



Graduate Program in Clinical Psychology

POLICY

Counting Research and Clinical Experiences as Program-Sanctioned Hours (*program-sanctioned hours must be pre-approved*)

Date: March 18, 2024

Preamble:

The University of Western Ontario's Graduate Program in Clinical Psychology recognizes there has been an overemphasis on residency applicants accruing a greater number of practicum hours to increase the probability that they will be matched for residency training. For many years, residency training directors have stated that the *quality* of hours is more important than the *quantity* of hours and that those individuals who rank applicants are (or at least should be) concerned most with the 'goodness of fit' between the residency applicant and the placement.

The Clinical Program also recognizes that other important factors increase the probability that one will be successfully matched (e.g., defending one's dissertation prior to beginning internship; depth of training experiences; how the applicant's materials are organized and written).

Notwithstanding the importance of demonstrating goodness of fit, completing dissertation requirements and ensuring that the candidate is well-prepared for the application and interview process, the issue of 'hours' remains important. The Clinical Program believes that permitting students to count appropriate research and clinical experiences that are accrued outside of regular practicum placements may (a) continue to foster growth and development as scientists and as clinicians and (b) enhance our students' competitiveness for the APPIC match. These program-sanctioned sanctioned.

Policy Guidelines:

A. Counting Unpaid or Paid Clinical Training in a Research Setting

Students will be able to count paid, volunteer or dissertation-relevant research experiences provided that the following conditions are met:

1. The research experience must involve direct (face-to-face) contact with a clinically-relevant sample.
2. The research experience must involve interviewing (e.g., structured clinical interviews), the provision of an intervention or treatment and/or the administration of intellectual or personality assessment. The administration of self-report, paper- and-pencil measures may not count as program-sanctioned hours.

3. Students must justify, in writing (in the relevant section of the [Intended Clinical Milestone \[ICM\] form](#)) why a particular research experience should be counted as program-sanctioned hours. The onus is on the student to demonstrate that a particular experience is clinically relevant and continues to provide incremental learning.
4. The research activity must be performed under the supervision of a registered doctoral-level psychologist.
5. The experience must involve some regular supervision (*ideally* maintaining the 4:1 ratio that is required of practicum experiences).
6. The hours must be documented by the student and verified by the supervisor.
7. The student must be meeting or exceeding objective benchmarks for their thesis or dissertation progress.

B. Counting Unpaid or Paid or Clinical Training in a community-based health/social service agency.

Students will be able to count unpaid or paid volunteer clinical experiences provided that the following conditions are met:

1. The clinical experience involves interviewing (e.g., structured clinical interviews), the provision of an intervention or treatment and/or the administration of intellectual or personality assessment. The administration of self-report, paper-and-pencil measures may not count as program-sanctioned hours.
2. The clinical experience must be consistent with evidence-based practice.
3. Students must justify, in writing (in the relevant section of the [Intended Clinical Milestone \[ICM\] form](#)) why particular clinical experiences should be counted as program-sanctioned hours. The onus is on the student to demonstrate that a particular experience is clinically relevant and continues to provide incremental learning).
4. The clinical activity must be performed under the guidance of a regulated health care professional.
5. The experience must involve regular meetings with the clinical trainer (*ideally* maintaining the 4:1 ratio that is required of practicum experiences).
6. The hours must be documented by the student and verified by the clinical trainer.
7. The student must be meeting or exceeding objective benchmarks for their thesis or dissertation progress.

Note: Clinical training done under the guidance of regulated health care professionals who are not doctoral-level registered psychologists does NOT count towards the 300 hours of direct clinical contact and 150 hours of supervision required by the Canadian Psychological Association. But, if approved in advance, it can count towards the tally of program-sanctioned hours that the DCT will sign off on for APPIC (i.e., as part of the residency application process).

Justifying of Training Experience

On page 3 of the ICM form, the student is asked to justify why this experience should be counted as program- sanctioned hours.

Program-sanctioned clinical hours in research settings are approved for a period of no more than 6 months at a time. After that, if students want to continue to accrue program-sanctioned clinical hours in the same research setting, they must submit a new ICM form where they make the case (on page 3) for the incremental training value of the extension. Each six-month 'stint' (or portion thereof) will appear as a discrete Clinical Training Milestone on the students' transcripts.

Paperwork

A summary of the paperwork required for Program-sanctioned hours is available [here](#).