

Detailed Graduate Program Requirement for Ph.D. in Psychology
Combined Clinical/Counseling/School Psychology Program

The Combined program seeks to attract high quality students. Students are selected on the basis of their qualifications as represented through their application, interactions with faculty and students, and the interview process.

Applicants to the Combined Program are required to submit the following application materials *directly to the graduate school*:

- 1) Application Form (which includes a letter of intent)
- 2) Official transcripts from all universities attended
- 3) Official report of GRE scores
- 4) 3 letters of recommendation

Applicants are also encouraged to include a vita with their materials.

Applicant files are reviewed and evaluated on the following qualifications:

1. GRE scores
2. GPA for last 2 years
3. Letters of recommendation addressing students academic, clinical and research abilities/aptitude, and interpersonal skills
4. Background in Psychology or related field
5. Previous clinical or applied experience
6. Documented prior research experience
7. Letter of intent outlining professional goals commensurate with USU's training program and demonstrating excellence in written communication
8. Diversity of applicants across a number of domains including ethnicity, geography, prior degrees (e.g., undergraduate or Masters), professional interest area, and gender
9. Academic broadening experience (e.g., students having their training with multiple faculty across academic institutions)

Students with stronger applications (e.g., rated more highly) are likely invited for in-person interviews (some of these may be conducted as phone interviews depending on applicant availability). In general, approximately 25 applicants are identified as finalists and 15 – 20 applicants are invited for interview, with the remaining 5 – 10 applicants considered interview alternates. Applicants invited for interview are further evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Interest in working with multiple faculty
2. Interpersonal skills
3. Oral communication skills
4. Professional demeanor
5. Critical thinking skills
6. Self-awareness
7. Fit with program and faculty needs

Upon completion of the interview process, student overall performance is considered (e.g., on all 16 criteria) and applicants are identified to whom offers of admission are extended. In general, 8 – 10 offers of admission are initially extended each year. Should students elect to decline an offer of admission, additional offers may be extended to other students who were in the finalist or alternate groups until a sufficient number of students are recruited for the program.

Potential for Academic Excellence

The ability of applicants to succeed in a rigorous doctoral program is evaluated through the following methods:

- 1) GPA
 - a. minimum standard is 3.2 or above from an undergraduate university and/or 3.5 in a graduate program (this minimum standard may be waived in cases in which applicants are exceptional in other areas)
- 2) GRE scores
 - a. minimum standard is 40th percentile or above in Verbal and Quantitative and combined scores of 1100 (this minimum standard may be waived in cases in which applicants are exceptional in other areas)
 - b.
- 3) Letters of Recommendation
 - a. ratings of academic ability as well as written comments regarding ability to succeed in a graduate program

Research Potential

The ability to be both producers and consumers of research is a critical component of doctoral level training in a Ph.D. program. This potential and the student's research interests are evaluated through:

- 1) Letter of Intent (and vita if included with application materials)
 - a. Description of previous research activities
 - b. Statement of future research interests
- 2) Letters of recommendation
 - a. Description of involvement in research activities

Potential for Excellent Services in Psychology

One purpose of the Combined program in psychology is to prepare students to work in a professional capacity across a variety of settings and in a number of different roles. This potential is evaluated through:

- 1) Letter of Intent (and vita if included)
 - a. Description of previous experience working with clients in school or clinical settings
 - b. Statements regarding future career goals
- 2) Letters of recommendation
 - a. Description of involvement in applied experiences with adults, couples, children, families, etc.

Background in Psychology

The Combined psychology program is housed in a psychology department and graduate students are assumed to have basic knowledge of psychology theories and principles.

This is evaluated through

- 1) A review of transcripts for psychology courses taken and grades received

Match with Program at USU

We believe fit with the program in terms of clinical and research interests, as well as future goals is important for graduate students to be successful in the program.

Additionally, students should be interested in working with more than one faculty

member. This is evaluated through:

- 1) Letter of intent
- 2) Interviews and other written and verbal communications with faculty and current students

Written Communication Skills

The ability to communicate effectively in writing is an important skill both to succeed in graduate school and to be a successful psychologist. We evaluate this through:

- 1) Letter of intent
- 2) Letters of recommendation
 - a. Statements made that specifically address this area
- 3) Other written communications with faculty and current students

Oral Communication Skills

The ability to verbally communicate with others is particularly important when working with clients, families, and other professionals. We evaluate this through:

- 1) Letters of recommendation
 - a. Statements made that specifically address this area
- 2) Interviews and other verbal communications with faculty and current students

Interpersonal Skills and Professionalism

The ability to work effectively with others in the professional arena is important for success in all professional activities. Additionally, Psychologists must be able to interact with other individuals including clients, peers, supervisors, medical personnel, etc. in a professional, non-discriminatory manner. This is evaluated through:

- 1) Letter of recommendation
 - a. Statements made that specifically address this area
- 2) Interview with program faculty
- 3) Communications with faculty and current students

Self-Awareness and Critical Thinking skills

The ability of psychologist to engage with new problems and meet the challenges of the field is essential in an every changing world. This is evaluated through:

- 1) Letter of recommendation
 - a. Statements made that specifically address this area

- 2) Interview with program faculty
 - a. Ability to respond to questions in a thoughtful manner
- 3) Communications with faculty and current students

Diversity

The Combined program seeks to recruit and retain a diverse student group across a number of dimensions including ethnicity, prior degrees (BS, MS), professional interest area, geography, and gender. This is evaluated through:

- 1) Transcripts and application
- 2) Letter of Intent
- 3) Interview and other communications with program faculty and current students

Academic Broadening Experience

Students are strongly encouraged to gain exposure to scientific perspectives, research, clinical or mentoring approaches, and academic systems other than the Psychology Department at USU. Students are discouraged from getting all of their academic degrees from any one department. This is evaluated through:

- 1) Application and transcripts