

**USC Aiken Psychology Department
MS Degree in Applied Clinical Psychology
Graduate Student Handbook
2009-2010**

Contents	Page
A. Mission Statement/Program Goals-----	2
B. Curriculum Requirements	
• Advisement and Orientation-----	2
• Coursework-----	3
• Academic Regulations and Grading-----	6
• Professional Responsibilities-----	8
• Application for Degree-----	8
• Practicum-----	9
• Thesis-----	10
C. Graduate Assistantships/Stipends-----	12
D. Professional Issues	
• Licensing-----	15
• Insurance-----	16
• Professional Development-----	16
E. USC Aiken Psychology Clinic-----	17
F. Departmental Facilities-----	17
G. Faculty-----	18
H. Appendix	
• Student Activities Self Evaluation Report-----	20
• Graduate Applied Activity Log-----	24
• APSY 798 Enrollment Consent Form-----	25
• APSY 799 Thesis Enrollment Contract Form-----	26
• Thesis Committee Approval Page-----	27
• Thesis Title Page-----	28
• APSY 790 Enrollment Consent Form-----	29
• APSY 791 Enrollment Consent Form-----	30
• APSY 699 Enrollment Consent Form-----	31
• Thesis Assessment Form-----	32

USC Aiken provides affirmative action and adheres to the principle of equal educational and employment opportunity without regard to race, color, religion, sex, creed, national origin, age, disability or veteran status. This policy extends to all programs and activities supported by the university. Any person who feels they qualify for special accommodations due to a physical, learning, or psychological disability should contact the Office of Disability Services at (803) 641-3609 for a free, confidential interview.

A. Mission Statement/Program Goals

The Master of Science Degree in Applied Clinical Psychology provides graduate study and clinical experience in preparation for careers in applied clinical and counseling settings and as a foundation for students interested in pursuing advanced doctoral studies. Students enrolled in this program are expected to pursue a plan of study to assure increased professional competence and breadth of knowledge in the field of clinical and counseling psychology. The degree objectives are designed to enable the student to:

1. Understand principles of psychology and how they are applied.
2. Understand a diversity of theoretical perspectives.
3. Interpret and apply statistical and research techniques.
4. Understand professional, legal and ethical principles as they pertain to professional conduct and responsibility.
5. Understand and develop skills in assessment procedures and intervention strategies.

The Master of Science Degree in Applied Clinical Psychology is an approved member of the Council of Applied Master's Programs in Psychology (CAMPP). Since the development of the degree program, a strong emphasis has been placed on the need to train students within the tradition of the scientist-practitioner guidelines espoused by CAMPP. It is the belief of faculty that the master's-level practitioner is well-served by participation in this process and that the critical-thinking skills so essential to sound clinical decision-making is enhanced through research experience.

The Master of Science Degree in Applied Clinical Psychology received full accreditation from the Master's in Psychology Accreditation Council (MPAC) in 2004. The mission of MPAC is to accredit academic programs in Psychology, which promote training in the scientific practice of professional Psychology at the master's level. Accreditation reflects a commitment to science-based training, with goals of enhancing services to the consumer and the public at large.

B. Curriculum Requirements

Advisement and Orientation

The Director of the Psychology Graduate Program will serve as academic advisor for all graduate students. Students must meet with this advisor in order to initiate the process for enrollment in graduate classes. At the beginning of each academic year, all newly admitted and currently admitted graduate students will be invited to attend a graduate program orientation meeting, conducted by the USC Aiken Department of Psychology. During orientation, students will receive information regarding curriculum and program requirements, and will be introduced to the Psychology Department faculty members. All students are expected to attend orientation.

As a part of the advisement process, students will be required to complete the Student Activities Self Evaluation Report (SASER). The primary purposes of the SASER are to inform the clinical faculty of the student's progress in the program, to provide a formal method of giving feedback to the student, and to help the student formulate plans to meet career goals. The process is necessarily an evaluative one, but the emphasis is on the

student and faculty working together in setting appropriate goals and evaluating performance in light of those goals.

Regardless of the student's eventual career path, training in the four overlapping domains of Academic, Research, Clinical, and Professional/Personal development is seen as crucial. The SASER is an annual listing of the student's activities, accomplishments, and goals in each of these domains. All students are required to complete the SASER at the completion of each semester and submit the completed form to the Graduate Program Director no later than the start of the subsequent semester. The clinical faculty will review each student report at the start of this semester, and will provide the student feedback by the end of the first month of classes. In this process, there will be multiple opportunities for the student and faculty to discuss and summarize accomplishments, highlight strengths and weaknesses, and set goals for each semester.

- **Coursework**

The MS Degree in Applied Clinical Psychology is a 45-hour degree program. Graduate students in the Master's Degree in Applied Clinical Psychology have a period of six years to complete the degree requirements. Full-time students should be able to complete their degree requirements in two years. However, the curriculum is designed to allow students to pursue their degree as either part-time or full-time students. In developing the degree requirements, an effort was made to address state licensing (e.g., Licensed Professional Counselor-LPC) requirements and national guidelines recommended by the Council of Applied Master's Programs in Psychology (CAMPP). Students are required to complete the following courses in order to obtain their degree:

1. Core Courses (All required): (15 credit hours)
 - APSY 610 Developmental Psychology (3)
 - APSY 620 Psychopathology (3)
 - APSY 625 Statistics and Research Design (3)
 - APSY 640 Social Psychology (3)
 - APSY 650 Learning, Cognition, and Behavior (3)
2. Applied Clinical Courses (All required): (21 credit hours)
 - APSY 600 Ethical and Professional Issues in the Practice of Psychology (3)
 - APSY 680 Assessment I (3)
 - APSY 720 Theories and Techniques of Counseling and Psychotherapy (3)
 - APSY 725 Group Therapy and Counseling (3)
 - APSY 780 Assessment II (3)
 - APSY 790 Practicum in Applied Clinical/Counseling Psychology (2 semesters; 3/3)
3. Advanced Topics (Must take at least one course): (3 credit hours)
 - APSY 700 Advanced Topics in Applied Psychology (3)
 - APSY 760 Topics in Neuroscience (3)

4. Thesis (Two semester minimum required): (6 credit hours)
 APSY 798 Thesis Preparation (1)
 APSY 799 Thesis (1-5)

5. Professional Electives
 APSY 630 Career and Lifestyle Development (3)
 APSY 699 Independent Research (1-3; may be repeated)
 APSY 791 Advanced Practicum in Applied Clinical/Counseling Psychology (1-3;
 may be repeated)

Further information about course descriptions and prerequisites is located in the USC Aiken Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Bulletin. Courses are generally held during the afternoon and evening hours in an effort to accommodate students' assistantship schedules and applied clinical experiences. Due to course scheduling limitations, practica, and applied course requirements, however, students will have to complete portions of their degree requirements during daytime hours. A student may not enroll in more than 12 credit hours during a semester. Provisionally admitted students are encouraged to enroll in 9 credit-hours during a semester. A student is classified as a full-time graduate student for academic purposes by enrolling in at least 9 hours during each of the fall and spring terms, and 3 hours during a summer session. In order to be eligible to receive a graduate stipend/assistantship, students must enroll in at least 9 credit hours of Psychology graduate-level courses during each of the fall and spring terms, and in at least 6 credit hours of Psychology graduate-level courses during summer session classes.

While the schedule of course offerings is subject to change, it is generally expected that a full-time student can complete the degree requirements in a minimum of two years. The following sequence of courses is an example of a possible enrollment strategy for those who intend to complete the degree requirements within this timeframe:

1st Semester (Fall)--12 credit-hour load

APSY 640 (Social Psychology)
 APSY 600 (Ethical and Professional Issues in the Practice of Psychology)
 APSY 620 (Psychopathology)
 APSY 650 (Learning, Cognition, and Behavior)

2nd Semester (Spring)--12 credit-hour load

APSY 610 (Developmental Psychology)
 APSY 625 (Statistics and Research Design)
 APSY 680 (Assessment I)
 APSY 720 (Theories and Techniques of Counseling and Psychotherapy)

Summer—4/6 credit-hour load

APSY 700 (Advanced Topics)
 APSY 798 (Thesis Preparation)
 APSY 790 (Practicum)

3rd Semester (Fall)--9 credit-hour load

APSY 799 (Thesis-3 credits)

APSY 780 (Assessment II)

APSY 790 (Practicum)

4th Semester (Spring)--11 credit-hour load

APSY 799 (Thesis-2 credits)

APSY 630 (Career and Lifestyle Development)

APSY 725 (Group Therapy and Counseling)

In an effort to provide students with valuable applied clinical and counseling experiences, several of the Applied Clinical courses will include a requirement of various applied experiences. To fulfill these course requirements, students will be required to devote approximately 3-5 hours per week per course performing specific class-related assignments. On occasion these assignments can be satisfied by performing certain applied activities within the formal classroom setting, though a major portion of these assignments will include working in applied settings outside of the formal classroom setting. Additionally, completion of a two-semester practicum course is required (APSY 790). To fulfill the practicum course requirements, students will be required to devote approximately 12 hours per week to applied activities. The student's clinical and counseling activities in these settings will be supervised by USC Aiken's clinical faculty, as well as by select staff members working in these settings, when appropriate. At the completion of their MS Degree, students will have accumulated a minimum of 600 clock-hours of supervised applied experiences. Students will be required to maintain an activity log throughout their graduate experience as a means of documenting their applied clinical experiences (see Appendix). Documentation of applied clinical experiences will also be made by completion of the SASER, discussed previously.

It should be noted that a graduate class format is generally quite different from what students may be used to at the undergraduate level. Graduate courses are generally taught in a seminar format, and students will be expected to fulfill a much more independent role in their academic experiences. This means that students will be responsible for having completed a comprehensive review of assigned reading materials prior to class and students will have a major responsibility in presenting material and in contributing to the class discussion. Graded assignments will frequently include in-class presentations, paper assignments, applied clinical/counseling assignments when appropriate, and more formal examinations, in addition to in-class participation. As representatives of USC Aiken and as professionals in the field of Psychology, students will be expected to fulfill their professional roles in a manner that is consistent with the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association and the American Counseling Association. Students will be expected to present themselves in a highly professional manner in both dress and demeanor.

It is our belief that the curriculum and training requirements for the Master's degree in Applied Clinical Psychology are rigorous and comprehensive. While it is our expectation that all students enrolled in our program should succeed, we must and will

maintain high standards of expectation for your performance. Graduate school is a long, difficult journey, with inherent major stressors. You will work very hard and be challenged repeatedly, and likely feel overwhelmed much of the time. Be certain that graduate school is something you really desire, as you will often be expected to do more than what you may feel that you have time for.

- **Academic Regulations and Grading**

Admission into the Master's degree program may be granted at one of two levels:

Full admission status: applications with satisfactory scores on the GRE, satisfactory references, and undergraduate records indicating good academic performance

Provisional status: applicants who intend to seek a graduate degree but who lack sufficient requirements for full admission status. Provisionally admitted students must attain a 3.0 grade point average during their first 12 credit hours to be eligible for full admission. If after the completion of any semester of the provisional enrollment, it is determined that the student will be unable to achieve a 3.0 grade point average during the course of the first 12 credit hours, the student will be removed from the program.

International Student Admission. Students who have earned a degree or taken any courses in countries outside the US must have an official transcript evaluated by a professional evaluation service. This evaluation must be forwarded directly to the USC Aiken Graduate Admissions Office from the evaluation service. (A list of several professional Evaluation Services can be obtained from the USC Aiken Admissions Office or found on the USC Aiken web site at: www.usca.edu/admissions). Students will not be considered for admission until this evaluation is received.

Admission to the graduate program is valid for one year. If an admission has not been acted upon by a student after one calendar year, the student must reapply for admission. (This does not allow the student to defer admission until the fall of the following year). Students who discontinue their enrollment during a fall or spring semester must apply for readmission to return to USC Aiken at a later date. Students who attend a spring semester and do not attend the following summer terms are not required to apply for readmission for the following fall semester. No application fee is required of readmit students. Students admitted to the program that have not completed any USC Aiken Psychology graduate courses during a period of three or more years are required to fulfill current admission requirements prior to returning to the University for additional graduate work. Such students become subject to the regulations of the graduate program that are in effect at the time of readmission.

A maximum of 12 hours of equivalent graduate coursework completed at other accredited institutions with a grade of B or better may transfer to the USC Aiken M.S. Psychology degree. However, thesis and practicum work from institutions other than

USC Aiken will not transfer into the program. The Department of Psychology will make final determination of transferability of all coursework.

The University reserves the right to decline admission, to suspend, or to require the withdrawal of a student when, for any reason, such action is deemed to be in the best interest of the University.

Graduate students are restricted in the choice of graduation requirements of one specific bulletin. According to USC Aiken regulations, graduate students in master's degree programs have a period of six years inclusive and continuous in which to claim the rights of a specific bulletin. Students are advised that unforeseen circumstances may interfere with the scheduling of any given course or degree offering. Students will be required to take such developments into account as they arise, even if doing so means a delay in the fulfillment of some of their academic goals, or a modification of these goals. The Department of Psychology will work closely with students facing such problems, in an effort to resolve them with a minimum of difficulty.

Graduate students in the Master's Degree in Applied Clinical Psychology have a period of six years to complete the degree requirements. Students who have not completed the degree requirements by the completion of their sixth year will be removed from the program.

After the completion of 9 hours of coursework in the USC Aiken M.S. Psychology program, a minimum grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained to remain in good standing in the degree program. If the overall grade point average falls below a 3.0 in any semester, a probationary period will begin in which a student must raise this average to at least a 3.0 within the next 9 credit hours of coursework. Failure to attain a 3.0 in this period will result in the student's termination from the degree program. Students may not enroll in practica, thesis, or independent research during the probationary period; students will not be eligible for placement in graduate assistantships during the probationary period.

Graduate courses other than Psychopathology and the Applied Core Courses Requirements may be passed for degree credit with a grade as low as a C, but the student's average on all courses attempted for graduate credit must be at least a 3.0. If the student earns a grade below a C on any course, that course must be repeated in order to earn degree credit (C or better). Psychopathology and the Applied Core Courses Requirements must be passed with a grade of B or better. If the student earns a grade below a B, that course must be repeated in order to earn degree credit (B or better). If the student earns a grade of C during his or her practicum coursework (APSY 790), that course must be repeated in order to earn degree credit. All registrations will appear on the student's permanent record and all grades will be computed in the student's grade point average. Course credit for graduation will be given only once unless otherwise stipulated in the course description. Students must have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in order to graduate from the degree program. Grades earned on credits transferred from other universities do not count in the grade point average. APSY 798 and APSY 799 are

graded on a pass-fail basis, and these grades are not included in the overall grade point average (see below for more information about thesis requirements). Students must obtain a minimum grade of B on all applied courses that serve as prerequisites for the practicum course prior to enrollment in APSY 790. Graduate courses may not be audited nor taken on a Pass/Fail basis (except 798 and 799).

Appeals and petitions related to programs, regulations, or other academic matters will be reviewed first by the academic unit, then by the USCA Graduate Advisory Council, and finally by the USCA Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Please refer to the USCA Undergraduate and Graduate Programs Bulletin and the USCA Student Handbook for further information regarding appeals and grievances.

- **Professional Responsibilities**

Students preparing for careers in mental health services must meet both the academic qualifications and level of personal adjustment (e.g., emotional stability, maturity, understanding of appropriate interpersonal boundaries) and self-awareness deemed necessary to function effectively as professional mental health service providers. Graduate students in the Applied Clinical Psychology program are expected to adhere to the ethical and professional standards required by the American Psychological Association, in addition to the standards of the USC Aiken code of conduct.

Graduate student performance in the Applied Clinical Psychology program is monitored, in part, by means of semester grades and behavioral evidence of appropriate adjustment and professional conduct. Students conduct a regular formal self-evaluation of various performance criteria by completing the Student Activity Self-Evaluation Report (SASER) each year. If satisfactory progress is not being made, the department will inform the student and suggest possible steps toward remediation as well as necessary criteria to regain good standing in the program. Unethical behavior as defined in the American Psychological Association Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct is considered grounds for immediate dismissal from the graduate program in Applied Clinical Psychology.

- **Application for Degree**

All candidates for degree must file a formal application with the USCA Office of the Registrar during the last academic term before graduation. Students are also expected to complete a graduate exit survey before graduation. In addition, a Clearance Recommendation for Graduate Degree Application must also be submitted. Deadlines for application are indicated in the Master Schedule of Classes for each term. Diplomas are not awarded retroactively. Additional USC Aiken regulations and procedures are printed in the USC Aiken Undergraduate and Graduate Programs Bulletin and the USC Aiken Student Handbook.

- **Practicum**

At the end of the first year of the degree program (after the completion of approximately 18-24 credit-hours) students should enroll in APSY 790. Enrollment in APSY 790 requires approval by the Psychology Graduate Program Director and the Psychology Department Chair. Students enrolled in this course will be expected to participate in 12 hours per week of applied clinical/counseling experiences, under the supervision of USCA's clinical faculty and/or appropriate community agency staff. This time will usually be divided among several participating clinical/counseling settings. A portion of this weekly contact will include group and individual supervision meetings. Practicum experiences will generally be obtained through ongoing clinical activities being conducted in the USC Aiken Psychology Clinic, contact with local community mental health agencies and practitioners, and ongoing USC Aiken programs. Students will be exposed to various clinical/counseling populations during their practicum experiences.

The nature of counseling and clinical experiences is such that the total weekly time spent on a particular practicum experience may vary greatly. Students engaged in these practicum experiences must be prepared to remain flexible about their time schedules in order to be able to address a particular clinical need in a professional and ethical manner. As representatives of USC Aiken and as professionals in the field of Psychology, students will be expected to fulfill their professional roles in a manner that is consistent with the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association and the American Counseling Association. Students will be expected to present themselves in a highly professional manner in both dress and demeanor. Students should recognize that the clinical supervision process is critical not only to their individual professional development, but also an integral part of the success of their efforts in working with clients. Students may be required to complete several assignments outside of their clinical activities (e.g., library research) in preparation for these activities, and will be expected to be prepared for their supervision sessions. In order to maintain continuity of services for clients that are being served by the graduate clinical program, students will be required to engage in clinical activities during semester breaks as course preparations are being made for the next semester.

At the appropriate time during their graduate training, graduate students will be provided with a copy of the *USC Aiken Psychology Clinic Manual of Clinic Procedures and Policies*. It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with this Manual and to follow all Clinic procedures that are documented in this Manual.

Testing/assessment materials and selected reference materials are available for USC Aiken Psychology graduate students and are housed in the USC Aiken Psychology Clinic. These materials are to be used for assessment/treatment and research purposes only. Students who lose or damage materials will be held responsible for replacing these materials. No unauthorized persons are to borrow or to remove materials from the Psychology Clinic. Access to the Clinic and Clinic materials is limited to student trainees contingent upon approval from their clinical supervisor. All assessment materials must

remain in the Psychology Clinic unless approval by a clinical faculty supervisor (e.g., to use them at an assistantship site).

After completion of the two-semester practicum requirement students may continue to work with clients while under the supervision of appropriate clinical faculty beyond their practicum requirements. In order to do so, students must be in good academic standing, and currently enrolled in the graduate program and enrolled in APSY 791 (Advanced Practicum). Enrollment in APSY 791 requires approval by the Psychology Graduate Program Director and the Psychology Department Chair.

Students will be required to complete 600 hours of applied clinical/counseling activities prior to graduation. If a student has not met this requirement by the completion of the applied clinical coursework, continuing enrollment in APSY 791 will be necessary until the 600-hour requirement is met. Students must complete the APSY 791 Enrollment Consent form prior to enrollment in APSY 791 (see Appendix).

- **Master's Thesis**

A major foundation of Psychology, and particularly the field of Clinical Psychology, involves formal research. Practicing professionals who are engaged in counseling and clinical activities must have the appropriate training and experience that allows them to critically evaluate their professional activities, and guides them toward selecting intervention techniques that are empirically validated. Toward this end, students will be required to successfully complete a master's thesis prior to graduating from the USC Aiken Graduate Program in Applied Clinical Psychology. Completion of the master's thesis experience includes the completion of two courses: APSY 798 and APSY 799.

APSY 798 (Thesis Preparation) is a 1 credit-hour course, during which the student will be expected to develop a formal thesis proposal. Successful completion of this course requires thesis committee approval of the final thesis proposal. The APSY 798 course is graded on a pass-fail basis. If, at the end of the semester, the student has not had his/her proposal approved by the thesis committee, a Fail grade will be issued if the faculty supervisor believes unsatisfactory progress has been made, or an incomplete grade (I) will be issued if progress has been satisfactory. The I grade will be changed to Pass once the student successfully defends the thesis proposal. Students will not be allowed to enroll in APSY 799 Thesis until a Pass grade is approved for APSY 798.

APSY 799 (Thesis) comprises a total of five credit hours, during which the student is expected to complete the independent research project, to successfully complete the thesis defense under the direction and evaluation of the thesis committee, and to complete the final written product as approved by the thesis committee. Generally, students will enroll in APSY 799 for two semesters. If a student has not successfully completed the thesis defense and/or final written product at the completion of 5 credit hours, continued enrollment in APSY 799 is necessary until all thesis requirements are met. Students are required to enroll in at least one hour of APSY 799 in any semester (including summer)

that the student will be using university facilities or receiving faculty supervision and involvement in the thesis project.

In summary, completion of the thesis requirement involves the following activities:

Completion of APSY 798:

- ❑ Selection of a thesis director and two additional graduate Psychology faculty to serve with the thesis director on the thesis committee
- ❑ Development of an independent research proposal, in consultation with the thesis director and committee members, presentation and defense of the proposal, and formal approval of the written research proposal by the thesis committee

Completion of APSY 799:

- ❑ Completion of the independent research project
- ❑ Completion of the written product of the research project
- ❑ Successful defense of the thesis as determined by the thesis committee
- ❑ Completion of final written product of the research project, incorporating any changes recommended by the committee during the thesis defense
- ❑ Submission of one copy of the final written product, (printed on bond paper) signed by the thesis committee members to the Chair of the Department of Psychology

Students should plan on enrolling in APSY 798 as soon as allowed (e.g., by the summer session of their first year of graduate school), after successful completion of APSY 625. Students should plan on enrolling in APSY 799 soon after completing APSY 798. The prerequisite for APSY 798 is completion of APSY 625 and consent of the Department of Psychology, and the prerequisite for APSY 799 is completion of APSY 798 and consent of the Department of Psychology. In order to gain departmental consent to enroll in APSY 798 and APSY 799, the appropriate forms must be completed (798 Enrollment Consent Form, 799 Thesis Enrollment Contract Form).

Successful research tends to be a time-consuming venture that requires considerable planning and preparation. Accordingly, students should meet with the Psychology faculty early on in their academic career to learn about various faculty research areas and possible thesis topics, and volunteer their time to participate in ongoing research activities. Students should spend this preparation time doing background reading in their field of interest, meeting with select faculty to discuss these readings, and upon enrollment in APSY 798, formally developing a research design under the direction/supervision of a faculty member with expertise in that research area. After the completion of APSY 798, it is expected that it will take at least 2 full semesters to complete the data collection and defense/written portions of the thesis requirements. Accordingly, upon completion of APSY 798, students must have already completed their research proposal and have received formal approval of this proposal from their thesis committee. Performance in APSY 798 is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Students may enroll in 1-5 hours of APSY 799. As noted, it is expected that it will take at least two semesters to fulfill all the requirements of the thesis. Students may allocate their thesis hours across more than two semesters if desired. APSY 799 is graded on a pass-fail basis, and is not included in the overall grade point average. Students will receive a 'T' letter grade, signifying satisfactory performance for each semester that they are enrolled in APSY 799 or a 'U' letter grade, signifying unsatisfactory performance, and will not count toward degree requirements. If, at the completion of 5 hours, the student has still not completed the thesis requirements, that student will be required to maintain enrollment in APSY 799 during subsequent semesters until the thesis requirements are met. Any student who continues to use University facilities or wishes to confer with faculty on thesis work must be officially enrolled in at least one hour of thesis credit. As noted above, if a student has not been enrolled in the graduate program for any fall or spring semester, that student must reapply for admission into the program.

Before enrollment in APSY 798, the student must select a faculty member who will function as the director of that student's thesis project. The director of the thesis committee must be a full-time faculty member in the Department of Psychology. The student must also select two additional faculty members who will function as thesis committee members. Committee members may be any full-time faculty within the Department of Psychology. Under some circumstances, it may be appropriate to include a fourth committee member from outside the Psychology Department. Inclusion of committee members from outside the Psychology Department is subject to approval by the director of the thesis committee, the director of the graduate program, and the department chair. The thesis committee will have the role of providing formal approval of the student's research idea, supervising the student's research activity, and providing formal approval of the defense and final written product. All students will be evaluated on 10 performance measures regarding the final thesis project, and will be given a final score based on these performance measures. A copy of the USCA Thesis Assessment Form is included in the Appendix.

As noted, the student is required to complete the Thesis Enrollment Contract Form prior to the initial enrollment in APSY 799 (see Appendix), and during each subsequent semester of enrollment in APSY 799, the student is required to complete the Thesis Enrollment Contract Form. This form is completed with the student's thesis director, and details the exact requirements that must be fulfilled during any semester in order for the student to receive a 'T' letter grade, signifying satisfactory performance. Failure to meet these course requirements will result in a 'U' letter grade. The student will not receive course credit for any 'U' graded hours. The thesis must be written in APA style, with an approved title page (see Appendix), and contain appropriate committee approval.

C. Graduate Assistantships/Stipends

In an effort to enhance the student's opportunity to gain important practical experiences while at the same time providing a degree of financial support, USC Aiken has agreed to provide stipend support for selected students when available. Each

available stipend will be provided on a semester basis. A student receiving a stipend will be required to enroll in a minimum of 9 credit hours for fall and spring semesters and 6 credit hours for the summer, must be in good academic standing in the Department, and will be required to work in a selected setting for a maximum of 15 hours per week. The total amount of weekly work time will be determined by the amount of funding that is available for the student. Generally, the student's work placement will be in a community mental health agency, in an applied clinical/counseling setting at USC Aiken, or a research setting at USC Aiken. In addition to the direct financial support that is gained through the stipend, USC Aiken has also agreed to provide tuition assistance for all students receiving an assistantship stipend. Stipends are generally provided to students during the 9-month academic year. The stipend pays \$2,500 for both the fall and spring semesters. Many assistantships are also available in the summer months. The stipend pays \$1,667 for the summer.

While an effort will be made to provide stipend opportunities for all interested and qualified degree-seeking students, available funding is limited. Accordingly, eligibility for stipends will be determined by an evaluation by the Department of the admission criteria for new entering students, and by an evaluation of existing performance criteria for advanced students currently enrolled in the degree program. For eligible students, ongoing participation in this assistantship program will be contingent upon satisfactory performance within the setting, as evaluated by USC Aiken's clinical faculty and appropriate agency staff (when applicable), in addition to satisfactory performance within the degree program. Due to limited funding opportunities, not all students enrolled in the graduate program may be eligible for stipends. Receiving a stipend during a particular academic period does not guarantee continued funding during subsequent academic periods.

Graduate Assistantship Selection Procedures: When assistantship opportunities are available, all degree-seeking students, with good academic standing, will be eligible for graduate assistantships. Every effort will be made to 'match' student interest and professional goals with assistantship placement. Students will be responsible for communicating their interests and professional goals to their graduate faculty advisor. It should be noted that while students may be approved to participate in assistantships by meeting our selection criteria, that does not guarantee assignment to an assistantship. Some assistantship sites may require an interview and subsequent approval by the personnel at the assistantship site before officially beginning their assistantship. Further, assistantship sites frequently have specific needs that may restrict the selection process. Students participating at particular assistantship sites may be required to purchase additional liability insurance beyond what the university provides (see below) and also may be required to complete a criminal background check.

The following selection process will be used by the Department to determine awarding of graduate assistantships:

Selection criteria: [order of priority]

1. **Second-Year/Advanced Graduate Students:** Advanced students who are currently placed at an assistantship site will have priority for assistantship sites and will be selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- Current academic standing
- Obtained ratings on their supervisor's evaluation form
- Documented professional growth and faculty ratings on the semi-annual SASER form in all areas

2. **Second-Year/Advanced Graduate Students:** Advanced students who are not currently placed at an assistantship will receive priority for assistantship sites based upon the following criteria:

- Current academic standing
- Documented professional growth and faculty ratings on the semi-annual SASER form in all areas

3. **First-Year Graduate Students:** First-year graduate students will receive priority for assistantship sites based upon the following criteria:

- Overall/Psychology Undergraduate GPA
- Admission Letters of Recommendation
- GRE scores
- Undergraduate experience

Outstanding first-year graduate students may receive placement priority over second-year/advanced graduate students when admission criteria for first-year students are outstanding, or when advanced students have not demonstrated an acceptable degree of professional and academic growth in the program, as measured by the SASER.

Involvement in the stipend program at USC Aiken is completely voluntary and independent of the degree-program requirements. While this involvement can be both financially and professionally beneficial, it does represent a major time and professional commitment, above and beyond course and applied clinical/counseling requirements. While participation in the stipend program is voluntary, once a student agrees to participate, the student is committed to fulfilling the responsibilities associated with the assistantship position. Each student should evaluate this commitment carefully before accepting this responsibility. As indicated above, students will be supervised by USC Aiken clinical faculty and community staff when appropriate. As representatives of USC Aiken and as professionals in the field of Psychology, students will be expected to fulfill their professional roles in their stipend activities in a manner that is consistent with the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association and the American Counseling Association. Students will be expected to present themselves in a highly professional manner in both dress and demeanor. Students will be required to complete a contract at the beginning of their assistantship period, which explains their commitment and responsibilities. Some assistantships may require attendance at training workshops or

orientation sessions that will be required of the student accepting that assistantship. Unsatisfactory performance will result in termination from the assistantship setting, and may result in termination from the degree program if certain professional/ethical standards are violated.

D. Professional Issues

Licensing

Students should be aware that licensing regulations are independent of the USC Aiken degree requirements. State law dictates the criteria that must be successfully met before an individual is eligible to receive a particular license. Licensing law determines what title a professional may use when presenting himself/herself to potential consumers of psychological/counseling services, and in most cases determines what type of professional activity the individual may engage in. It is the student's responsibility to be fully aware of existing state licensing regulations. Such regulations usually dictate a) degree and curriculum requirements; b) performance criteria for demonstration of knowledge in one's field (e.g., successful completion of a standardized examination); and c) requirements for supervision of post-degree professional activity. Students should be aware that specific license requirements may vary considerably from state to state.

The American Psychological Association (APA) has not approved the provision of a license for master's-level practitioners in the field of Psychology. Most state licensing boards in Psychology, including the South Carolina licensing board in Psychology, have remained in agreement and do not provide for a license for master's-level practitioners in Psychology. However, South Carolina does provide a license for master's degree-level professional counselors (known as the LPC, for Licensed Professional Counselor). South Carolina state law does dictate certain criteria that must be satisfied before the professional is able to gain the LPC license. All of these criteria must be satisfied prior to receiving the license:

Degree and Curriculum Requirements: The student must graduate from a master's-level degree program that includes a curriculum that addresses the following major areas of academic training (each number indicates the content area along with the USC Aiken course that addresses that content):

- Human Growth and Development (APSY 610)
- Social and Cultural Foundations (APSY 640)
- The Helping Relationship (APSY 720)
- Group Dynamics, Processing, Counseling (APSY 725)
- Lifestyle and Career Development (APSY 630)
- Appraisal of Individuals (APSY 680)
- Research and Evaluation (APSY 625)
- Professional Orientation (APSY 600)
- Psychopathology (APSY 620)
- Diagnostics of Psychopathology (APSY 780)

Each academic program must have one course that covers Counseling Theories and Techniques (APSY 720) which may be included in category #3, and a supervised Counseling Practicum (APSY 790).

Demonstration of Knowledge in the Field: Following successful completion of the master's degree, a student must demonstrate a knowledge base of content areas by successful completion of the National Counseling Examination (NCE). The student may be allowed to take the NCE during the final semester of their graduate training, and must receive an adequate score to allow for participation in supervised post-graduate counseling activities.

Post-Degree Supervision of Professional Activity: The license applicant must receive 2000 hours of supervised clinical/counseling experiences. Supervision must be done by a qualified supervisor (pre-approved by the LPC board of examiners).

Insurance Coverage

Students and faculty at USC Aiken receive minimal coverage associated with professional liability insurance and workers compensation insurance, as long as they are following university policy and engaging in appropriate professional activities as approved by USC Aiken. It is highly recommended that students purchase additional liability insurance, beyond what the university is able to provide. Certain assistantship sites may also require that the student purchase additional insurance in order to satisfy the professional requirements at that site. Liability insurance is available through the American Psychological Association Insurance Trust for \$35 a year. Information and an application can be found at: <http://www.apait.org/apait/products/studentliability/>

Professional Development

Periodically each semester you will be asked to attend a graduate student event. This gathering will be in the form of either a town meeting, or a professional colloquium presentation. The town-meeting format will generally involve a discussion of various professional issues, in addition to providing students an opportunity to express any needs or concerns that they may have about the graduate program. At various times, professional clinicians from the community will be invited to present research and/or clinical information within their specialty fields. Students will be expected to attend these meetings.

Students are also encouraged to attend regional/national conferences, either to present data or to participate in the professional activities of peers and colleagues. Attendance at professional conferences is also a great way to develop and refine thesis projects. The Department also has a chapter of Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology, and graduate students are encouraged to join and participate.

E. USC Aiken Psychology Clinic

As a part of the graduate training program, the Psychology Department has developed the USC Aiken Psychology Clinic. This setting provides an opportunity for graduate students to receive important clinical/counseling experiences, under the supervision of Psychology Department clinical faculty. Students are required to be familiar with the *USC Aiken Psychology Clinic Manual* and are required to follow all clinic procedures documented in this manual.

The USC Aiken Psychology Clinic will be utilized as a training site for applied clinical course requirements, including practicum training requirements, in addition to providing support for select course, stipend, and research activities. Graduate students may engage in supervised clinical/counseling activities within the Clinic as a part of their course requirements. Eligible students may also elect to continue their supervised Clinic activities in order to enhance further their professional skills outside of formal course requirements. In order to be eligible, graduate students must be in good academic standing and maintain enrollment in the graduate program by being enrolled in APSY 791.

F. Departmental Facilities

Psychology Research Laboratory. The Psychology Department Laboratory is used by faculty and students for research and teaching. The Laboratory includes an animal vivarium and supporting animal research equipment, in addition to a human laboratory that supports physiological, neuroscience, and cognitive research. There is also space that allows for small groups, observational, and survey research. Penland 205 is a larger research room that contains 10 computers available for research projects as well as group testing.

Psychology Computer Lab. The Psychology Department also houses a computer classroom (Penland 214). Both undergraduate and graduate students have access to computers that allow for statistical analyses, data management and internet access, in addition to other essential computing capabilities. The Department standard statistical package, SPSS, is installed on all computers in the computer lab.

Graduate Student Mailboxes/Email Addresses. Each graduate student will be assigned a mailbox in the Graduate Student Office (Penland 237B). These boxes may be used for any activities related to the graduate program and university activities. On occasion, important announcements regarding class requirements, thesis defenses, colloquium presentations, graduate student town meetings, or graduate program materials will be placed in these mailboxes. It is important that students check their boxes on a regular basis. Students may have access to their mailboxes 24-hours a day. In addition to the use of the mailbox for important Department communication, students will also be assigned a university email address. This address will be used to communicate both individual class, and general program information. Accordingly, students should access their email daily.

Graduate Student Offices. Two separate student offices (Penland 207; Penland 237B) are available for all Psychology graduate students. A phone, computer, and printer are available in each office for student use. Students will be assigned a key to these offices from the Department Administrative Assistant. A student office is also available in the Psychology Clinic, and its use is generally limited to students enrolled in Practica (APSY 790; APSY 791).

G. Faculty

The USC Aiken Psychology Department is comprised of nine full-time faculty members:

Professors:

Edward Callen, Ph.D. (Psychology Department Chair)
Area: Experimental Psychology (Learning and Motivation)

Keri Weed, Ph.D.
Area: Developmental Psychology

Associate Professor:

Maureen Carrigan, Ph.D.
Area: Clinical Psychology

Laura May, Ph.D.
Area: Experimental Psychology (Social/Personality)

Assistant Professors:

Chad Drake, Ph.D.
Area: Clinical Psychology

Echo Lever, Ph.D.
Area: Neuroscience

Dawn Morales, Ph.D.
Area: Experimental Psychology (Neuroscience and Cognition)

Jane Stafford, Ph.D. (Director of USC Aiken Master's Degree Program in Applied Clinical Psychology).
Area: Clinical Psychology

Sarah Stevens, Ph.D.
Area: Clinical Psychology

Clinical Associate:

Rachel Moulton, M.S.
Area: Clinical Psychology

Our faculty members are actively involved in teaching, research, and supervision of students. Ongoing research interests of the Psychology faculty include fear and avoidance models of psychopathology, addictive behaviors, parenting and attachment, mental retardation, self-esteem, childhood disorders, interpersonal relationships, post-traumatic stress disorder, cognitive processes, neuroscience, and visual processing. There are many opportunities for students to become actively involved in research, and it is recommended that students volunteer early in their academic career as a preparation for their thesis requirement. Students may receive course credit for engaging in formal research activities by enrolling in APSY 699 (Independent Research). Students who are interested in pursuing an academic experience beyond their Master's degree are particularly encouraged to gain valuable research experience beyond their thesis requirements. Students must complete the APSY 699 Enrollment Consent Form prior to enrollment in APSY 699 (see Appendix).

STUDENT ACTIVITIES SELF EVALUATION REPORT

Inclusive Dates: _____

Name: _____ Year in program: _____

I. ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Semester:

Course (Dept & Number)	Title	Grade
------------------------	-------	-------

Summer:

Course (Dept & Number)	Title	Grade
------------------------	-------	-------

GPA for All Courses Completed
Cumulative GPA at USC Aiken

List Courses Waived Based on Work Completed Elsewhere:

Student comments/Goals:

Overall Academic Rating: U = Unsatisfactory; S = Successful; N= Notable

II. RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

A. Thesis

Enter your year in the program and the dates of any proposal meetings or final defense for the thesis.

Thesis	Proposal		Final Defense	
	Year in Program	Date of Proposal	Year in Program	Date of Defense

B. Additional Research Activities (beyond thesis):

1. Attendance at colloquia/guest speaker presentations:
2. Regional/national conferences/conventions attended:
3. Completed progress on thesis:
4. Any additional research activity (e.g., involvement in faculty research):
5. Conference presentations submitted or presented: (give full APA citation and indicate date submitted and/or presented). Specify type of submission/presentation (i.e., poster, paper, etc.):
6. Papers submitted for publication/published: (give full APA citation and date submitted):

C. Quality/Scope/Initiative/Programmatic Nature of Research Project(s):

The student and has the opportunity to comment on the quality, comprehensiveness and/or scope of the thesis and other independent research projects. Initiative in developing and completing projects or involvement in multiple projects will be noted.

Student Comments/Goals:

Overall Research Development Rating: U = Unsatisfactory; S = Successful; N = Notable

III. CLINICAL DEVELOPMENT

List practicum/applied clinical activity experiences, and supervisors and briefly describe responsibilities:

Semester	Supervisor	Activities	Responsibilities
----------	------------	------------	------------------

Student Comments/Goals:

Overall Clinical Development Rating: U = Unsatisfactory; S = Successful; N = Notable

IV. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Describe assistantship duties and, if obtained, any feedback received from supervisor):

2. List any other professional activity:

Student Comments/Goals:

Overall Professional Development Rating: U = Unsuccessful; S = Successful; N= Notable

Additional Activities and Comments:

List and describe any activities that were not mentioned in categories I-V above that you feel should be considered:

Describe if and how this semester's activities achieved your plans/goals as stated in the previous semester's Student Activities Self Evaluation Report (1st semester students can discuss this item in terms of goals set with advisor in beginning of the year). If goals were modified (added, subtracted, changed, etc.) over the course of the year, explain rationale for the modification:

State plans and goals for the current semester:

Overall Faculty Comments:

Academic:

Research:

Clinical:

Professional:

Overall Student Rating: U = Unsatisfactory; S = Satisfactory; N = Notable

Program Director's Signature

Date

Student's Signature

Date

**Master’s Degree Program in Applied Clinical Psychology
Psychology Department
USC Aiken
Thesis Preparation (APSY 798) Enrollment Consent Form**

Student: _____ ID # _____

Date: _____ Term: _____

1. Total Graduate Program Hours: Completed _____ In Progress: _____

2. Tentative thesis area: _____

3. Thesis Director/APSY 798 Faculty Supervisor: _____

4. APSY 798 Requirements:
- Complete a formal research proposal
 - Select a thesis committee (thesis director, plus two full-time Psychology Dept. faculty members; of these three faculty, at least one must be a clinical faculty person)
 - Obtain formal committee approval of research proposal

Signatures:

Thesis Director

Director of Psychology Graduate Program

Psychology Department Chair

**Master's Degree Program in Applied Clinical Psychology
Psychology Department
USC Aiken**

Thesis Contract (APSY 799)

Student's Name (print): _____ Local Phone: _____

Student Number: _____ APSY 799 Hours Previously Completed: _____

Current Term: _____ Credit Hours (1-5): _____

APSY 798 completion: _____ Grade: _____

Thesis Director: _____

The following section is to be completed by the thesis director, who will supervise the thesis project:

Tentative thesis title: _____

Committee Membership: _____

Goals and objectives of current enrollment:

Method of evaluation:

Student's signature: _____ Date: _____

Thesis Director: _____ Date: _____

Director of Graduate Program: _____ Date: _____

Department Chair: _____ Date: _____

TITLE OF THESIS

Student's Name

Approved:

Committee Chair

Date

Committee Member

Date

Committee Member

Date

Chair, Department of Psychology

Date

TITLE OF THESIS

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Psychology

University of South Carolina Aiken

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

By

Name

Month and Year of Graduation

**Master's Degree Program in Applied Clinical Psychology
Psychology Department
USC Aiken**

**Practicum in Clinical Psychology (APSY N790)
Special Enrollment Permission**

Student's Name (print): _____ Local Phone: _____

Student Number: _____ Current Term: _____

Pre-Enrollment Requirements:

	When completed	Grade (B or Better)
600	_____	_____
620	_____	_____
680	_____	_____
720	_____	_____

Student's signature _____

Date _____

Director of Graduate Program _____

Date _____

Department Chair _____

Date _____

**Master's Degree Program in Applied Clinical Psychology
Psychology Department
USC Aiken**

**APSY 791 Enrollment Consent Form
Advanced Practicum in Clinical Psychology (APSY N791)**

Student's Name (print): _____ Local Phone: _____

Student Number: _____ Current Term: _____

Credit Hours (1-3): _____

Graduate Program Director: _____

Goals and objectives of current enrollment:

Method of evaluation:

Student's signature _____

Date _____

Director of Graduate Program _____

Date _____

Department Chair _____

Date _____

**Master's Degree Program in Applied Clinical Psychology
Psychology Department
USC Aiken**

**APSY 699 Enrollment Consent Form
Independent Research Contract (APSY 699)**

Student's Name (print): _____ Local Phone: _____

Student Number: _____ Current Term: _____

Credit Hours (1-3): _____

Faculty Research Director: _____

Research Topic (provide a brief description of planned research area/topic):

Goals and objectives of current enrollment:

Method of evaluation:

Student's signature _____ Date _____

Research Director _____ Date _____

Director of Graduate Program _____ Date _____

Department Chair _____ Date _____

Graduate Thesis Assessment

Rate each of the following items on a scale from 0 to 10, using the following guidelines:

- 0 - complete absence of the item
 1 – 3 - limited attention to or understanding of item
 4 – 6 - adequate coverage of item
 7 – 9 - in depth analysis and clear understanding
 10 - Outstanding achievement on the item with no room for improvement

Be sure to consider both the quality and comprehensiveness of the student's efforts. Items 1 through 8 should be considered with respect to evidence manifest in both students' written manuscript and oral presentation. Numerical ratings will be used to assign overall ratings of unsatisfactory (0 – 50), satisfactory (50 – 75), and notable (75 and above). P = important for thesis proposal; D = important for thesis defense

<p>1. Theoretical foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly describes theory (e.g., learning, psychoanalytic, cognitive) being investigated (P&D) • Compares and contrasts theoretical perspectives (P&D) • Research design addresses theoretical questions (P&D) • Integrates thesis findings with theory (D) • Understands alternative theoretical interpretations of findings (D) • Addresses theory-based questions (P&D) 	
<p>2. Literature review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review is detailed, covering the major and significant findings directly related to field of study (P&D) • Literature review is comprehensive, covering the significant findings that are indirectly related to field of study (P&D) • Demonstrates ability to summarize relevant findings in the literature, providing sufficient detail on relevant designs and outcomes (P&D) • Demonstrates ability to critically evaluate existing literature, discussing limits to internal and external validity of findings (P&D) • Demonstrates ability to generate hypotheses from existing findings in literature (P&D) 	
<p>3. Development of hypotheses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypotheses are testable and appropriately conceptualized (P) • Hypotheses are logically developed from theory (P) • A sufficient number of hypotheses are identified to adequately test the proposed theory (P) • Demonstrates an ability to provide a link between theory and practical application of hypotheses (P&D) 	
<p>4. Internal validity of methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research design appropriate for hypotheses (P) • Appropriate controls are provided in design (control groups or statistical 	

<p>controls) (P)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats to validity (e.g., confounding, extraneous variable) are acknowledged and addressed as applicable (P&D) • Direction of effect is clear from research findings (D) • Understands alternative explanations for findings (D) • Able to discuss alternative designs to provide better controls (P&D) 	
<p>5. External validity of methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sampling method is appropriate (e.g., random, representative) (P&D) • Sufficient power to provide meaningful effects (e.g., sufficient number of subjects) (P&D) • Able to discuss ways to enhance generalizability of findings (P&D) 	
<p>6. Statistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an ability to understand the statistical procedures used (P&D) • Utilizes appropriate statistical procedures to analyze data (P&D) • Presents results in a clear and appropriate manner (D) • Understands appropriate conclusions that may be drawn from the data (P&D) • Able to discuss alternative statistical procedures for future research (D) 	
<p>7. Significance to field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an ability to discuss the contributions of selected constructs to proposed study (P&D) • Demonstrates an understanding of study's specific and overall contributions to the field (P&D) • Able to distinguish and discuss the statistical and clinical significance of the study to the field (D) • Able to discuss alternative contributions to populations other than the presently identified (P&D) 	
<p>8. Synthesis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriately integrates theory and results in discussion section (D) • Demonstrates ability to discuss connection between internal and external validity (P&D) • Thesis (written product) evidences appropriate connections throughout (lit review, hypotheses, methods, results, discussion) (P&D) • Demonstrates ability to adequately answer questions concerning all sections of thesis (P&D) • Demonstrates a deep understanding of problem and issue (P&D) 	
<p>9. Professionalism in conducting thesis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progression in a timely manner (e.g., met deadlines associated with development and completion of thesis) (P&D) • Conscientiousness (P&D) • Understood and complied with ethical treatment of human and animal participants (P&D) 	

10. Oral presentation

- Organization: well-structured – theory, hypotheses, design & methodology, potential stats, etc. (P&D)
- Clarity: communication style (ability to articulate coherently) (P&D)
- Flow: structural and communicative (P&D)
- Responsiveness: thoughtful and precise response to questions posed during and after presentation (P&D)

Process:

- Each committee member independently completes assessment prior to (or during) thesis proposal meeting and thesis defense meeting.
- Following presentation by student, the committee reviews individual responses to arrive at a group consensus. Qualitative judgments of unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and notable will be derived based on quantitative assessments
 - Student feedback at this time is limited to the qualitative judgment.
- Student completes self-assessment independently following presentation.
- Thesis chair reviews committee's rating and student's self-assessment ratings with student in a timely manner following the presentation.