that prepares graduates for master’s level practice as a Licensed Psychological Associate or Licensed Professional Counselor. The program maintains an excellent student-professor ratio and has high admissions standards. Faculty members are actively involved with students to support and monitor their progress through coursework, hands-on practica, and collaborative research. Students gain applied therapy and assessment experience under the supervision of faculty members and licensed professionals at university and community training clinics.
**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Master of Science Program is to provide quality training to graduate students interested in mental health careers in diverse communities. The training seeks to produce graduates who are practitioner-scientists prepared to address local behavioral health needs in a context that is culturally sensitive and community focused.

**Clinical Skills**

Our program is designed to meet the needs of Alaska's diverse mental health settings. We provide a wide range of treatment-related classroom instruction that is complemented by three semesters of supervised clinical experience, beginning in our own clinic. Our classes are small so we can provide individualized training across the spectrum of skills needed for applied practice. With proper planning, graduates meet all of the state course work requirements to sit for licensure as either a Licensed Psychological Associate (LPA) or (with 12 additional post-graduate credits) a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). These licenses allow clinicians to practice on par with other master's level licenses (i.e., LCSW, LMFT). Many states have licensure laws that are similar to those in Alaska so graduates from our program may be eligible for master's level licensure in other states as well. Students who anticipate seeking licensure outside Alaska are encouraged to consult with the licensing boards in those states prior to beginning their training at UAA.

**Research Skills**

Our program provides all students with an understanding of research methodology. This training allows students to be knowledgeable and critical consumers of the empirical literature in psychology. Students wishing to receive more specialized skills may work with faculty on independent research projects and/or may elect to produce an empirical thesis.

**Career Preparation**

We prepare graduates for several different career options. The program requires at least two-years of study (48 credit hours without an optional thesis and 51 credit hours with an optional thesis) and is designed to provide the successful student with:

- skills in diagnosis, treatment planning, psychotherapy, and assessment
- supervised clinical experience in a variety of settings
- course work addressing licensing requirements for the LPA & LPC credentials
- the ability to critically evaluate research
- foundation skills for pursuing a doctoral degree in psychology

Over the next two years, we will be transitioning to a required 60-credit hour M.S. degree as we prepare to apply for accreditation from CACREP (Commission on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Experiences).

**Psychology Faculty Members**

Faculty members in the psychology department are a dynamic group of individuals. Together they bring decades of clinical and research experience to the M.S. program. Many faculty members work on cutting edge research that attracts national and international recognition. Students have the
opportunity to work closely with faculty on many clinical and research endeavors, including theses and independent research projects. Please check the Psychology Department website (http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/psych/) for further information about the department and the faculty.

**Program Structure**

Our curriculum was developed with the practitioner-scientist in mind and takes into account academic standards, the needs of Alaskans, licensing requirements, and the input of students and alumni. The goal of the program is to provide students with a well-rounded education that includes an evidence-based background in the best practices applicable to community mental health settings. The curriculum addresses local behavioral health needs in a context that is culturally sensitive and community focused. The program is based on a sequence of core classes that provide competencies essential to a mental health service provider and practitioner-scientist. Classes emphasize supervised, hands-on practice.

**Coursework**

The program has a non-thesis option (48 credit hours required for graduation) and a thesis option (51 credit hours required for graduation). A thesis is not required but is encouraged and supported by faculty. The following classes, required of all students, represent the basic skills necessary for practicing psychotherapists and developing scientists.

- PSY 604 Biological & Pharmacological Bases of Behavior
- PSY 609 Applied Research Methods
- PSY 611 Ethics and Professional Practice
- PSY 612 Advanced Human Development
- PSY 622 Multicultural Psychopathology
- PSY 623 Intervention I
- PSY 624 Group Therapy
- PSY 626 Family Therapy
- PSY 627 Community Based Intervention Skills
- PSY 633 Tests and Measurement in a Multicultural Context
- PSY 654 Cultural Issues in Psychotherapy
- PSY 665 Psychotherapy Practicum
- PSY 670 Psychotherapy Internship (2 semesters)
- PSY 681 Substances of Abuse in Alaska (1 credit)
- PSY 682 Clinical Interventions for Substance Abuse (1 credit)
- PSY 683 Substance Abuse Assessment and Treatment Planning (1 credit)

**Elective Courses**

At least 3 credits of elective courses are required. Elective courses are offered regularly on a variety of subjects. PSY A699-Thesis or PSY 689 Individual Research (with a faculty member) may be counted as an elective. Guest lecturers and specialists regularly offer courses on a variety of special topics throughout the year. The Graduate Certificate in Child Mental Health combines courses from psychology and from other disciplines that count as electives. We have a series of new elective courses
in Applied Behavior Analysis. Check with the class schedule each term for availability of those courses.

**Graduate Project**

During the two semesters of Internship and before graduation, each student will complete a Competency Portfolio. This comprehensive project represents a cumulative record of skills development and professional competencies.

**Disclosure Form**

State licensing regulations and employment regulations of major agencies prohibit licensing and/or employment of people who have particular criminal records in their background. In addition, most Internship opportunities require a criminal background check. Included in this application packet is a disclosure form that must accompany the student’s application to the program. Disclosure of this information does not automatically preclude admission. However, students with a history of major legal involvements may be prohibited from working in the field and therefore would not be accepted into this training program.

**After Graduation**

After completing the M.S. program, students typically pursue one of two options; applied work in the clinical field or further studies for a PhD or PsyD degree.

**Clinical Service as a Master’s-Level Practitioner**

Common settings for employment at the master’s level include community mental health centers; outpatient clinics; psychiatric or general hospitals; rehabilitation centers; private or group practices; and residential centers that treat various populations, including emotionally disturbed children, severely mentally ill persons, developmentally disabled individuals, substance abusing persons, juvenile offenders, and victims of abuse. Graduates from our program have found employment in these diverse settings, in Alaska and elsewhere. Please note that the Department of Defense, Veterans Administration, and Tricare require that licensed mental health practitioners graduate from training programs accredited by CACREP. There are no programs in Alaska that have CACREP accreditation at this time.

With proper course planning, students graduating from our program will meet the course requirements to pursue a State of Alaska license as a Licensed Psychological Associate (LPA) or as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). LPC licensure requires applicants to take 12 additional credits beyond a Master’s Degree for a total of 60 graduate credits. Most states provide master’s level licenses in psychology or counseling. These licenses bring with them specific rights, which vary from state to state. Generally, they allow one to practice independently and, in many states, to collect third party payments. Although it varies, most states require a master's degree, two to three years of post-master's supervised experience, and successful completion of a state and a national exam.

**Doctoral Programs**
For students interested in pursuing a doctoral degree, our program provides an excellent foundation in clinical and research skills. Many of our students have been admitted into highly competitive programs and have received their doctorates. Thus, our program has an excellent track record for initiating this career path for appropriately motivated and interested students.

Although the joint UAA-UAF Ph.D. program in Clinical-Community Psychology is a separate program from the M.S. Clinical Psychology program, students from the M.S. program have applied and been accepted into the joint Ph.D. program. For more information or questions see [http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/psych/doctoral.cfm](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/psych/doctoral.cfm). You may apply for admission to the M.S. program and the Ph.D. program in the same year, but please note that applications and application deadlines are different and an application to the Ph.D. program is not an application to the M.S. program.

**Prerequisites and Financial Information**

**Departmental Prerequisites for the M.S. Program**

To ensure sufficient background in psychology, students must have undergraduate training in general psychology, statistics, research design, learning and cognition, clinical psychology, and testing and measurement. Examples of UAA courses that meet these requirements are PSY A111; PSY A260, PSY A355 or PSY A200 or PSY 400, PSY A425, and PSY A473; alternative courses and/or experiences will be considered. Students who have a baccalaureate with a major in psychology and have not completed these prerequisites may be conditionally admitted into the program. Conditionally admitted students may also be required to complete other coursework based on transcripts, writing sample or GPA to ensure the student’s success in the program. Please note that completing prerequisites and/or other requirements after entering the program will extend the time it takes to complete the program. Students who do not have an undergraduate major in Psychology must have all prerequisites to be admitted to the program.

**Graduate Transfer Credit**

A limited number of graduate credit hours may be transferred into the program if the content areas meet the requirements for the M.S. program. Transfer of credits is not automatic. Students who are accepted into the M.S. program may petition the M.S. Clinical Training Committee (CTC) to have up to 9 prior credits considered for transfer.

**Financial Aid**

The UAA Financial Aid Office ([http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/financialaid/index.cf](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/financialaid/index.cf)) can provide information and application forms for grant and loan programs, scholarships, and employment opportunities. The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education ([http://acpe.alaska.gov/](http://acpe.alaska.gov/)) also has information about loans and grants, although there are residency requirements for eligibility.

**Tuition Waivers & Assistantships**

We cannot guarantee student support; however, there are some Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs) available competitively for students enrolled full-time in the M.S. program. GTAs require 20 hours per week of documented work with a faculty member in the psychology department. In return, students receive 9 hours of tuition waiver, a stipend, and health insurance. GTAs are assigned based on applicant qualifications (i.e., ranking in the
applicant pool) and departmental needs. Think carefully about your workload before applying as a GTA. Once a GTA is awarded, you are making a work commitment for at least one term. Because of the heavy workload involved in clinical internship (PSYA670), students may not be a GTA at the same time they are registered for internship.

The Center for Behavioral Health Research and Services (CBHRS) generally offers a small number of Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs) for students in the M.S. program. GRAs also require 15 to 20 hours of documented work per week, are paid at the same hourly rate as GTAs, and receive the same health insurance and tuition credits. You must follow CBHRS instructions to apply for CBHRS GRA positions.

Occasionally, the M.S. program has tuition waivers for students who do not have GTAs or GRAs; however, those are not guaranteed and you should not depend on getting a tuition waiver.

FAQs

Are you accredited?
Many potential applicants ask about APA (American Psychological Association) accreditation. APA does not accredit Master’s programs in Psychology and there is no requirement for accreditation for Masters level licensure in Alaska. A growing number of programs are seeking CACREP accreditation; however, there are no programs in Alaska that are CACREP-accredited and UAA is not seeking CACREP accreditation.

What is the ratio of applicants accepted to the program?
We generally receive 40 to 45 completed applications and accept 10 – 12 students, for a ratio of applicants to accepted students of about 4:1.

What if I have an undergraduate degree in another field?
Students wishing to apply for the UAA MS Clinical Psychology graduate program who have an undergraduate degree in another field are required to complete prerequisite courses BEFORE admission to the program. Please note that some prerequisite courses have prerequisites themselves. Preference is given to students with training in psychology (or a closely related field), though students with other educational backgrounds who wish to make a career change are encouraged to apply if they have prerequisites.

Whom should I contact for further information?
If you have further questions after reading the M.S. program, please contact Dr. Gloria Eldridge (program coordinator) at 907-786-1623 or geldridge@alaska.edu or Ms Katie Brandenburg (administrative assistant) at 907-786-4717 or kjbrandenburg@alaska.edu.
APPLYING TO THE M.S. CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

The Clinical Psychology graduate program accepts students for fall admission only and admissions cannot be delayed. If you are accepted for admission in Fall 2017, you must enroll full-time in the program at that time or your admission to the program will be rescinded.

General application instructions and information for prospective students are available on the Graduate School website http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/graduateschool/Prospective/index.cfm. Please note that the M.S. in Clinical Psychology has its own graduate application deadlines and admission requirements and these take precedence over general admissions instructions. Go to the Admissions tab on the Department of Psychology Graduate Programs website for application instructions. https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-arts-and-sciences/departments/psychology/academic-programs/graduate/masters/admissions.cshtml

To be considered for admission to the M.S. in Clinical Psychology, you must submit a complete application with a non-refundable application fee paid to UAA Enrollment Services on or before March 15, 2017. Because we review all applications immediately, we can only consider applicants with complete applications, including transcripts and letters of reference. We will notify successful applicants by April 15, 2017. You have until May 1, 2017 to accept our admissions offer. If you do not accept by that date, the offer will be rescinded.

If you have questions about the program, please contact the program coordinator, Dr. Gloria Eldridge at 907-786-1623 or gdeldridge@alaska.edu.

If you have questions about the application process, please contact Katie Brandenburg at 907-786-4717 or kjbrandenburg@alaska.edu.

If you require a mailing address for the MS program, please send items to:

University of Alaska Anchorage
MS Clinical Psychology Graduate Program
c/o Katie Brandenburg
SSB 352
3211 Providence Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

If you are not accepted into the M.S. program, Letters of Reference, Disclosure Forms, Resumes, and Letters of Intent will be shredded. If you wish to reapply to the program in another year, you may ask UAA Enrollment Services to postpone your application but you must submit a new letter of intent and disclosure form, updated resume, and new letters of reference with your second application.
**Guidelines for the Letter of Intent and Questions**

Part One of your Letter of Intent must include a detailed description of your interest and purpose in studying clinical psychology, including a description of reasons why you are seeking an M.S. in clinical psychology at this point in your professional development.

Part Two of your Letter of Intent must include **answers to the following questions.** Answer each question on a separate page. Number your responses to correspond with the question number and put your name on each page. Your answers must be single-spaced. Limit your responses for each question to the number of pages indicated below.

1. **Clinical psychology experience (maximum of one single-spaced page.)**
   Please describe your professional and paraprofessional clinical psychology experiences. Not all applicants have professional or paraprofessional experience and these experiences are not required for admission to the program. For clinical experience, describe your experiences providing individual or group psychotherapy, volunteer or practicum experience in a mental health setting, or prior training experience. For each experience, indicate how much time was involved and whether it was paid or volunteer. Describe the nature and frequency of the supervision you received. If you have no experience, please explain your interest(s).

2. **Research experience (maximum of one single spaced page)**
   Please describe any research experience you have had (including undergraduate academic experiences), indicating the following: 1) settings in which it occurred; 2) primary populations studied; 3) your responsibilities (e.g., data collection, observation, coding, design and planning, instrument development, data analysis, report preparation); 4) length of time involved in each research project; 5) nature and frequency of supervision; and 6) description of presentations or publications that may have resulted from the research. If you have no research experience, please explain your interest(s).

3. **Personal Statement (maximum of one single spaced page)**
   Please write a personal statement in which you describe significant life experiences and people who have shaped your career choice, the impact of your clinical and community experiences, your special interests, and your personal goals as a psychotherapist, including your desired location of practice. In addition, please tell us anything that you feel would assist us in making admission decisions.