

\*This document serves as a provisional handbook copy  
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2024-2025

# Psy.D. Program in Clinical Psychology Handbook

Department of Psychology  
Liberty University



Supplemental to Liberty University Academic  
Information and Policies

[HTTPS://CATALOG.LIBERTY.EDU/GRADUATE/ACADEMIC-  
SUPPORT/ACADEMIC-INFORMATION-POLICIES/](https://catalog.liberty.edu/graduate/academic-support/academic-information-policies/)

## Table of Contents

<b>Accreditation .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Authority of the Handbook.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Purpose of the Handbook .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE PSY.D. IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Mission Statement.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Program Overview.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Commitment to Diversity.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Admissions Policies.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Curriculum and Degree Completion Requirements.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>License Preparation and Eligibility.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Course Catalog .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Transfer of Credits .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Transfer Process.....	12
Petition for Transfer Credit.....	12
<b>Clinical Training.....</b>	<b>13</b>
Clinical Practicum.....	13
Clinical Supervision .....	14
<b>Research Training.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Dissertation.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Administrative Review for Behavioral Intervention .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Behavioral Concerns at Practicum, and Internship, and Field Placement Sites .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Administrative Review for Behavioral Intervention .....	16
Appeal of Interim Action(s) Following Administrative Review .....	17
<b>Remediation.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Appeal of Dismissal .....	19
<b>Student Enrollment.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Time Limits, Residency, &amp; Full-Time Status .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Leave of Absence.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Tuition and Fees .....</b>	<b>22</b>

<b><i>Financial Aid</i></b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b><i>Orientation</i></b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b><i>Advising</i></b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b><i>Student Rights and Responsibilities</i></b> .....	<b>23</b>
Institutional Environment .....	23
Program Policies .....	23
Professional and Educational Training Opportunities .....	23
Work Environment.....	24
Appeals and Grievances .....	24
<b><i>Student Concerns</i></b> .....	<b>24</b>
Records of Student Concerns.....	25
<b><i>Student Resources</i></b> .....	<b>26</b>
Counseling & Psychological Services.....	26
Student Health and Wellness .....	27
<b><i>Academic Regulations and Information</i></b> .....	<b>27</b>
Academic Year.....	27
Student Code of Conduct.....	27
Academic Standing .....	27
<b><i>Grade Appeals</i></b> .....	<b>28</b>
Criteria for Appeal:.....	28
Appeal Process:.....	29
<b><i>University Academic Calendar</i></b> .....	<b>32</b>

## Accreditation

Liberty University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097; 404-679-4501) to award associate, bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees.

## Authority of the Handbook

The policies and procedures described in this Handbook supersede those described in previous Handbooks and replace all other communications on issues addressed herein. These policies and procedures apply to current and newly accepted students.

## Purpose of the Handbook

It is essential that students in the Psy.D., Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DCP) program thoroughly read and understand the Handbook as it provides a detailed summary of the requirements and structure of the Psy.D., DCP Program. When students enter this Psy.D. program, they agree to adhere to all the policies and procedures outlined in the handbook. Additionally, because the handbook is revised as program and/or university policies and procedures evolve, students must review the Handbook each year to remain aware of the Handbook revisions. **Ignorance of policies and procedures in this handbook and in the catalog is not an acceptable defense for failing to abide by them.**

Prospective students may peruse the Handbook discover information to assist them in determining if our doctoral program is right for them.

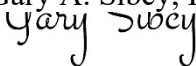
To summarize, this Psy.D. Doctorate in Clinical Psychology Handbook offers information that supplements the content in Liberty University's *Catalog*. The Handbook clarifies relevant information, policies, procedures, requirements, and expectations of the Psy.D. at Liberty University. The following pages provide critical information on the pursuit of this degree. Doctoral students must always know and adhere to the content of the current handbook.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE PSY.D. IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

### **Welcome to Liberty University's Department of Psychology and The Center for Professional and Clinical Psychology**

We consider it an honor and privilege to support you as you acquire the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to enter the field of Clinical Psychology. The department staff and faculty are here to encourage, mentor and support you during your doctoral studies. Becoming a practicing licensed clinical psychologist is a vital calling. We are committed to providing you with training experiences and relationships that are rewarding and rigorous. We desire that this program of study will prepare you to make a profound difference in the lives and communities in which you work. May you devote yourself to this endeavor with a mission to serve Christ as a highly competent clinical psychologist: one who is committed to the ongoing integration of a Christian worldview with science and practice; one who is both a consumer and a contributor to the science and practice of clinical psychology; one who appreciates and honors diversity and advocates for social justice; one who incorporates ethical virtues into both personal and professional life.

We devote ourselves to walking alongside you in the most helpful and meaningful ways possible. Ultimately you are responsible for your degree and achieving the goals you have related to your vocation. Our hope and prayer is that you flourish in all ways during your doctoral journey!

Gary A. Sibcy, II, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist  


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Professor of Clinical Psychology  
Director, Psy.D.. Program in Clinical Psychology

## Mission Statement

The Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology mission is to develop ethically and spiritually aware clinical psychologists who possess the values, knowledge, skills, and personal disposition to promote the biopsychosocial and holistic wellness of clients across diverse populations. We aim to prepare graduates to enter careers as health service psychologists equipped and ready to provide direct service delivery of evidence-based, best practices to a broad and culturally diverse spectrum of individuals.

## Program Overview

Visit the provided link to view and download the full Psy.D. program overview:

<https://www.liberty.edu/behavioral-sciences/psychology/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2020/03/PsyD-Program-Overview.pdf>

The Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology (PDCP) is housed within Liberty University's School of Behavioral Sciences in the Department of Psychology. The Psy.D. program is a practitioner-scholar program designed to prepare scholar-clinicians (those who use science to inform practice and practice to inform science) within a Christian worldview to practice in an ethically virtuous and professionally competent manner. The program is new, with the first cohort starting in the spring of 2021.

Liberty's Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology program is not accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association. Questions related to the program's accredited status should be directed to the Commission on Accreditation:

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation  
American Psychological Association  
750 1st Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: (202) 336-5979 / E-mail: [apaaccred@apa.org](mailto:apaaccred@apa.org)  
Web: [www.apa.org/ed/accreditation](http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation)

Liberty's Psy.D. is a 126-hour program (semester hours), which awards a master's in clinical psychology (MA) En-Route at the end of the second year (this requires the student to have completed all required courses noted in the DCP, including successful completion of the Clinical Competency Exam, Psy.D. 770). The program is an integrated, sequential program of learning, with each year of training designed to provide an increasingly complex body of knowledge combined with real-life, hands-on experiences (practicums, in years 2 through 4) that prepares learners to enter a full-time internship experience (in the 5<sup>th</sup> year). The program culminates with a doctoral dissertation (which may be completed by the end of year 4, prior to entering the internship year).

The Psy.D. is designed to provide education and training experiences for students seeking career opportunities as licensed clinical psychologists, providing direct delivery of psychological services (assessment, intervention, consultation, supervision, and education). While our program is not a purely research-oriented training experience, we provide

sufficient training in research methods and statistical analysis to afford our students the knowledge and skills to both consume and contribute to the scientific literature related to clinical psychology. We work from the perspective that science informs practice and practice informs science. Consequently, we aim to prepare graduates to provide evidence-based, empirically supported assessments and interventions while carefully evaluating their effectiveness. This training includes sensitively and effectively adjusting service delivery to accommodate individual and cultural differences. When students discover effective ways of delivering evidenced-based assessments and interventions to diverse people groups, we encourage them to disseminate these findings into appropriate scientific outlets. Additionally, we encourage students to understand key components and conventions of a Christian worldview and thoughtfully and skillfully integrate them into their understanding of empirical findings and practice recommendations promoted by the profession of clinical psychology.

The Psy.D. program is a structured curriculum designed to develop both knowledge and skills relevant to the practice of clinical psychology. Our program is designed in accordance with APA guidelines to establish both discipline-specific knowledge (DSK) and profession-wide competencies (PWC). Our program includes a wide range of clinical practica, a Clinical Competency Exam, a 2000-hour pre-doctoral internship at an approved site, and a doctoral dissertation. We currently do not have specific concentrations or cognates, but these will be developed over the next few years. Nonetheless, we encourage students to develop their interests through elective course offerings and selection of practicum sites. The electives provide opportunities for additional learning in various areas, including psychodynamic therapy, advanced cognitive therapy, family therapy, pediatric/child assessment and interventions, health psychology, and neuropsychology. The electives provide flexibility for the student to establish specialized interests.

The Psy.D. program seeks to develop and maintain robust mentoring relationships between faculty members and students. These relationships provide individualized supervision and training in scientific thinking, research, ethical decision-making, professional practice, and behavior, and integrating Christian theological concepts and principles into practice. Our program faculty routinely monitors and updates the curriculum to ensure it remains up-to-date and relevant, integrating the latest research and best practices promoted by the profession. Consequently, the curriculum is subject to change in response to accreditation/certification standards. Students will develop proficiencies in the PWC and DSK areas outlined by the Standards of Accreditation (SoA) of the American psychological Association (APA). Our training model is built on the practitioner informed by science framework.

According to this model, our intention is to train future health service psychologists to demonstrate the following:

1. An understanding of the scientific foundations of psychology through discipline-specific 1. knowledge areas, including:
  - History and systems of psychology,

- The affective bases of behavior
  - Biological bases of behavior
  - Cognitive bases of behavior
  - Developmental factors across the lifespan
  - Social bases of human behavior
2. An ability to integrate multiple, basic discipline-specific areas of knowledge
  3. An understanding of the foundations of practice in health service psychology, including the demonstration of observable competencies in applying ethical decision-making processes considering current ethical and legal standards, appreciating individual and cultural diversity, incorporating professional values, attitudes, communication, and interpersonal skills into their interactions with other students, faculty members, patients, and other healthcare professionals.
  4. Entry-level clinical skills and competencies necessary for evidence-based practice in assessment, intervention, supervision, and consultation.
  5. An understanding and ability to apply appropriate research methods and statistics to both inform clinical practice as well as to inform the research community.

After graduation, each Psy.D. student should be eligible for licensure to practice as a clinical psychologist. As noted previously, the integration of faith, science and practice is accomplished through an organized, sequential training program that provides training in the following areas:

1. Discipline-Specific Knowledge in the scientific foundations of psychology, including the affective, cognitive, behavioral, developmental, and social bases of human behavior.
2. Coverage of profession-wide competencies in individual differences in cultural diversity, research methods and statistical strategies, and social bases of human behavior.
3. Program-specific competencies for Liberty's Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology revolve around the acquisition of skills and knowledge necessary to integrate faith-based Christian beliefs, practices, and attitudes into clinical practice with both individuals and institutions. In doing so, Liberty University Psy.D. students will endorse a Christian worldview.

## Commitment to Diversity

Liberty University is a school founded on Christian values like grace, truth, and love for all persons. As believers in Christ, we demonstrate our commitment to loving others by celebrating and honoring diversity (cf. Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28). Our belief that all humans are created in the image of God supports the notion that all persons possess dignity and worth because they are unique subjects of Divine Creation. Our vision is focused on nurturing an academic community of diverse people and ideas and assuring that diversity enhances academic excellence and individual growth.

Our vision is to acquire and maintain a community of faculty and students comprised of persons



that represent various national, ethnic, spiritual, and denominational backgrounds. We advocate and encourage respect and appreciation of other cultures, believing that such diversity adds to each student's learning experience at Liberty. For that reason, we are committed to nurturing and training a diverse student body in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation of differences, while at the same time maintaining our commitment to the core values and beliefs of a biblical worldview.

Liberty's School of Behavioral Sciences, the Psychology Department and the doctoral program in Clinical Psychology provides an academic community for students, faculty, and staff to teach and learn from the experiences of others and to submit professional development, and personal growth occur in a climate that encourages a deepened appreciation of differences. Therefore, we do not discriminate in our educational and training programs on the bases of race, color, creed, religion, gender, age, national/ethnic origin, sexual orientation, and physical or mental disability.

As a reflection of our commitment to the importance of all dimensions of diversity as mentioned above, the Psychology Department adheres to the following initiatives:

- Increase, through recruitment and retention measures, the diverse representation of students, faculty, and staff.
- Promote full implementation of professional standards of practice and multicultural competencies across the curriculum and in specialized courses.
- Include issues of diversity throughout the instructional programs and professional development activities.
- Develop graduate assistantships opportunities to serve diverse student groups.
- Provide departmental opportunities for students and faculty to engage in the exchange of ideas and information related to diversity.
- Maintain ongoing educational opportunities and equality of access to our academic community.
- Equip students to ethically utilize spirituality as a force for healing when and where appropriate.

Students in the Psy.D. program must exhibit the American Psychological Associations standards and ethics for the profession of Psychology regarding sensitivity to and celebration of diversity.

## Admissions Policies

In addition to the General Admission Procedures outlined in the graduate catalog, doctoral applicants to the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology program must have:

1. Requirements for admission to the Psy.D. program include the completion of the bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a minimum of 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale. In addition, at least 18 semester hours in psychology are required, including at least one course in each of the following groups of courses:
  - a. general psychology
  - b. abnormal psychology or psychopathology

- c. quantitative methods or statistics and research methods or experimental design
- d. personality psychology or theories of psychotherapy
- e. physiological psychology
- f. one course from the traditional “scientific subdisciplines” (i.e., learning, cognition, social or developmental psychology or sensation/perception) \*
2. A cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 or above (on a 4.00 scale) in all previous graduate course work.
3. Applicants are encouraged to take the GRE General test. A minimum composite GRE score of 300 will contribute positively to the applicant’s success. Applicants with a graduate degree in related fields (e.g., counseling, social work, applied behavioral analysis, etc.) may document extensive experience in the field to replace the GRE.
4. Personal interviews are required for all finalist in the application process.
5. Three Letters of Recommendation from professional sources, at least one of which is from an academic source, that speak to the student’s character, work ethic, teachability, leadership potential, quality of academic work and ability to do doctoral level work.
6. Statement of Purpose: Personal Essay must be 500-700 words. The essay should address your long-term career plans, area of interest in clinical psychology, and why you want a doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology from this program.
7. Departmental approval (as required by Graduate Admissions)

The above are minimum academic requirements for admission to the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology program. Applications that meet the above requirements will be submitted to the Clinical Psychology program, where an individual, face-to-face interview (in-person or via TEAMS or Zoom) will be scheduled with Psy.D. core faculty members. The applicant’s overall fit with program goals as well as applicants’ character, integrity, and general fitness to practice within the profession of Clinical Psychology will also be considered in the admission process. As noted in our commitment to diversity (see above), our recruitment practices encourage recruitment of students comprised of persons that represent various national, ethnic, spiritual, and denominational backgrounds.

## Curriculum and Degree Completion Requirements

**Students must adequately complete the following requirements:**

1. Required curriculum
2. Clinical requirements
3. Dissertation

These degree completion requirements are established to produce profession-wide excellence and competencies as demarcated by the APA standards of accreditation (SoA). Each requirement is discussed in the following sections.

### Required Curriculum

The entirety of the Psy.D. program involves a full-time (i.e., 9 plus credit hours per semester) and residential course schedule. The first two years of course work primarily focuses on knowledge acquisition in discipline specific knowledge areas of psychological science as well as basic clinical competencies in assessment and clinical interventions. Beginning the second year,

students will be placed into practicum sites throughout the greater Lynchburg area, where they will be exposed to increasingly complex clinical situations. Years 3 and 4 will involve an increased emphasis on practicum and clinical skill development as well as dissertation research. Although not a requirement of the program, students are encouraged to complete their doctoral dissertation prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> year. Year 5 focuses on completing the clinical internship. The Liberty University Psy.D. curriculum is designed to offer each student the needed knowledge and preparation to operate as a clinical psychologist. Liberty University faculty diligently developed the Psy.D. curriculum to impart depth and breadth in clinical psychology. Each aspect of the program curriculum is developed in accordance with the curricular requirements of the American Psychological Association. Psy.D. students will be eligible for licensure in the state of Virginia as a clinical psychologist upon graduation and completion of post-doctoral residency period in accordance with state guidelines. Liberty University Department of Psychology faculty actively assess the Psy.D. curricula to ensure APA requirements are met. Furthermore, curricula may be adapted as needed for the benefit of the students' knowledge and training.

### **Clinical Requirements**

Our program provides a minimum of 1000 hours of supervised practicum experiences, involving a wide array of placements both within Liberty University's Counseling and Psychological Services and in community-based hospitals, clinics, and agencies. These experiences will prepare you for placement in full-time internship programs throughout the United States. The 6 practicum semesters are coupled with three 1-year clinical seminars (total of 6 semesters). The practicum experience involves three 1-year clinical seminars that provide students with additional knowledge and cover clinical, professional, and ethical competencies needed as students undertake professional training in clinical settings. The practicums will include not only the clinical hours from the placement, but two hours of clinical group supervision weekly that is provided by one of the licensed clinical psychologists in the Psy.D. program. At the end of the second year, students must complete and pass a clinical competency exam prior to receiving the master's in clinical psychology. Once students have completed practicum and course work, they will apply to and begin the clinical internship in year 5. See practicum handbook for specific details.

### **Dissertation**

Each Psy.D. candidate must prepare and defend a Dissertation. The Dissertation is a scholarly project representing the results of original and significant empirical research of publication quality. The candidate must demonstrate the ability to conceive, design, conduct, and interpret independent and original research related to the counseling field of Clinical Psychology. The Dissertation is the culmination of the Doctoral Program and is overseen by the student's Dissertation Chair and Dissertation Committee Members. The Dissertation Committee (Chair and two Committee Members) provides continual assistance, guidance, and timely feedback throughout the dissertation process.

### **License Preparation and Eligibility**

The required course work is designed to educate and train students with the essential knowledge and skills needed to operate as proficient clinical psychologists. Liberty University faculty developed each course with the highest degree of excellence to contain an expansive collection

of discipline-specific information. Liberty University Psy.D. graduates who pass the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP) are eligible for licensure granted by the Virginia Department of Health Professions Board of Psychology. Each state possesses its own licensure regulations and requirements, and students are responsible for reviewing the licensure policies held by the state in which they wish to practice. A list of each state's board contact information and policies regarding licensure and certification can be found by visiting the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) website (<https://www.asppb.net/page/BdContactNewPG>).

Liberty University Department of Psychology faculty continuously monitor the Psy.D. program curricula to ensure adherence to APA accreditation requirements. If necessary, faculty may modify curricula to enhance student clinical competence while keeping in accordance with APA standards.

The Psy.D. program is 126 credit hours, and the curriculum is outlined below in the required sequence. Students who have completed courses with sufficiently comparable content may be eligible to make a course substitution (see **Transfer of Credits** in section x.x.). Otherwise, students must take the courses below in the General Required Courses section in the outlined sequence.

## Course Catalog

The entirety of the Liberty Psy.D. course catalog can be found by clicking [here](#) or by inserting the following link into your browser: <https://catalog.liberty.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/behavioral-sciences/clinical-psychology-psyd/clinical-psychology-psyd/>

## Transfer of Credits

The following guidelines are used to evaluate courses requested to transfer from other graduate schools and/or programs in psychology and related fields.

### *Transfer of Credit*

All transfer credit must be awarded during the student's first academic year in the doctoral program.

### Transfers from U.S. Accredited Institutions of Higher Learning:

At least 70% of the total hours required for a degree program (90 credits for the Psy.D. program) must be taken from Liberty University's Psy.D. program. With program approval, up to 30% of the program (39 credits for the Psy.D. program) can be graduate-level transfer credit, under the following conditions:

1. The credits are from an APA-approved program in clinical psychology (up to 39 hours).
2. Courses that meet the criteria defined by the APA Standards of Accreditation only in Category 1 and Category 2 in the discipline-specific knowledge may be considered for transfer. These areas include:
  - History and Systems of Psychology
  - Cognitive and Affective Aspects of Behavior
  - Biological Aspects of Behavior
  - Developmental Aspects of Behavior
  - Quantitative Methods and Psychometrics
3. Courses with content related to the Profession-Wide Competencies that may be considered

for transfer, include:

- Individual and Cultural Diversity
  - Assessment
  - Intervention
4. Credits may be awarded for up to one elective in the Liberty Psy.D. program. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
  5. No transfer credits may be applied practicums, internship, or dissertation research.
  6. Courses must be completed no longer than five years before the student's first enrollment in the Psy.D. program.
  7. A grade of B- or higher was received. A grade of P (pass) or CR (credit) or other such grades cannot be accepted as equivalent unless it can be officially verified as such. Courses in which the grade was lower than a B (or equivalent as evaluated by WES or ECE for Non-U.S. Institutions) cannot be transferred. Credits from a conferred doctoral degree cannot be transferred. Students must complete their last semester of study at Liberty University.
  8. Student must provide both the course description provided in the institution's program handbook and the course syllabus (used at the time the student was enrolled in the course).
  9. The course syllabus should include list of required reading material (both textbooks and journal articles). The syllabus should also include the professors name and credentials (must be a doctoral-level professor) as well as the year and semester in which the course was taken. Moreover, the syllabus should clearly identify all graded assignments for the course and each assignments corresponding value (e.g., percentage of overall course grade). For example:  
Term Paper X = 25% of grade.
  10. At least 80% of course grade should be allocated to graded, academically focused assignments. For example, if 30% of grade is allocated to "class participation" and/or "field observation" this would not meet the 80% rule for graded, academically focused assignments.
  11. For courses that do not specifically identify required journal articles reviewed in the course, but have clearly written, graded assignments that required students to identify, read, and critically evaluate peer-reviewed, scientific articles related to the course content, the student must provide copies of their completed assignments. Additionally, students may be asked to provide copies of other graded assignments, especially those involving term-papers including cited peer-reviewed, scientifically oriented, primary resource articles related to the course content.
  12. The course for which transfer credit is desired is deemed to be current and substantially equivalent (at least 80%) to the Psy.D. course offered at Liberty University.

### Transfer Process

Liberty University uses semester credit hours. A quarter hour from other institutions is equivalent to .67 of a semester hour. Where and how the credit is to be specifically applied in transfer will be petitioned and negotiated after matriculation. The sole exception to this will be that transfer credits that may affect first semester course enrollment will be negotiated by correspondence with the chair of the Admissions and Academic Requirements Committee before or during orientation.

No transfer of credit will be granted for previous graduate practicum or field placement courses.

### Petition for Transfer Credit

1. Prepare a list of those courses to be considered for transfer with course number, credits (specify qtr. or sem.), and grade along with the Liberty Psy.D. course(s) /
2. Submit the "Transcript Request Form" and notify Program Administration with a copy of the syllabi you are seeking to transfer. The "Transcript Request Form" can be found at <https://www.liberty.edu/transcript-request-form/>

The Admissions and Academic Requirements Committee or its Chair will review a request. In most cases the opinions of faculty members teaching in the specialty area most closely related to the transfer request will be sought.

Committee or its Chair recommends one of three possible decisions for each transfer of credit request:

1. *Accepted as a transfer credited course* — The course for which transfer credit is desired is deemed to be current and equivalent to course requirements of Liberty's Psy.D. training course.
2. *Declined* — The course for which transfer credit is desired is inappropriate for Psy.D. course credit for any of the following reasons: i. The course was taken too long ago to be appropriate for present-day standards; ii. The course was not sufficiently rigorous for graduate-level transfer credit; iii. The course is not directly relevant to the training model employed in the Liberty University Psy.D. program.

All final decisions regarding transfer of psychology credit will be made by the Registrar's Office.

**Transfer credits will be awarded when the course being evaluated meets all the following criteria:**

- **Accreditation:** Regionally or Nationally Accredited Institution approved by the [Department of Education](#)
- **Grade:** B- or higher. Grades of P are eligible to transfer as long as the grading system at the transfer institution states that P is equivalent to B- or better.
- **Equivalency:** Similar in content and scope of courses offered at Liberty University. Taken from a graduate program in a closely related field. Note, students are responsible for LU Psy.D. course knowledge for any course(s) that was substituted with a transfer/substitution course.
- **Non-Transferable Courses:** Thesis, Dissertation, Comprehensive Exam, Practicum, and Internship courses are not able to be fulfilled by transfer credit. Additional courses are listed below by program
- **Hours:** 3 semester hours (4.5 quarter hours) per course
- **Age Limit:** 7 years for doctoral programs

Please visit <https://www.liberty.edu/registrar/transfer-policies/behavioral-sciences/> for more information

## Clinical Training

### Clinical Practicum

The clinical practicum sequence in the Psy.D. program is designed to provide close supervised assessment and intervention experience for each student. The clinical practicum may also offer training in consultation and/or liaison. Psy.D. students have the opportunity to perform their practicum on campus with the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and extensive clinical settings throughout the city of Lynchburg. CAPS practicum/clinical rotation involves the Psy.D. student performing individual counseling with residential students at the university. Sites include but are not limited to CAPS, Centra Medical Group Piedmont Psychiatric Services, Centra Autism Development and Bridges Treatment Center, Horizon Behavioral Health, and Advanced Psychotherapeutics. The practicum sites allow students to gain clinical experience with mental/behavioral health clients in a variety of settings.



## Clinical Supervision

Although the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology program expects in-person supervision to occur throughout the practicum sequence, the program allows the use of synchronous audio and video telesupervision during the practicum experience after the first year of in-person practicum supervision. This allows for ongoing supervision in the event of periodic unscheduled supervisor absence on site due to personal circumstances and in situations where there might be an extended need to utilize telesupervision (e.g., public health restrictions). If telesupervision will be used on a regular basis, students must submit a Request for the Use of Telesupervision which includes the rationale for its use, the frequency of its use, how direct observation requirements will continue to be met, and supervisor indication of agreement. Typical requirements of in-person supervision are expected to occur, including but not limited to patient confidentiality and coverage during supervisor absence.

## Research Training

Students will complete extensive instruction in research methods which will equip them to comprehend and apply research to their practice as clinical psychologists. Additionally, each student must complete a dissertation comprised of their original research. In addition to research-related curriculum, students are encouraged to collaborate with and participate in Department of Psychology faculty research. The Psy.D. program is designed to focus primarily on clinical application and practice in comparison to the PhD in Applied Psychology and PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision. Yet, the Psy.D. program prepares students for excellence in research consumption, application, and dissemination.

## Dissertation

By the fall of the third year, students will have acquired their Dissertation Chair and register for PSYD 989: Dissertation Proposal and Research. The goal of the Psy.D. program is for students to complete three consecutive semesters of PSYD 889 and then register for PSYD 890 (Dissertation Defense) in the second semester (spring) of the fourth year. Assuming they successfully defend their dissertation, students will be unencumbered by dissertation research obligations during their pre-doctoral internship year (fifth year). However, students are expected to participate in research in accordance with the policies and expectations of their internship sites. In cases where a student does not complete their dissertation defense by the end of the fifth year, it is University Policy that students must continually remain registered for PSYD 889 until they defend their dissertation. International students who need to maintain 6 hours per term may take up to 6 Dissertation hours per semester. When the student's Dissertation Chair permits to do so, the student will register for PSYD 890 set a date with their dissertation committee to defend their dissertation.

For a comprehensive understanding of the Dissertation process and to review the Dissertation Grading Rubric, see the Dissertation Manual posted online at:

## Administrative Review for Behavioral Intervention

In keeping with the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics (ACA), National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and the American Psychological Association (APA),

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requirements, faculty in counselor the School of Behavioral Sciences' education programs are required to assess the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions of students in their programs and take action if issues arise that could compromise the well-being of present or future clients. The following summarizes the School of Behavioral Sciences procedures for assessing these competencies.

## Behavioral Concerns at Practicum, and Internship, and Field Placement Sites

If, during the Practicum or Internship or Field Placement, a student fails to successfully demonstrate the required skills, professional behaviors, or personal or professional dispositions in this course and/or receives failing evaluations, is dismissed from the site, or is found practicing at a site without having received approval by the department for the site, the site supervisor will notify the student's professor. The professor will write an incident report and send it to the Program Director and the Clinical Director. The Program Director, the Clinical Director, and other program leadership will examine the nature and reason for the skills deficit, unprofessional behaviors, or dispositions and/or site dismissal and recommend a course of action, which could include Administrative Review for Behavioral Intervention and/or referral to Remediation and/or the Office of Community Life. Administrative Review is appropriate when a student's behavior is so concerning and/or nonprofessional that prompt protective action is required (see below section, "Administrative Review for Behavioral Intervention"). **Note:** The steps within this section are specifically designed to address unique aspects of practicum and internships, and certain steps in this section may overlap with those of other processes. For instance, the practicum or internship professor's submission of an incident report to the Program Director and Internship Office and their examination of the incident report will satisfy the early and secondary stages of the remediation process. Also note that remediation can be engaged at any step, as the School of Behavioral Sciences deems appropriate.

If a failing evaluation or dismissal from the site involves a violation of the University's Honor Code, the professor will fill out an Honor Code Violation form, which will be investigated by the Program Director and the Office of Community Life. At any point in this process, the student may receive a grade of "F" based on the skills deficit, unprofessional behaviors, or personal or professional dispositions, dismissal from their site, and/ or failure to follow approval policies. The student will be placed on hold in the program pending the outcome of any ongoing process(es) (e.g., Administrative Review, the remediation process, the disciplinary process, and/or grade appeals process).

For violations that do not result in dismissal from the program, the remediation process can include requiring the student to retake certain courses, recommending personal counseling, etc. If, after remediation, the student is unable to correct the problems in professional competence, the Remediation Committee will meet to decide the best course of action for the student, up to and including an "F" for the course and dismissal from the program. The final decision regarding whether the student is eligible to retake the Clinical Practicum or Clinical Internship course(s) and disposition of the hours accrued during the Internship are at the discretion of the Leadership Team and based on a thorough evaluation of the incident. **Note:** When necessary, the



Department may immediately remove a student from the site upon notification of concerning behavior by the supervisor. During the remediation process, the student has an opportunity to appeal interim actions following Administrative Review, grades, honor code violations, and dismissals in accordance with the procedures outlined for the applicable process(es). See, for example, Appeals Policy and the appeal sections below for information on the appeal process. Please consult the Clinical Training Manual for additional information.

### Administrative Review for Behavioral Intervention

There may be times when School of Behavioral Sciences faculty determines that a student's behavior is so concerning and/or nonprofessional, regardless of whether the student is making satisfactory academic progress, that prompt protective action is required. This is especially true when students are interacting with clients in a clinical setting. In such situations, the Program Director will place the student on Administrative Review. As part of Administrative Review, the Program Director (and Clinical Director if concerns are related to clinical training) will review all of the available and relevant evidence to determine an appropriate interim action to address the concerning behavior, which may include an interim suspension of the student from courses or clinical placements. The Program Director may, in his or her discretion, also apply a registration hold to prevent the student from registering for courses, including Clinical Practicum or Internship, or clinical placements (and potentially, therefore, from progressing in the program) until the behavior at issue has been resolved. The interim action should be narrowly tailored to address the concerning behavior such that it places as few restrictions as possible on the student and only as determined necessary to address the concerning behavior. Interim actions should also balance the School of Behavioral Sciences' gatekeeping function of protecting others with promoting the student's best interest. Administrative Review is protective, not disciplinary, in nature. Interim actions will remain in place until the program director (in consultation with the student and faculty) determines both that the concerning behavior has been resolved and that any pending processes to address the student's behavior are complete (e.g., the remediation process or a disciplinary matter in the Office of Community Life or the Office of Equity and Compliance).

Within 48 hours of the program director's decision to initiate the Administrative Review, the program director will notify the student in writing, which may include email, of (1) the initiation of the Administrative Review, (2) the interim action(s) imposed, and (3) the reason(s) for the Administrative Review. The program director will also notify the Registrar's Office of the interim action(s), including any registration hold. The student will have an opportunity to review all of the evidence that formed the basis for the interim action(s) and to respond (including the opportunity to present any relevant evidence) to the program director. Once the program director has an opportunity to review all of the available and relevant evidence, the program director will either reverse the interim action(s) or keep the interim action(s) in place pending the outcome of any other processes (e.g., remediation). The program director may refer the student to the Office of Community Life and/or the Remediation Committee. If the student's behavior cannot be remedied to a point such that the student is qualified to continue in the program, the student may ultimately be dismissed from the program. Should the student decide to appeal the interim action(s) imposed by the program director, the student must follow the appeal procedures below.

### Appeal of Interim Action(s) Following Administrative Review

Students who disagree with the interim action(s) imposed by the program director following Administrative Review have an opportunity to appeal. Students must submit the appeal in writing to the Deans of the School of Behavioral Sciences within seven (7) days of receiving the notice of the program director's decision. The appeal should clearly state the reason(s) the student believes the interim action(s) should be reversed. Once received, the Deans of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) will review all available and relevant evidence and, if determined necessary, speak with the student, the program director, and/ or any other person with relevant information. The Deans of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) will endeavor to make a determination within ten (10) days of receiving the appeal. The determination to uphold or reverse the interim action(s) will be sent to the student in writing, and the Deans of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee)'s determination concerning the interim action(s) will be final, pending the outcome of any other processes.

### Remediation

Students in the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology program start receiving focused feedback on the acquisition of Discipline-Specific Knowledge and Profession-Wide Competencies from the beginning of the first semester. There are multiple ways in which students receive feedback about and guidance to remediate problems with their behavior and/or professional competence.

The front line of this process is at the course level and involves the course instructor and the student in the context of each academic course. Course instructors monitor student progress toward developing knowledge and competence and provide feedback through assignment grades, availability for course-related questions, and, when indicated, actions within the course intended to remediate any knowledge, skill, or dispositional deficits. Within each course, the instructor is able to document interactions with students moving from less formal to those involving a written plan. Students who have been identified as needing a written plan at the course level collaborate with their faculty member to complete a Professional Competence Development Plan (PCDP) which details the concerns, recommended action steps, and consequences if remediation is unsuccessful, and includes a student acknowledgement of and response to the PCDP. This is a collaborative process between the student and instructor that is explained to the student verbally and provided in writing. If professional competence deficits are not remediated within the time frame of the plan and the course, the student is referred to their advisor and the Program Director who decide whether to send the referral on to the Remediation Committee or attempt other remediation efforts before referral to the committee. The student is given an opportunity to meet with their advisor and the Program Director about the problem(s) in professional competence before a decision regarding referral to the committee is made and is then notified in writing about the decision.

When engaging in practicum field placement and internship activities, students are regularly provided verbal and written feedback by their site supervisor, and their progress toward developing professional competence is shared with the instructor of their Clinical Seminar and Clinical Practicum courses. The site supervisor shares any concerns with the instructor as they arise, and the instructor and student complete the Professional Competence Development Plan so the student is given opportunities to address the problem(s) in professional competence. If a student fails to successfully demonstrate the required skills, professional behaviors, or personal

or professional dispositions, and/or receives failing evaluations, the instructor notifies the Program Director. The Program Director, Clinical Director, and the Leadership Team examine the nature and reason for the problem(s) in professional competence such as skills deficits, professional behaviors, or dispositions, and recommend a course of action, which could include referral to the Remediation Committee. The student is given an opportunity to meet with the Program Director and Clinical Director to discuss the problem(s) in professional competence before a decision regarding referred to the committee is made. In cases where the student's behavior is egregious and/or a violation of the [University's Honor Code](#), there may be an administrative review for more immediate intervention such as removal from a training site or a registration hold. Within 48 hours the Program Director will notify the student in writing of the initiation of the administrative review or referral to the Remediation Committee, the reasons for it, and any interim action(s) imposed, such as a registration hold.

At the program level, near the end of each Spring semester, students are rated by program faculty using the Program Composite Rating Form which is based on the APA benchmark areas that include Foundational Competencies (professionalism, relational, and science) and Functional Competencies (application, education, and systems). The Program Composite Rating Form is then shared with each student by their advisor, with opportunity for student input about the rating and their own strengths and areas for growth. At the end of the first year, the Program Composite Rating Form also serves as a measure for a student's readiness for practicum. At the end of the fourth year, it serves as a measure for a student's readiness for internship. At the end of the internship, the Program Composite Rating Form serves as a measure for a student's readiness for entry to practice. Students rated at the "moderate" level or lower on a competency will be referred to their advisor to develop a plan for obtaining professional competence in the area(s) of concern. The plan could include a Professional Competency Development Plan, referral to the Remediation Committee for development of a Professional Competency Remediation Plan, or referral to the program director to discuss student's status in the program.

In all cases where an issue is referred to the Remediation Committee, the committee schedules a meeting with the student to discuss competency issues of concern and actions already taken to address the concerns. The committee reviews all presented information, including the Professional Competency Development Plan (PCDP) developed by the student, instructor, and advisor, if applicable, and the evaluation of progress towards remediating problems in professional competence, and makes a decision regarding next steps, which could include a Professional Competency Remediation Plan (PCRP) or dismissal from the program. This decision is communicated to the student both orally and in writing and the student has five working days to respond to the recommendation. Professional Competency Remediation Plans are designed to assist the student in correcting any deficits so that they may successfully continue in the program, and may include such actions as repeating particular courses, completing additional assignments, reviewing the ethics code, the recommendation to obtain personal counseling, and transferring to a non-licensure program. If the decision is made to move forward with remediation, the Remediation Committee meets with the student, their faculty advisor, and others as needed (e.g., supervisors) to collaboratively develop a Professional Competency Remediation Plan (PCRP). This plan identifies problems in professional competence in foundational and/or functional competencies, details the date(s) problems were brought to the student's attention and steps the student and faculty have already taken to remediate the

identified problem(s), and describes expectations for acceptable performance, student and instructor/supervisor actions, timeframe for acceptable performance, assessment methods, dates of evaluations, and consequences for unsuccessful remediation. The student is asked to sign the PCRCP as an acknowledgment of the identified problem(s) and is given an opportunity to include a written response to the remediation plan.

If the Professional Competency Remediation Plan is accepted, the student will follow the remediation plan and progress will be monitored at regular intervals by their advisor and/or others listed on the remediation plan. Evaluations of progress toward remediation is documented on the PCRCP to systematically track efforts made by the student to address the problem(s) of professional competence. At the end of the remediation period, if the problems in professional competence are corrected, this will be documented clearly in the student's file and communicated to him or her orally and in writing. If remediation is unsuccessful, the student is notified in writing by the Remediation Committee and referred to the Program Director to consider options, which could include an extension of the remediation plan, counseling the student out of the program, or program dismissal. This decision is promptly communicated to the student orally and in writing. Any interim action(s) from Administrative Review will remain in effect, and accordingly, the student should be aware that, if he or she does not reenroll in courses within a certain period of time, he or she may break enrollment and need to re-apply to the program. In those situations, admission is not guaranteed. If the decision is program dismissal, students have the option of appeal to the Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences, consistent with institutional academic policies.

### Appeal of Dismissal

Students who disagree with the program director's final determination have an opportunity to appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences within seven (7) days of notification of receiving the notice of the program director's decision. The appeal should clearly state the reason(s) the student believes the final determination should be overturned. Once received, the Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) will review all relevant evidence and, if necessary, speak with the student, the program director, and any others who have relevant information (e.g., members of the Remediation Committee). The Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) will endeavor to make a determination within ten (10) days of receiving the appeal. The determination to uphold or overturn the final determination will be sent to the student in writing. The determination of the Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) concerning the interim action(s) will be final, pending the outcome of any separate processes. If the Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) overturns a dismissal, the student will have the option either to remain in the program and continue work with the Remediation Committee to fully address its concerns, or to withdraw from the program.

### Student Enrollment

Liberty University's enrollment policy requires students to maintain continuous enrollment for the fall and spring semesters within an academic year. Failure to maintain continuous enrollment will result in *broken enrollment*, which will require the student to reapply to the program if they desire to resume in the program (see below, Leave of Absence).

For summer semesters, Psy.D. students should enroll in the courses prescribed by their model degree completion plan (DCP). Failure to maintain summer enrollment could jeopardize students' ability to advance through the program. Broken enrollment may interfere with one's ability to complete the program within the seven-year time limit.

### Time Limits, Residency, & Full-Time Status

In order to ensure that an awarded Psy.D. degree reflects the most current competencies required to enter the profession of clinical psychology, students must complete their degree requirements within seven years from the time of first enrollment.

If a student does not complete all the requirements within the seven-year time limit, the student's advisor and the remediation committee will construct an individualized remediation plan for program completion. The plan will require the student to maintain full-time enrollment status, consisting of 9 credit hours of course work (including independent study) and/or practicum/supervision hours for both fall and spring semesters. Additional course and practicum hours may also be completed during the summer semesters.

To be eligible for the doctoral degree, each student must be in full-time residence for a minimum of 3 ½ academic years. This requirement is not related to the number of transfer credits a student may receive upon entry into the program. Students must be registered, full-time (9 credit hours per semester, spring, and fall), continuously to maintain full-time status in the Psy.D. program. **A failure to register for either a fall or spring semester will result in broken enrollment.**

While fulfilling the minimum three-and-one-half-year residence requirement, students are expected to follow the model curriculum provided in the DCP. The model curriculum is designed to ensure that students remain in the cohort in which they were admitted. This is necessary to manage proper practicum placements (as practicum placements are limited). The number of semester credit hours required varies according to progress in the program, with more semester credit hours required earlier in the program. **Students are expected to live within one hour of the University to attend and fulfill responsibilities in the various program requirements reliably (i.e., courses, meetings, labs, supervision, and practicum sites/duties).** Students are considered "full-time" when they are enrolled in the proper sequence of courses as indicated in the model curriculum. **Enrolling in fewer courses than is indicated in the model curriculum requires special permission from the program director.**

Students who have completed the minimum of the first three-and-one-half years in residence should refer to their model curriculum for their fourth- and fifth-year requirements.

**For certain forms of financial aid, full-time and part-time status may be defined differently. Students applying for financial assistance MUST clarify this with the Office of Student Financial Assistance.**

Students must maintain continuous registration for a minimum of 1 credit in the fall and winter semesters until the degree is awarded, except for the internship year. All students going on internship must register for the clinical psychology internship course each semester for the duration of their training. Additionally, if a student has not completed their dissertation before

beginning their internship, they must continuously enroll in the dissertation course until completion<sup>1</sup>.

## Leave of Absence

There are occasions where a student may need to take a leave of absence (LOA). Students who desire to do so should discuss this option with their advisors first. If a LOA is deemed necessary and appropriate, the student must submit a written request to the program director that clearly states the rationale for the LOA (the program director may request the student provides sufficient documentation to support their rationale for LOA). The program director will refer the student to the remediation committee to develop an appropriate re-entry plan for the student. Since the student will not enroll in any course work during the program-approved LOA, the student will be required (by the University) to reapply for admission. Re-admission to the program will require the student to meet with the program director and the remediation committee to ensure recommendations have been satisfied. If it is determined the student is not ready to resume the program, specific remediation actions will be identified. For students who are determined to be ready to continue in the program, a specific plan and schedule will be devised in order to ensure an effectual transition back into the program. However, the student should remember that the LOA could put the student behind schedule for graduation by an entire year, as they will most likely be joining a different cohort. This may result in scheduling problems and may interfere with the program term limits.

**Students on leave of absence are not permitted to participate in any University related activity, including practicum/supervision, Clinical Competency Exam defense, or directed study.**

If a student fails to register for a required semester without first following the above procedure, they will be considered by the University to have broken enrollment. The student may reapply to the program at a future date, but failure to acquire a program-approved LOA will undoubtedly result in more difficulty with the re-admission process, as a more careful evaluation process may be required in order to determine the student's readiness to resume in the program.

A Leave of Absence may impact a student's financial aid status. Students should discuss the

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<sup>1</sup> Note that when students enter the pre-doctoral internship year, they must remain enrolled for fall, spring, and summer continuously for 1-year but will not need to be enrolled in 9-hours per semester. Also, note that once a student enrolls in the dissertation course (PsyD 889), they must remain enrolled in that course continuously until the completion of the dissertation. Students are encouraged to complete the dissertation defense prior to entering the clinical internship year, but should they not complete the dissertation prior to beginning the clinical internship, they must remain continuously enrolled in this course (fall, spring, summer) until they successfully defend dissertation (PsyD 890). **For students who have completed their internship year (999) but have not completed dissertation defense (890), they must remain continuously enrolled in PsyD 889 (fall, spring, summer) until they have completed PsyD 890. Failure to remain continuously enrolled in PsyD 889 will result in broken enrollment and the student must follow university policies for re-admission to the program.**



impact of such a request with the office of financial aid.

## Tuition and Fees

All students pay a non-refundable Application Fee or Reapplication Fee of \$50. Other fees include a Technology Fee of \$199 per semester.

Currently, as of Spring 2022, the tuition for Psy.D. Courses is \$1,100 per credit hour. Tuition for Clinical Prerequisites is the same as for Psy.D. courses for doctoral students currently in the Psy.D. Program. Students are responsible to check for updates to tuition requirements by consulting the LU Admissions & Tuition web page.

## Financial Aid

For certain forms of financial aid, full-time and part-time status may be defined differently. Students applying for financial assistance MUST clarify this with the Office of Student Financial Assistance

For current information about financial aid, please refer to:

<https://www.liberty.edu/student-financial-services/>

## Orientation

All new students are required to attend orientation before the start of the fall semester. At orientation, students are provided with needed information about Liberty's Psy.D. program resources, an overview of academic guidelines, and opportunities to meet program faculty and advanced students in the program.

## Advising

Early in the fall semester, students will be assigned to a faculty advisor. Later in the program, as students have an opportunity to learn about faculty professional interests and initiatives (including clinical, research and advocacy interests). Once students reach the dissertation phase (PSYD 889), they may work with their advisors to select a dissertation chair, who will serve as a research/dissertation mentor. Faculty advisors will work with students in the following manner:

First year students will meet with their assigned advisor by September 15<sup>th</sup> of the first semester to discuss progress in program, adjustment to program requirements, and to answer any questions about the program. Should the student or the advisor have any concerns prior to September 15<sup>th</sup>, they should communicate with one another in order to set-up meeting. The complete list of assigned advisors and advisees will be reviewed in the first faculty meeting of the winter semester each year and finalized by the faculty. Mentors and trainees meet at least twice each year.

- One of these meetings must be an individual meeting to complete the Annual Review and Individual Development Plan (see Appendix V **for Individual Development Plan**).
- The other meeting may include discussion of progress on initial goals, discussion of relevant upcoming opportunities (e.g., conferences, funding opportunities), career guidance/support, discussion of self-care needs, preparation for internship, and other

- topics of relevance to the student's professional goals.
- *Note, if there were any significant concerns raised about student's progress prior to this meeting, a meeting should be scheduled to discuss this. If needed, a remediation plan will be constructed and reviewed with the student (see remediation section).*
- It is critical for students and faculty advisors to have an open, trusting, interactive relationship. Should students develop concerns about the program, they should feel comfortable about contacting their supervisor and discussing these concerns before their progress to substantial obstacles to program progress.

## Student Rights and Responsibilities

### Institutional Environment

- **1.1** Right to respectful treatment by faculty members, colleagues, staff, and peers.
- **1.2** Right to have professional and personal information handled in a sensitive and respectful manner such that personal information is only disclosed when it is deemed necessary for educational or training purposes, and that students are informed prior to any such disclosure.

### Program Policies

- **2.1** Right to publicly available, accurate, and up-to-date descriptions of costs, the availability of financial support, and the likelihood of ongoing support throughout training
- **2.2** Right to accurate and up-to-date information from research advisors and thesis/dissertation committee members on professional factors that could impact student training, career development, and timely program completion.
- **2.3** Right to access and exercise formal written policies regarding leave and accommodations as they pertain to pregnancy, parenting/caregiving, bereavement, medical or mental illness, and disability.
- **2.4** Right to access and exercise formal written policies and procedures regarding academic and placement/internship requirements, administrative procedures, evaluation, advisement, retention, average "time to degree," and termination.
- **2.5** Right to express opinions and have representation on campus committees relevant to professional development, with voting privileges where appropriate.
- **2.6** Right to exemption from new graduation or program requirements, developed after admission, that might result in a delay of graduation.

### Professional and Educational Training Opportunities

- **3.1** Right to appropriate professional training (e.g., teaching, research, clinical practice) in the current standards and practices of the discipline and specialty area.
- **3.2** Right to be evaluated by faculty consistent with current ethical practices in employment, progression through the program, and grading, solely on the basis of academic performance, professional qualifications, and/or conduct.
- **3.3** Right to quality mentorship.
- **3.4** Right to change advisors and committee members for professional and personal needs.
- **3.5** Right to receive timely, ongoing feedback on all areas of trainee competency and the opportunity to address growth areas with support from faculty.
- **3.6** Right to co-authorship in publications when the student has made significant contributions of ideas or research work.
- **3.7** Right to freely communicate and collaborate with other academic colleagues.
- **3.8** Right to lead, assemble, and participate in organizations and activities outside the academic program.
- **3.9** Right to engage in self-care as a routine practice throughout training.



## Work Environment

- **4.1** Right to fair compensation for services provided during training (e.g., graduate, teaching, and research assistantships).
- **4.2** Right for students providing services during training (e.g., teaching, research, clinical, and administrative graduate assistantships) to enjoy the recognitions, rights, privileges, and protections afforded to employees under state, provincial, territorial, and national labor laws.
- **4.3** Right to study and work in an environment free of exploitation, intimidation, harassment, or discrimination based on one's student status, race, ethnicity, skin color, national origin, religion, political beliefs, economic status, age, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy or parental status, disability, medical or mental health conditions, ancestry, citizenship, military veteran status, or any other identity salient to the individual in admissions and throughout education, employment, and placement.
- **4.4** Right to work under clearly expressed and mutually agreed-upon job descriptions and work or training conditions.
- **4.5** Right to perform only those tasks that relate to academic program requirements, professional development, and/or job duties.
- **4.6** Right to provide constructive and professional feedback to supervisors, directors, administrators, and staff concerning the quality and content of supervision

## Appeals and Grievances

- **5.1** Right to clearly defined official grievance procedures and informal complaint procedures.
- **5.2** Right to whistleblower protection for exposing professional, ethical, or legal violations.
- **5.3** Right to due process for any accusation of violation or infraction.
- **5.4** Right to be free of reprisals for exercising the rights contained in this document.

## Student Concerns

On occasions when students have concerns or complaints about any aspect of the Psy.D. program, the following guidelines should be observed:

If you are struggling in any class—or all of them—students are encouraged to do the following. If you are in a course and you are having difficulty learning—comprehending—understanding material, your very first step should be to request a meeting with the specific professor. Communicate your concerns with the professor and see if there is some way to work out differences in learning style and teaching methods. Professors are open to receiving constructive, critical feedback and are often willing to adjust teaching methods to help students better acquire knowledge.

It is important to note here that the professor may also give you feedback on your functioning as a student—e.g., are you doing the reading? Are you prepared for class? Do you ask specific questions and ask for clarifications? Do you participate in discussions? Note that doctoral students are "active learners" who take the initiative and engage in personal problem-solving about ways to learn better and understand the material. To complain to a professor about not understanding what you read or not "enjoying" the content is not an appropriate complaint.

If you don't like the textbooks, you can let them know but then actively search for other resources that teach the content in a more engaging/interesting/understandable way. If you happen to discover such a resource you are encouraged to pass this information along to your professor.

After you meet with the professor, we recommend you write a brief summary of the meeting—describing what you talked about and what kind of plan you devised. You may also express your impression of what happened (e.g., "I did not feel like you took my concerns seriously"). Send that summary in an email to your professor so they may make any additional comments and observations about the meeting. If you feel that you have "resolved the issue" with the professor, then great. If not, schedule a meeting with your advisor to discuss your concerns. Send them a copy of your emails with the professor before the meeting. After meeting with your advisor, do the same thing: send them a brief summary and allow them to comment.

If you cannot reach any resolution, contact the Program Director and request a meeting. Forward the Director a copy of your email interactions with the course professor and advisor. The Program Director will follow the same process, and if this does not address your concerns effectively, you can take the concern up the ladder to the Psychology Chair, Dean of SBS, then the Dean of Graduate School, and finally to the provost.

The APA ethical code advocates this method for handling disagreements, and it is also a process that most organizations use (it also happens to be a biblical model). It would be best if you attempted to resolve conflicts and concerns with the individual professor. Still, if this is ineffective for some reason, we have a process for addressing these concerns using the chain of command. It is imperative for you, as students in clinical psychology, to learn how to follow this process.

**One caveat to the above process: if you are enrolled in a practicum site and are having difficulties with your supervisor's approach to supervision, you would start with a discussion with your practicum instructor.** Here you can decide if a face-to-face conversation with the practicum supervisor is in order or if the practicum instructor or the Clinical Director should first contact the practicum supervisor. It is crucial that you not attempt to circumvent this process as it could lead to unforeseen problems.

Also, at the end of the semester, you can complete a course evaluation form. These are critical for each professor to learn about their courses and teaching style. We all know we can improve course structure and our delivery of content.

### Records of Student Concerns

The Psy.D. program maintains student records through several means. The first means is use of secure electronic folders for each student with restricted access using one of the institution's digital information management systems (i.e., secure server). Access is restricted based on a need-to-know basis, as well as for processes related to advising. Student records regarding remediation processes are maintained in a specific folder with restricted access only for program administrators and faculty who serve as the Remediation Committee. A second means of maintaining student records is through the Canvas Learning Management System. Documentation of course-level issues can be entered electronically by the course professor. Email communications that take place via a secure email account for the Remediation Committee members are also placed electronically into the student's secure folder. A third means of maintaining student records is the CORE platform for managing data regarding students' clinical educational/ and experiential activities and student competency assessment processes, particularly those related to practicum and

internship. Program, instructor, supervisor, and student ratings and the tracking of student clinical activities are managed and maintained through the CORE platform.

Without a student's written permission, no part of the record (including transcripts and verification sheets) will be made public or provided to other institutions or individuals, except for program faculty, staff, and administrators, members of official accrediting agencies, or agents of Liberty University who have a need to know.

Student records through the University's secure servers, Canvas, and CORE are maintained by the program for a period of at least ten years or for the full period between APA site visits. Final course grades are reported to the University's Registrar and are maintained indefinitely by the institution. Liberty University maintains student academic records in accordance with FERPA and applicable state law.

## Student Resources

### Center for Student Thriving

Purpose is to create programs and provide life skills coaching to empower students to be Champions for Christ by living healthy and purposeful lives at Liberty and beyond.

#### Thrive Coaching

How would you like to remember your college experience after you graduate? Do you imagine you'll say that you survived? Or do you hope to say that you thrived?

Studies show that students who thrive are **enthusiastic** learners, **determined**, **hopeful**, **respectful** of differences, **service-oriented**, and **connected** on and off campus. Above all, thriving students possess a deeply **spiritual** sense of **purpose** that supports all that they do.

If you're surviving, but desire more, we encourage you to sign up for **Thrive Coaching**! Across **six weeks**, you'll meet with a compassionate coach from among Liberty University's faculty and staff who will guide you toward the perspectives, rhythms, and skills you need to thrive in college.

Interested Students can register: <https://www.liberty.edu/students/dean/student-thriving/>

## Counseling & Psychological Services

Students who enroll in the Psy.D. program have access to university services, including Counseling & Psychological Services, which is staffed with licensed clinical mental health professionals, and a medical practice staffed by Collaborative Health Partners, consisting of licensed physicians, psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, and mental health professions. These facilities are equipped to offer medical and mental health care to all students. We recognize the potential threat to privacy and confidentiality for any student enrolled in the Psy.D. program seeking counselling at Liberty University's Counseling & Psychological Services. Therefore, we ensure our students are aware of alternative options for counselling at various professional practices throughout the Lynchburg area that do not participate in our practicum services. We have also established an agreement with a local counselling practice to meet with our students within 7 days of referral. Program administrators and faculty are also willing to help students

find appropriate levels of care within the community, when needed.

## Student Health and Wellness

Step into a healthier lifestyle with quality health services and educational programming from the **Student Health Center and Wellness Initiatives Department at Liberty University**. As a Liberty student, you know that your health can directly impact your success. And we're here to help, so a stronger and healthier you can meet your dreams head-on. For accessing information about student health center, Visit: <https://www.liberty.edu/students/health-wellness/>

## Academic Regulations and Information

### Academic Year

The academic year is divided into three semesters: Fall, Spring, and Summer. Psy.D. students are required to register for courses according to the required sequence. Exceptions to this policy can be addressed on a case-by-case basis with Psy.D. program directors. The first and second years consist of fifteen credit hours per Fall and Spring semester and six credit hours during the summer semester. Year three consists of eleven credit hours per Fall and Spring semesters and six credit hours during the summer semester. Years four and five contain eleven credit hours per Fall semester, nine credit hours per Spring semester, and zero credit hours per summer.

### Student Code of Conduct

The Student Honor Code (aka Code of Conduct) is contained in [The Liberty Way policy](#). This Honor Code includes content on academic honor and misconduct (i.e., dishonesty, plagiarism, falsification). See [The Graduate School Handbook](#) for more graduate school information including a link to The Liberty Way (aka Honor Code).

### Academic Standing

In accordance with the Liberty University Graduate Catalog, no grades lower than a "B" may be applied to the degree. Any coursework taken toward fulfilling the requirements of the Doctor of Psychology degree or required by the student's advisor or remediation committee with a recorded grade below "B" (includes B+ & B-) will not count toward the degree and may result in remediation action and possible dismissal from the program. In order to graduate from the program, students must maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA.

Academic standing is calculated at the end of each Fall and Spring term, or upon completion of all courses within a term, and is based on the student's cumulative GPA. At the discretion of the Registrar's Office, a student may have his/her standing updated to good standing after completion of all courses in the Summer term.

A student's cumulative GPA comprises all coursework completed at the current academic level (Undergraduate, Graduate or Doctoral) regardless of prior degree conferral, broken enrollment or a program/major change.

### Academic Warning

Students failing to attain and maintain the cumulative GPA required for good academic standing

in their degree program will be placed on **Academic Warning**. Students on Academic Warning will be required to take [GRST 501](#) Graduate Success Strategies (0 c.h.) in their next semester of enrollment, unless they have already taken and passed the course.

### **Academic Probation**

At the end of the term on Academic Warning, students who fail to raise their cumulative GPA to the required level will be placed on **Academic Probation**. Students on Academic Probation will be required to take [GRST 501](#) Graduate Success Strategies (0 c.h.) in their next semester of enrollment, unless they have already taken and passed the course.

Additionally, students who are enrolled full-time and fail all courses will be placed on **Academic Probation**, unless they were previously on Academic Probation or Academic Suspension. Students who are enrolled full-time and fail all courses while on Academic Probation or Suspension will progress to the next academic standing level.

### **Academic Suspension**

At the end of the term on Academic Probation, students who fail to raise their cumulative GPA to the required academic level will be placed on **Academic Suspension**.

All graduate and doctoral students, both residential and online, who desire to return to Liberty in the future must appeal to the Registrar's Office in writing through the designated portal. Appeals will be considered by the academic department. If the student's appeal is approved, an Academic Contract will be formulated. The student must agree in writing to abide by the terms of the Contract before being permitted to register for courses.

### **Academic Dismissal**

Students who fail to raise their cumulative GPA to the required academic level (see above) by the end of the subsequent term and/or who fail to meet the terms of their Academic Contract will be **Academically Dismissed** and will not be allowed to appeal to return to Liberty unless a period of at least two academic years has passed.

When academic standing is updated, students on **Academic Warning, Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal** will be sent a notification by the Registrar's Office.

## **Grade Appeals**

Liberty encourages students to have open and respectful communication with their instructors to resolve any concerns regarding individual course assignment grades and/or the final grade for the course.

### **Criteria for Appeal:**

Students may appeal a final grade within 30 days of the end of the class. Only final posted grades may be appealed. Individual assignment grades may not be appealed under this Policy. Questions regarding individual assignment grades should be directed to the instructor.

Appeals are accepted for review only on one or more of the following three ground(s):

- When the final grade assigned does not comport with the published grading rubrics for the course assignments
- When the final grade assigned conflicts with written communication (e.g., email, announcements, etc.)
- When there is a calculation error on an assignment, leading to an incorrect final grade

Appeals, other than those asserted on one or more of the ground(s) above, will not be reviewed. The student must provide written documentation that supports his/her specified ground(s) for appeal. Documentation may be in the form of email correspondence, graded assignments, proof of timely submission, etc. After submitting the appeal, if additional information is needed to process the appeal, the student will be notified via the complaint/appeal portal. If the student does not respond to the request for additional information, the appeal will be denied.

### Appeal Process:

A student dissatisfied with his/her final grade should first seek to resolve the situation with the instructor. However, if the student wishes to appeal the final grade under this Policy, the student must follow the process outlined below:

1. Within 30 calendar days of the end of the class, the student may submit a written appeal that will be reviewed by the Program Director/Chair (or designated reviewer). The student should submit his/her appeal through the grade appeal form found on the Beacon complaint/appeal portal ([www.liberty.edu/beacon](http://www.liberty.edu/beacon)). The student must include the information required above, including the ground(s) for the appeal and documentation supporting the claimed ground(s). The instructor will also be notified of the appeal and will be able to provide pertinent documentation, prior to the Program Director/Chair (or designated reviewer) rendering his/her decision. The Program Director/Chair (or designated reviewer) will have 7 days to review the appeal from the time of submission. When the review is complete, the student will be notified of the decision via his/her Liberty Webmail and the appeal portal.
2. If the student is dissatisfied with the Program Director/Chair's (or designated reviewer's) decision and the student has additional support for his/her appeal, the student may re-appeal (second-level appeal) to the Associate Dean (or designated reviewer) through the appeal portal after receiving the decision of the Program Director/Chair (or designated reviewer). The student's written re-appeal and additional supporting documentation must be submitted within 7 days of the Program Director/Chair's (or designated reviewer's) decision. The Associate Dean (or designated reviewer) will review the student's re-appeal, as well as any information provided by the instructor. The Associate Dean (or designated reviewer) will have 7 days to review the re-appeal from the time of submission. When the review is complete, the student will be notified of the re-appeal decision via his/her Liberty Webmail and the appeal portal.
3. If the student is dissatisfied with second-level appeal decision and has additional support for his/her appeal, the student may re-appeal (third level appeal) to the Dean (or designated reviewer), through the appeal portal after receiving the decision of the Associate Dean (or designated reviewer). This written re-appeal and additional supporting documentation must be submitted within 7 days of the Associate Dean's (or designated reviewer's) decision. The Dean (or designated reviewer) will review the student's re-appeal, as well as any information provided by the instructor. The Dean (or designated reviewer) will have 7 days from the time of submission to review the re-appeal. When the review is complete, the student will be notified of

the decision via his/her Liberty Webmail and the appeal portal. The Dean's (or designated reviewer's) decision on a third level appeal is final.

Grade appeals that are submitted using the student complaint form will be converted to the grade appeal form and reviewed according to this Policy.

Appealing an approved decision within the published timeframe may require use of the student complaint form.

The following are **not** able to be appealed through the grade appeal Policy/Process:

- Appeals of grades of FN, NF, W, I, IP, R, Q, P, or A.
- Academic misconduct appeals. For information about how to submit an academic misconduct appeal, see <https://www.liberty.edu/students/community-life/academic-misconduct/>
- Potential Scrivener's Errors (e.g., typographical) identified outside of the 30-day appeal period. For information about reporting a potential Scrivener's Error, see [www.liberty.edu/ferpa/](http://www.liberty.edu/ferpa/)





# University Academic Calendar



Last edited: July 15, 2022

## University Calendar 2022 – 2023

### **FALL SEMESTER\***

#### **August 8, Monday**

- ☐ Faculty return

#### **August 9-16, Tuesday – Tuesday**

- ☐ Faculty Orientation

#### **August 17-18, Wednesday – Thursday**

- ☐ Residence Halls open for new students
- ☐ Dining Hall opens at 12 PM Wednesday for new students

#### **August 19, Friday**

- ☐ Residence Halls open for returning students at 1 PM
- ☐ Dining Hall opens at 12 PM for returning students

#### **August 22, Monday**

- ☐ Classes begin

#### **August 22-26, Monday – Friday**

- ☐ Add/Drop Week

#### **August 26, Friday**

- ☐ Last day to add or drop a class until 4 PM

#### **October 6-7, Thursday – Friday**

- ☐ Fall Break

#### **November 18, Friday**

- ☐ Thanksgiving Break begins after last class
- ☐ Dining Hall closes after dinner

#### **November 21-25, Monday – Friday**

- ☐ Thanksgiving Break

#### **December 6, Tuesday**

- ☐ Last day of classes
- ☐ Last day to withdraw from a class with a "W"

#### **December 7, Wednesday**

- ☐ Reading Day

#### **December 8-13, Thursday – Tuesday**

- ☐ Final Exams

#### **December 14, Wednesday**

- ☐ Residence Halls close at 12 PM
- ☐ Dining Hall closes after lunch

#### **December 16, Friday**

- ☐ Fall semester ends

#### **December 23, Friday**

- ☐ Final grades due

### **WINTER BREAK**

December 17 – January 8

### **SPRING SEMESTER\***

#### **January 9, Monday**

- ☐ Intensives begin
- ☐ Faculty return

#### **January 12, Thursday**

- ☐ Residence Halls open for new students
- ☐ Dining Hall opens at 12 PM for new students

#### **January 13, Friday**

- ☐ Residence Halls open for returning students at 1 PM
- ☐ Dining Hall opens at 12 PM for returning students

#### **January 16, Monday**

- ☐ Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Day of Service
- ☐ Classes begin

#### **January 16-20, Monday – Friday**

- ☐ Add/Drop Week

#### **January 20, Friday**

- ☐ Last day to add or drop a class until 4 PM

#### **March 10, Friday**

- ☐ Spring Break begins after last class
- ☐ Dining Hall closes after dinner

#### **March 13-17, Monday – Friday**

- ☐ Spring Break

#### **March 29, Wednesday**

- ☐ Annual Assessment Day

#### **April 10, Monday**

- ☐ Easter Holiday – No classes

#### **April 17-20, Monday-Thursday**

- ☐ Research Week

#### **May 2, Tuesday**

- ☐ Last day of classes
- ☐ Last day to withdraw from a class with a "W"

#### **May 3, Wednesday**

- ☐ Reading Day

#### **May 4-9, Thursday – Tuesday**

- ☐ Final Exams

#### **May 10, Wednesday**

- ☐ Residence Halls close at 12 PM

#### **May 11-13, Thursday-Saturday**

- ☐ Commencement Weekend
- ☐ Commencement Degree Presentation Ceremonies

#### **May 12, Friday**

- ☐ Spring semester ends
- ☐ Dining Hall closes after dinner

#### **May 15-19, Monday – Friday**

- ☐ Faculty workdays

#### **May 19, Friday**

- ☐ Final grades due

### **SUMMER TERM**

May 15 – August 18

\*All dates are subject to change due to required accommodations for COVID-19.