THE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY DOCTORAL PROGRAM AT CIIS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS:

The Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program’s mission is to provide broad and general training in clinical psychology that prepares students for the professional practice of psychology. Training is guided by the following six core values: Holism, Spirituality, Diversity, Relationship, Inquiry\Reflective Practice and Learning in Context.

1. **What is the program’s curriculum?**

The Program is 90 semester units, and has a strong emphasis on therapeutic practice and spirituality. Six of those units are used for the completion of the dissertation. We have three required courses that address spirituality as a content area. These are:
1) Religion and Spirituality in Clinical Practice
2) Neuroscience and Spirituality
3) Buddhism and Psychotherapy

Electives in this and other important areas are offered regularly. Students may also take electives in other programs at CIIS. The full curriculum is posted on our website at [http://www.ciis.edu/Academics/Graduate_Programs/Clinical_Psychology/Course_of_Study.html](http://www.ciis.edu/Academics/Graduate_Programs/Clinical_Psychology/Course_of_Study.html)

2. **What is the curriculum for an Advanced Standing student who already has a Master’s Degree in a related field?**

Students with qualifying graduate work may receive up to 30 units of credit toward our degree. A Faculty Advisor will work with each Advanced Standing student to produce a program plan detailing which of the required courses can be waived because of previous graduate level coursework. If your Master’s Degree included a field placement you may be able to waive the first year of our practicum series.

3. **What are the field placement and internship requirements?**

While they are taking foundational coursework in clinical skills, first year students also move through a structured series of clinical experiences at our Psychological Services Center. In the second and third years students work in practicum placements throughout the Bay Area, usually with a 20 hour a week commitment and frequently in Community Mental Health clinics and programs. After completing most of their coursework students work at a full-time year long internship.

More information on internships is in question # 9 on this sheet.

4. **What kinds of dissertations are acceptable in the program?**

Students may pursue dissertation projects in the following formats: Clinical Case Study, Qualitative Research, Quantitative Research, Program Development, Development of Theory/ Synthesis of Literature.

Some dissertation topics from recent years include:
• *The Effect of Mindfulness Meditation on Mother-Infant Bonding*

• *Slavery and the Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma in Inner City African American Male Youth: A Model Program*

• *Applied Ecopsychology for Adults: Outcomes of the Kamana Nature Awareness Training Program and Sensory Awareness Practice*

• *Trauma Research & Treatment of Combat Veterans: An Evidence Based Integrative Literature Review*

5. **Is the PsyD program accredited?**

Yes - CIIS is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), which is one of six regional accrediting associations in the United States. A degree such as ours, from a regionally accredited institution, is sufficient for licensure in California and many other states. Question # 8 on this sheet provides more information about licensing. The PsyD program is no longer accredited by the APA.

6. **What is the APA?**

The American Psychological Association is a professional organization whose members are doctoral level Psychologists in the United States and Canada. Not all Psychologists belong to the APA. It is not a government agency.

7. **What does the program plan to do about APA?**

The Program will re-apply for APA accreditation, but the date for application is under review.

8. **Can I get licensed in my state without an APA accredited degree?**

Graduates of the PsyD program at CIIS are eligible for licensure as Psychologists in California and most other states. Students interested in applying for licensure in states other than California are encouraged to refer to the state-by-state listing of licensing requirements available at [www.asppb.org/pubs/handbookusr.asp](http://www.asppb.org/pubs/handbookusr.asp). Our students tend to do very well on the California state licensing exam (please go to [http://www.ciis.edu/Academics/Graduate_Programs/Clinical_Psychology/Licensure.html](http://www.ciis.edu/Academics/Graduate_Programs/Clinical_Psychology/Licensure.html) on our website to see where our graduates stand in relationship to other Bay Area school PsyD graduates.)

A handful of states have more stringent, APA-specific requirements, according to the ASPPB (Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards) Handbook of Licensing and Certification Requirements.

Specifically:

- **Florida** accepts only APA-accredited doctoral programs for those who graduated after 1999 and requires internships to meet APA standards.
- **Mississippi** requires internships to be accredited by APA or the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA).
- **Oklahoma** accepts only APA-accredited doctoral programs for those who graduated after 1997.
- **Utah** accepts only doctoral programs and internships that are APA- or CPA-accredited. (Grad Psych, 2004)
This list of states can change so it’s important to keep yourself updated if you intend to practice in another state.

9. How will APA accreditation impact internships?

Most CAPIC (California Psychology Internship Council, http://www.capic.net), and numerous APPIC (Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers, http://www.appic.org) internships are open to students in non-APA accredited schools. APA internships are generally unavailable, although an occasional student has been able to secure one. Our students typically train at CAPIC and APPIC internships and they have been very successful in obtaining these placements. For example we have, or will have next year, interns at the California Pacific Medical Center, UC Davis Medical Center, UC Davis Counseling Center, the San Francisco Jung Institute Clinic, and a number of San Francisco County Community Mental Health Clinics.

10. Will graduation from a non-APA accredited school impact job prospects?

If your goal is to establish a private practice, then all that is needed is a license to practice, which is available to our graduates in California, and in a majority of the states. Graduates seeking work in such settings as community mental health agencies, hospitals, county school systems, civil service, and college counseling centers will find that each employer establishes its own job requirements, and many do not require graduation from an APA program. Please be advised that the Veterans' Administration and Kaiser facilities require graduation from an APA program. Agencies and clinics practicing alternative and/or holistic healing modalities are rarely concerned with APA accreditation. Most academic jobs at the BA or MA level will not require an APA approved degree but a Faculty position in a PsyD or PhD program will almost always require an APA approved degree.

A useful exercise to get a sense of typical job requirements is to do an internet search for current job openings for clinical psychologists and review the ads. A cursory search done today (3/1/2013) found 7 positions advertised in the Bay Area for psychologists. 2 of these positions required APA approved degrees. Employers who had ads posted today and did not require APA approved degrees included the US Air Force, UCSF and San Mateo County.

11. What financial Aid is available for applicants?

For more information, visit our Financial Aid page: http://www.ciis.edu/Admissions_and_Financial_Aid/Financial_Aid.html

You can also contact the Financial Aid office 415-575-6122 or email them at finaid@ciis.edu

Some scholarships are available.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR PROGRAM – PLEASE VISIT OUR PROGRAM WEB SITE:

http://www.ciis.edu/Academics/Graduate_Programs/Clinical_Psychology.html