



SEFAKO MAKGATHO
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Application for the 2027 MSc Clinical Psychology Programme

Application Guide

Dear Applicant

Thank you for showing interest in applying for the Master of Science (MSc) in Clinical Psychology training programme at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU), Department of Clinical Psychology in the School of Medicine.

The MSc (Clinical Psychology) programme is a 3-year (including an internship year), full-time, and comprehensive programme that integrates academic, clinical, and professional training to equip students to function as well-balanced and grounded Clinical Psychologists in the future. After completion, the candidate can apply to the Professional Board for Psychology of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) for registration as a Clinical Psychologist. Such registration is, however, subject to the conditions stipulated by the Professional Board for Psychology at the time of registration (including that you pass and complete the MSc Clinical Psychology degree and meet all the requirements of a 12-month internship training at an accredited institution, in our context, Dr. George Mukhari Academic Hospital). In addition, the candidate must pass the HPCSA board exam, which will be followed by a 12-month community service placement.

Below is an outline of the MSc Clinical Psychology programme, admission requirements, application procedure, and selection process.

The Department of Clinical Psychology wishes you the best of luck with your application to our programme.

Sincerely,

Prof. Mokoena Maepa
MSc Clinical Psychology Coordinator

1. CURRICULUM

The curriculum covers theoretical, practical, and research training, and extends over two full-time academic years. The third year is carried out at Dr. George Mukhari Academic Hospital, which is SMU's internship site. The three areas carry equal weight and, therefore, all three should be completed. All modules (theoretical, practical and research) must be passed with a minimum assessment weighting of 50%. Students may be excluded from the programme at any time on the grounds of unsatisfactory academic progress, unethical behaviour, and/or behaviour considered to be inappropriate for professional psychology practice. While the orientation of the programme is an African epistemology paradigm, indigenous communities, their worldviews, and their existential material conditions, students are equally exposed to other theoretical perspectives to develop their critical theoretical and practical skills which will enable them to function effectively in different contexts. To this effect, the development of an integrative approach is encouraged. Contributors to the programme will articulate philosophical perspectives, which in the main inform the courses they teach.

1.1. Coursework

The coursework component of the MSc in Clinical Psychology degree provides the candidate with advanced, applied, and contextual training in the core fields of Psychology that are needed to professionally orient the candidate toward becoming a Clinical Psychologist. Over the two years (Theory & practical), students are exposed to the following fields:

- Psychodiagnostics and Assessment,
- Psychotherapy Theory and Practice: Psychodynamic Therapy, Client-Centered Therapy, Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, Group Therapy, Couple/Family/Systems/Ecosystems Therapy, Community Psychology, Postmodern Therapies, African Epistemologies,
- Child/Adolescent/Adult Psychopathology,
- Psychopharmacology, Health Psychology, Neurophysiology, Neuropsychology Assessments, Forensic Psychology
- Research Methods
- Ethics

Applicants should take special note of the fact that a pan-epistemic orientation to learning is seriously encouraged. Here, special emphasis is laid upon epistemology and ethics. The latter will focus primarily on medical and professional ethics.

1.2. Practical work

Students have the opportunity to develop the necessary competencies and practical skills through experiential work-integrated training in the coursework component, as well as through working in a practical placement. First-level students (M1s) are involved in various practicums, including psychological assessments of children/youth and community projects, which are conducted under the supervision of experienced clinicians. Community projects and group interventions are conducted through teamwork in the community and on campus under the supervision of lecturers.

Second-level students (M2s) are exposed to in vivo therapy and clinical case management through practice to develop specific clinical skills under supervision. The practicum sites are: Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU), Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital (DGMAH), and Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital. The practicum programme covers exposure to problem areas within various clinical settings, and these include the following blocks:

- a) **Child and Adolescent block at the SMU Clinic and in the community:** This block focuses on the community around SMU, under the supervision of lecturers.
- b) **Acute Psychiatry block in Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital (DGMAH):** This block provides students with experience in conducting assessments and psychotherapy with adult patients in acute Psychiatry, both with admitted patients and outpatients. Students also gain further experience by attending ward rounds, participating in multi-disciplinary team presentations, and report writing.
- c) **Chronic Psychiatry block at Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital:** This block exposes students to multi-disciplinary ward rounds, medico-legal conferences, and the treatment of psychiatric and forensic patients within the context of a psychiatric complex.
- d) **Adult and child assessments and psychotherapy at the Clinical Psychology Unit (DGMAH).** Patients include inpatients and outpatients who can visit the Unit. This block is combined with the Acute Psychiatry block at the Psychiatry Outpatient Unit.
- e) **Group and individual supportive interventions with patients in the medical wards of DGMAH.** Many patients are based in neurology, spinal, and renal wards. Other areas of training include casualty (Emergency Unit), paediatrics, internal medicine, general surgery, plastic surgery, orthopaedics, oncology, as well as obstetrics and gynaecology. Practical work is crucial to enable students to integrate and apply what they have learned in the theory modules. Detailed schedules will be provided during the training.

1.3. Research

The research component of the MSc in Clinical Psychology degree allows the candidate the opportunity to complete a mini-dissertation on an appropriate and relevant topic as approved by the Department of Clinical Psychology and the SMU Research Ethics Committee (SMUREC). Students are expected to complete their research projects by the end of their second year of the MSc Clinical Psychology study.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the general admission and selection requirements of the university, the following requirements apply for admission to the MSc in Clinical Psychology programme:

- 1) The minimum academic requirements to apply for the MSc in Clinical Psychology programme are:
 - a. A **completed**, accredited Honours degree in Psychology or the equivalent thereof.
 - b. An average of **at least 60%** for the above-mentioned Honours degree.
 - c. Proof of relevant training or academic record that shows Psychology as a major subject.
 - d. According to the HPCSA, candidates with a criminal record or criminal charges against them are not eligible to apply, and, therefore, cannot be admitted to the programme.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Firstly, the applicants must ensure that they meet the minimum academic requirements (as stipulated above) to apply for the MSc in Clinical Psychology at SMU before proceeding with the application process.

Secondly, and only after the admission criteria above are successfully met, applicants can complete and submit the following documents, which form a complete application portfolio:

Please complete all sections of the application form. Emailed application forms will not be accepted.

Attach the following documents to your student application form:

1. Typed **Personal Motivation**
2. A certified copy of your **Identity Document/Passport**
3. A certified copy of your **Grade 12 certificate/school leaving results**
4. A certified copy of your **Honours Psychology degree certificate**
5. Certified copies of your **Honours academic record**
6. **Additional academic records and certificates** from previous academic institutions
7. Certified copies of **SAQA certificates for qualifications obtained at non-South-African institutions** (where applicable).
8. **Proof of payment. An application fee of R250.00. Payment details: Account name: Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University; Standard Bank; Acc No.: 071244395, Branch Number: 020909, Reference: Clin Psy 4012. NB: No application form will be processed without proof of payment.**
9. Provide the confidential **Referee Report Form** from your choice of **two** appropriate referees. Both **Referee Reports** should be completed **electronically on the link provided on or before 15 May 2026 (before 13h00)**.
10. Submit the **Online Student Application Form** with the compulsory **documents attached on or before 15 May 2026 (before 13h00)**. No late and/or incomplete applications will be accepted. It remains the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the department receives the complete application before the closing date.

The queries for the MSc in Clinical Psychology application process can be directed to Ms. Nthabiseng Sibeko on (Tel: (012) 521 4632, E-mail: smuclinpsych.applications@gmail.com)

Please Note:

1. **Clinical Psychology Department Online Student Application Forms will only be accepted via the application link <https://www.smu.ac.za/msc-clinical-psychology-online-application-form/>**
2. **Referee Report Forms will only be accepted via the link (<https://www.smu.ac.za/msc-clinical-psychology-programme-referee-report-form/>) directly from the chosen Referees**
3. **The general university online application system will be accepted via the application link https://onlineapplication.smu.ac.za/pls/prodi41/gen.gw1pkg.gw1startup?x_processcode=ITS_OAP**
4. **Applications that are not fully completed are considered incomplete and will not undergo further processing or consideration.**
5. **Late applications will not be processed.**
6. **Applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements for admission into the MSc in Clinical Psychology will not be considered for selection.**

SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process is conducted by a panel of staff members from the Department of Clinical Psychology at SMU and supervising psychologists from HPCSA-accredited internship sites (DGMAH), who are involved in training candidates. The panel understands that the selection process can be gruelling and, therefore, endeavours to make the experience a developmental process which is constructive as possible.

The policies and criteria governing the application process and selection procedures for the MSc in Clinical Psychology programme are derived from the strategic mission and goals of the Department of Clinical Psychology and SMU. Selection procedures are aligned with institutional policies and are also informed by, on the one hand, historical, educational and social contexts within which the programme is based. Professional benchmarks and developments which allow the Department of Clinical Psychology to select the most competitive, adaptive, and suitable candidates for further training in Clinical Psychology will apply. In this regard, the academic and institutional policy framework of SMU is also brought to bear to meet the requirements of transformation and diversity throughout the selection process.

This selection process can be summarised as follows:

1. Initial Screening, Evaluation and Shortlisting of Applicants

The first round of selections entails a thorough review of application forms by the selection panel. Given a large number of applications to the programme, the initial round of selections is based purely on scrutiny of the documentation supplied. The minimum requirements listed above are used as criteria to screen the applicants.

Potential candidates who meet the requirements are shortlisted and invited to the selection process. Being shortlisted at this stage does not imply or guarantee a successful application. The Department of Clinical Psychology will contact the shortlisted applicants via email with the invitation to participate in the selection process. It is, therefore, important to provide an active email address. If applicants do not receive any correspondence from the Department of Clinical Psychology regarding the paper selection results by **06 July 2026**, they should consider their application unsuccessful.

2. Selection week

Applicants who have been shortlisted are invited to participate in the selection process, which is scheduled to take place from **27 to 31 July 2026**. During this week, applicants will be involved in various tasks and activities that may include individual interviews, group activities, writing activities, role plays, and panel interviews. Candidates are rated against several criteria. Ratings for applicants are collated, and the selection panel discusses the results. At the end of the selection week, a joint meeting of the selection panel determines the successful candidates. The most suitable candidates are identified by consensus. The decision of the selection panel regarding successful candidates is final and binding. Between **10 and 12** candidates may be selected, and a shortlist of further potential candidates is compiled. After the completion of the formal selection process, the final successful candidates are announced. Successful candidates will be informed in writing of the outcome of their applications. An opportunity is given to the applicants to indicate whether they accept the selection or not.

Due to the large number of applications, we cannot provide any feedback to unsuccessful applicants. In response to this limitation, we recommend that applicants make use of various resources available in the field of psychology for guidance and preparation for Master's Psychology selections.

Please Note:

1. Should you wish to withdraw from the selection process, please notify the Department of Clinical Psychology by contacting Ms. Nthabiseng Sibeko (Tel: (012) 521 4632, E-mail: smuclinpsych.applications@gmail.com) by no later than **10 July 2026**.
2. Applicants who accept the invitation to participate in the selection process at SMU are expected to personally be responsible for the costs of any accommodation and/or travel expenses that may be incurred.
3. The selected applicants are advised that it is their responsibility to obtain information on fee structure and accommodation, as these important issues are not managed by the Department of Clinical Psychology.

Prof Mokoena Maepa

MSc Clinical Psychology Programme Coordinator

Prof Lesiba Baloyi

HOD: Clinical Psychology