



Faculty of The Humanities

Applied Master's Programmes in Psychology

SELECTION: 2024 INTAKE

Information Booklet

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*Inspiring excellence, transforming lives
through quality, impact, and care.*

UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA



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1 OVERALL ORIENTATION

Thank you for your interest in one of our Master's Programmes in Psychology. The University of the Free State currently offers a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology and a Master's Degree in Counselling Psychology. These professional qualifications are designed to lead to registration as a Clinical or Counselling Psychologist with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA).

The requirements for these degrees include one year of full-time study, one year of accredited internship (professional training), and a mini-dissertation submission. The language of instruction in both programmes is English. Students registered for clinical psychology must complete a community service year following their internship. Note that an additional requirement for registration would be the successful completion of a national Board Exam, which the HPCSA manages.

More about the department: We strive for academic excellence through research and teaching. We strive to produce qualified psychologists who can serve the diverse South African population effectively. We aim to expose our students to multiple therapeutic approaches, including

humanistic approaches (such as Person-Centred Therapy), cognitive approaches (such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy), constructivist approaches (such as Solution-Focused Therapy) and integrated approaches (such as Schema Therapy).

The master's programme is designed to train students to meet the needs of our transforming society. With the compilation of the programme, we consider the HPCSA requirements and national and international trends within the discipline. Through internal and external moderation, the department ensures that our training is of a high standard. We take pride in students' development of critical thinking skills, in-depth knowledge of the discipline, and the ability to apply knowledge within different contexts.

Credit value of the course: 240

NQF level of the course: 9

Course co-ordinators: Dr Carla Nel (Clinical Coordinator)

Mr Henry Taylor (Counselling Coordinator)

Course secretary: Mrs Elize Du Plessis

2 NATURE OF THE PROGRAMMES

The requirements for the MSocSci Clinical Psychology and MSocSci Counselling Psychology degrees involve full-time study, internship, and the submission of a mini-dissertation over two years. In the **first year**, students are based at the Department of Psychology and are expected to participate actively in the learning process.

The emphasis is on theoretical training during the first year, and the main aim is to assist students in acquiring a range of core professional psychological competencies. Students also gain practical exposure by rendering therapeutic services to the public in various practices, specialising in assessing, intervening and managing children, adolescents and adults. Practical experience in community psychology is gained through the planning, implementing and evaluating intervention programmes for groups with specific needs for personal growth. All practical work is conducted under supervision.

The overall learning outcomes for the first year of training are:

- A. Students should demonstrate the ability to use psychological assessment to conceptualise, diagnose, plan, and monitor therapeutic processes and outcomes.
- B. Students should demonstrate the ability to develop theoretical and aetiological formulations. They should have acquired the ability to use a range of psychological interventions with different age groups and contexts.

- C. Students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of psychological practice that meets professional and ethical standards.
- D. Students should be able to design, manage and conduct ethical and responsible research that contributes to psychological knowledge, theory, and practice and demonstrate the ability to report on such research.

The **second year** entails the completion of an internship at an accredited training site. Internships are intended to provide trainees with basic competence in the scope of practice for their relevant registration categories. Students are responsible for obtaining an accredited 12-month internship (approved by the HPCSA) within the registration category they have registered for as student psychologists. Failure to complete the internship within the specified time will result in a (possibly) unpaid internship extension of between 3 and 12 months.

The UFS Department of Psychology serves as a collaborating university for internship institutions. We **do not accept responsibility for the placement of students at internship institutions**.

3 HPCSA REGISTRATION AS A PSYCHOLOGIST

Registration as a psychologist takes place after a student has completed the following successfully:

- a. Academic training (theoretical and practical assessment)
- b. Accredited internship (12 months)
- c. Research (submission of an extensive mini-dissertation)
- d. Community service (in the case of clinical psychology)
- e. Board Examination (administered by the Health Professions Council of South Africa - HPCSA).

Students must pass a national examination by the HPCSA's Professional Board of Psychology. This examination can be written during February, June, or October of a specific year. Clinical Psychology students must ensure they write and pass their National Board Exam timeously, as they will only be allowed to commence with their community service once that is done.

It is expected of all **clinical** psychologists to do **community service** for 12 months following the successful completion of their internships. Students registered in the Clinical Psychology category must attempt to submit their research by **June** of their internship year, as Community Service can only be started after completion of all academic requirements necessary for the degree. Candidates can apply to the Department of Health for positions available nationwide.

For more information regarding internships, the board exam or the community service year, please get in touch with the Health Professions Council of South Africa at +27 12 338 9300 or visit their website at www.hpcsa.co.za.

4 FEES & COMPENSATION

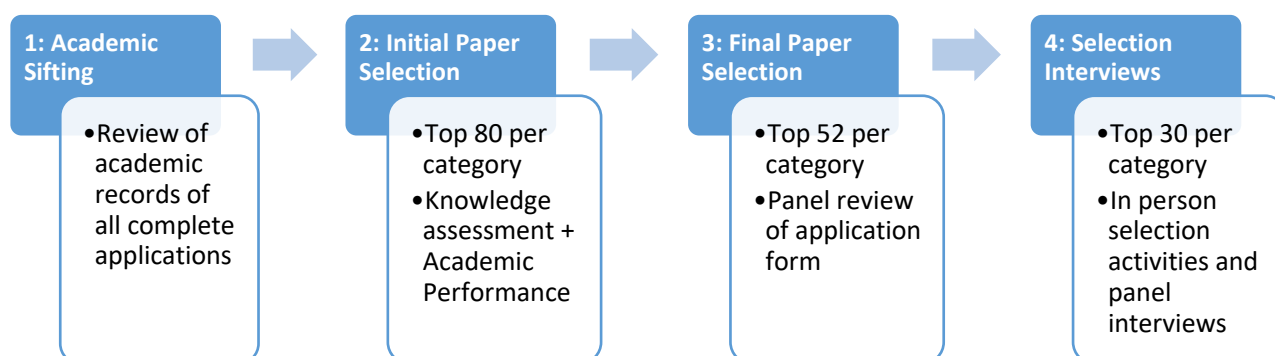
The first year of the course is an academic study year and consequently occurs without financial compensation. Students usually receive monetary compensation from the internship site during their internship year. However, no guarantee can be provided for this.

Students who require financial assistance are advised to contact the **Financial Aid Department, University of the Free State (Tel. 051-401-9160/2106/3603)** in time.

5 SELECTION

5.1 SELECTION PROCESS

Owing to the limited number of internship positions, prospective candidates are subject to a selection process. The selection process takes place in different stages:



The Department uses the following selection criteria:

- Academic potential and achievement
- Psychological knowledge and insight
- Work experience (part-time and full-time)
- Community involvement
- Interpersonal skills
- Maturity
- Research skills

Incomplete applications will not be considered and will be removed from the application pool, as well as for the following reasons:

- Candidates who applied for more than ONE category;
- Candidates who fail to provide the department with their verified academic record by the due date.

- c. Candidates who list friends, family members, or UFS selection panel members as references. Only people who know the candidate in a professional/academic context should act as referees.
- d. Candidates who fail to meet the minimum requirements as listed in the next section.

5.2 MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements apply:

1. Prospective candidates should be in possession of (or in the process of obtaining) an exit-level 8 qualification in Psychology (Honours or BPsych equivalent);
2. A pass mark of at least 65% in the exit-level 8 qualification in Psychology is a prerequisite to register for the applied master's programme [Reg A61.1]. Candidates who still have to complete their fourth year of training in Psychology in the year when they apply are selected conditionally, pending the successful completion of their 4-year degree with a final mark of at least 65%;
3. Candidates who have completed their training in Psychology more than five years before applying to the programme must be able to provide evidence that they have been active in the field of psychology, such as working in other HPCSA registered categories (e.g., as a registered counsellor or psychometrist), and/or have been pursuing academic study in a relevant field;
4. Fluency in English is a requirement, with preference given to candidates who are fluent in at least two languages;

5.3 APPLICATION PROCESS

5.3.1 PHASE 1: ACADEMIC SIFTING

If you meet the minimum requirements, you may start your application process, which consists of 3 steps:

STEP 1:

Complete the online **Application for Admission to Postgraduate Study** process via <https://ufs.ac.za/prospective> **before 17:00 on 31 May 2023**. Please note that your application will only be considered if you follow this step. **IMPORTANT: Applicants who are currently students at the UFS in 2023 do not have to complete the UFS Postgraduate application form.** You can thus skip the first step and continue to STEP 2.

****Please also see the *Final Word* section on the outcome of this application process.****

STEP 2:

Complete the online **Department of Psychology's Initial Application Form** using this link <https://forms.office.com/r/yR3TZr2yJQ> **before 17:00 on 31 May 2023**. Candidates whose

Departmental Application Forms are incomplete and/or have been submitted late will not be considered for selection to the programme.

STEP 3:

Submit **certified copies** of your **academic records** via email to duplesse@ufs.ac.za before **17:00 on 14 July 2023**. Candidates must submit their certified records by the deadline to be considered for selection to the programme.

When applicants are pursuing an honours degree in psychology at the time of applying for selection, the marks obtained for their third-year psychology modules will also be considered. Since the level of complexity/difficulty differs between the third and their academic honours years, the third-year mark will be recalculated using a weight of only 0.9. The module marks of applicants with a completed honours degree will have a weight of 1. An example of the practical implementation of this weighting in calculating academic requirements is provided in the box below:

Candidate 1 has 6 psychology undergraduate modules with the following marks: 72; 74; 78; 80; 75; 72 AND two honours modules with the following marks: 77 and 79. The calculation will be: $(72+74+78+80+75+72) \times 0.9/6 = 67.6$ plus $(77+79)/2 = 78$. The final mark will be $(67.6+78)/2 = 72.8$.

Candidate 2 has completed their honours degree with the following marks: 72; 74; 78; 80; 75; 72. In this case, the final mark will be $(72+74+78+80+75+72)/6 = 75.2$.

Based on academic marks, the 80 top-ranked candidates for each category will be invited to proceed to the next phase of the selection process.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR PHASE 1:

Closing date for completing the Initial Departmental Application Form	31 May 2023, 17:00
Closing date for completing the UFS Postgraduate Admission Form	31 May 2023, 17:00
Deadline for Submission of verified academic records	14 July 2023, 17:00

5.3.2 PHASE 2: INITIAL PAPER SELECTION

Applicants who progress to this phase will complete an online Second Departmental Application Form (the link will be provided to them). The applicants identified through the previous phase of the selection process will be required to complete an online knowledge-based assessment

between 20 and 23 July 2023. Applicants' performance on this knowledge-based assessment will be awarded a mark out of 10. Their average academic performance (calculated during the previous phase of the selection process) will be converted to a score out of 10. The mark for the knowledge-based assessment will be added to the applicants' academic score out of 10 to produce a total score out of 20. The marks will be calculated as follows:

Criteria	Mark
1. Academic performance/potential <i>(mark out of 10)</i>	
2. Knowledge-based assessment <i>(mark out of 10)</i>	
TOTAL (out of 20)	

Based on this mark, the 52 top-ranked applicants for each category will be invited to proceed to the next phase of the selection process.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR PHASE 2:

Completion of Online Assessment	Between 20 – 23 July 2023
Closing date for completing the Second Departmental Application Form	24 July 2023 12:00

5.3.3 PHASE 3: FINAL PAPER SELECTION

The selection panels will now review the Second Departmental Application Form of the applicants who proceed to this phase. This review of application forms will take place between 24 and 28 July 2023. The staff members responsible for this phase are all registered psychologists who serve as panel members, programme coordinators, and the programme secretary. The applicant's marks will be calculated as follows:

Criteria	Mark
1. Academic performance/potential <i>(mark out of 10)</i>	
2. Knowledge-based assessment <i>(mark out of 10)</i>	
3. Community involvement OR Work experience (YES = 1; NO = 0)	
4. Research experience (YES = 1; NO = 0)	
5. Interpersonal skills and cultural sensitivity <i>(mark out of 4)</i>	
6. Maturity <i>(mark out of 4)</i>	
7. Insight into the profession <i>(mark out of 4)</i>	
TOTAL (out of 34)	

Each category's 30 highest ranked candidates will be invited to proceed to the next phase. At the discretion of the panels, applicants may be required to have referees complete and submit online referee reports by 11 August 2023.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR PHASE 3:

Feedback from Department on Paper Selection Outcome	31 July 2023
Submission of Referee Reports (if required)	11 August 2023

5.3.4 PHASE 4: SELECTION INTERVIEWS

This phase of the selection process consists of three separate activities and will take place between 14 and 18 August 2023. The staff members responsible for this phase are all registered psychologists that serve as members of the interview panels, academic staff that serve as research panel members, programme coordinators, as well as the programme secretary and other administrative staff.

Activity 1: Candidates will be required to complete various research activities. The rationale for the research activities is to evaluate the base level of the candidates' research skills. This activity should be coordinated by a research panel comprising at least two academic staff members.

Activity 2: Candidates in each registration category will be randomly assigned to groups. Each group will be given an unprepared activity. These activities are designed to evaluate how applicants deal with novel situations with incomplete information and the absence of clearly stated prerequisites or rules. Panel members will be instructed to note how candidates make decisions, solve problems, demonstrate self-insight, and interact with other group members. The group activities will not be scored. However, information gathered during observation of these activities may be used to inform questions during the individual interviews.

Activity 3: Candidates will be required to participate in two 30-minute individual interviews. Interviews will be conducted by two panels comprised of members of staff, other stakeholders (representatives of internship organisations) and a moderator registered in the specific category (clinical/counselling) for which the candidate is applying.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR PHASE 4:

Selection Interviews	14 - 18 August 2023
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6 EXPENSES: TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

All applicants who are invited to the second round of the selection process will be responsible for **their own travel and accommodation expenses**. The University of the Free State and the Department of Psychology will not be held liable for any of such costs.

7 FEEDBACK

All applicants will receive notice via email regarding the outcome (successful/unsuccessful) of the paper selection process.

After the interview process, the successful candidates will be informed telephonically. Unsuccessful candidates will receive an email regarding the outcome of the interview process.

The Department provides **no other form of feedback**. The Department adheres strictly to specific procedures when selecting the new intake of students. The decision of the Department regarding the success of an application is final and binding. If your application was unsuccessful, **no correspondence** will be entered into by the Department with you or any associates or family regarding the outcome.

8 A FINAL WORD

Please note applying for selection entails 2 application processes: a) departmental and b) institutional. We are responsible for communicating the outcome of the departmental process to you. Therefore, please ensure that your correct email address is used during this process. The University of the Free State keeps the institutional application process for postgraduate studies open until next year's University registration. You will, therefore, continue to receive communication from the UFS until early 2024 indicating that your application is still in process. This often creates confusion for applicants. To clarify: your acceptance to the UFS for postgraduate studies in applied psychology is subject to the outcome of the departmental selection process. The institutional application is only kept active in the event that you would like to apply for another postgraduate degree at the University of the Free State. The outcome of your selection application, as communicated by our department, stands as the final outcome for the MSocSci Clinical Psychology or MSocSci Counselling Psychology programmes.

We appreciate your interest in our Master's programmes. We trust that you will experience the selection process as fair and use it as an opportunity for personal growth and development.

Dr C. Nel (Clinical Coordinator)
Ms Elize du Plessis (Secretary)

Mr H.W. Taylor (Counselling Coordinator)