The Department and Our Concentrations

Q1: Are the programs in your department accredited?
A1: The Clinical Studies Program is considered a formal program and is accredited by the American Psychological Association (http://www.apa.org) and is a member of the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science (http://www.pcsas.org/) The APA only accredits doctoral graduate programs in clinical, counseling, and school psychology, and programs offering combinations of two or more of these areas because these are professional programs that require a license after graduation. Our other concentrations are not professional programs. Programs across the nation that are not clinical, counseling, or school psychology do not tend to seek out individual program accreditation, but instead rely on university-level accreditation. The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), which evaluates all degree-granting programs at our university. UHM is accredited by the WASC for the next 10 years.

Q2: Which of your faculty members are interested in taking students and where I can find more information about the faculty?
A2: All of our faculty are able to accept students, but they tend to decide on a yearly basis if they are interested in/have the resources for accepting students. Some basic information about our faculty can be found at http://socialsciences.people.hawaii.edu/faculty/?dept=psy and http://www.psychology.hawaii.edu/faculty.cfm. We also recommend that you contact the faculty member(s) you are interested in working with directly and ask them if they plan to take students for the next application cycle.

Q3: What does the program cost? Is there any financial assistance available for students accepted into the MA and PhD programs?
A3: Each year the Department has a certain number of Graduate Teaching Assistantships available. These pay full tuition and a modest stipend. The Department automatically considers all applicants (both HI residents and non-residents and both national and international students) for the financial aid it has available, so students do not need to apply. If a student is accepted into the program, she/he will be guaranteed tuition for the first year, usually in the form of a Teaching Assistantship. After the first year, students generally have to find a new position that comes with a tuition waiver, but in almost all cases students are able to find a position, and therefore, continue to have funding. Graduate students in our
program generally only have to pay minimal fees (e.g., Student Activities Fee). For other information on financial aid, see http://manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/content/financial-support.

Q4: What concentrations do you offer? Where can I find more information about the concentrations?
A4: We offer concentrations in Behavioral Neuroscience, Clinical Studies, Clinical Studies Respecialization, Cognition, Community and Cultural Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Experimental Psychopathology, and Social/Personality Psychology. More information about these concentrations can be found at http://www.psychology.hawaii.edu/concentrations/overview.html.

The Application Process

Q5: How can I learn more about the application process and the required forms/documents?
A5: You can learn more about the application process and the required forms at http://www.psychology.hawaii.edu/graduate/application.html. Please note that the application process involves two stages. Stage 1 involves processes required by the UHM Graduate Division (e.g., online application, application fee, official transcripts, GRE scores, and evidence of English language proficiency, if applicable). Stage 2 involves processes required by the Department of Psychology (e.g., supplemental information form, CV or resume, statement of objectives, three letters of recommendation, and unofficial transcripts).

Q6: Where do I send my application materials? Can I submit my application via e-mail?
A6: Application materials due to the UHM Graduate Division (Stage 1) should be sent to: University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Graduate Admissions Office, 2540 Maile Way, Spalding 354, Honolulu, HI 96822, USA. Official transcripts should be sent directly from your previous institution(s). Your GRE scores should be sent to UHM from Educational Testing Services (ETS); the institution code for UHM is 4867. The online application can be found at https://www.sis.hawaii.edu/uhdad/bwskalog.P_DispLoginNon. Application materials due to the Department of Psychology (Stage 2) can be mailed to: Department of Psychology, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, 2530 Dole Street, Sakamaki C 400, Honolulu, HI 96822-2294, USA, or e-mailed to gradpsy@hawaii.edu.
Q7: When is the application deadline? Do all materials need to be submitted by that date?
A7: The deadline for admissions for Fall semesters is December 1st of the preceding year (e.g., the deadline for Fall 2015 is December 1st, 2014). All application materials are due on that date.

Q8: What is the application fee and how do I pay it? Are application fee waivers available for students in special circumstances?
A8: The application fee is $100 starting Spring 2013 for all applicants. Application fees are non-refundable and may not be used for an application submitted at a later date. Applicants may pay by credit card, check or money order. You will be able to pay online (by Visa, or Master Card) upon submission of your online application. If you can't pay online, payment by check or money order must be in U.S. dollars, drawn on a U.S. bank, and made payable to the University of Hawai‘i. Applicants should include their full name and date of birth on the payment. Unfortunately, we are not able to waive the application fee. For more information, please contact Graduate Division at Tel: (808) 956-8544; Tel: (808) 956-8500; Voice/Text: (808) 956-4257; Email: gradadm@hawaii.edu.

Q9: Can I apply for enrollment for Spring or Summer terms?
A9: No, we only accept applications for Fall admissions.

Q10: Who do I contact if I have questions about the application process?
A10: You can e-mail the Graduate Assistant for Admissions in our Department at gradpsy@hawaii.edu. We do not schedule individual meetings or mail information to prospective students, but we are happy to answer any questions you may have via e-mail.

Q11: I want to get my MA in psychology, but I am not interested in getting a PhD at this time. Can I still apply to your Department?
A11: The Department does not offer terminal master's degrees – it is expected that every entrant will progress to Ph.D. if their performance is satisfactory.

Q12: The online application doesn't list the concentration that I am applying for. What option should I select?
A12: You should select 'Psychology- PhD' or a similar option on the online application. The online application is managed and compiled by the UHM Graduate Division and is a university-wide application (so it is not specific to our Department). You will have a chance to include the specific concentration that you are interested in on the Supplemental Information Form that is due to the Department.
Q13: Can I apply to more than one concentration?
A13: Yes, you may list more than one concentration on your application. If you decide to do so, be sure to list faculty from each concentration on the application question that asks who you would like to work with. Also, please be advised that you will most likely be accepted into only one concentration, although it is possible to have more than one advisor (e.g., one advisor from each concentration you are interested in). Please contact the faculty member(s) you are interested in working with to discuss this option.

Q14: What is the “faculty-student mentorship model”?
A14: This means that during the admissions process, we aim to create a "best match" for incoming graduate students and faculty members in the Department. Thus, having excellent academic credentials (e.g., high GRE scores and undergraduate GPA) does not insure acceptance for graduate study in the Department. It may be helpful to look through our faculty to see if there is anyone whose research interests match your own. Some basic information about our faculty can be found at http://socialsciences.people.hawaii.edu/faculty/?dept=psy and http://www.psychology.hawaii.edu/faculty.cfm.

Q15: How can I tell if I am a strong candidate for the psychology MA and PhD programs?
A15: The best way to help ascertain if you are strong candidate is to compare your credentials with those of students who have been accepted for graduate study in our Department. Students accepted for graduate study typically have the following credentials:

1. A baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution with a major in psychology or related field.
2. Cumulative undergraduate grade point averages of 3.5 or above.
3. GRE scores in the 600 range or above on the verbal and quantitative scales (160 verbal; 148 quantitative using the new scale), and 5.0 or above on the analytic scale.
4. Three strong letters of recommendation, typically from professors.
5. An average of 1 to 2 years of research experience in their desired field of study (usually working with professors during their undergraduate studies).
6. Research and training interests that are highly compatible with existing departmental resources (i.e., the student is well matched to work under the mentorship of an existing faculty member).

For additional information see the website for prospective students at http://www.psychology.hawaii.edu/graduate/prospective.html.
Q16: I didn't get a baccalaureate (undergraduate) degree in psychology. Can I still apply?

A16: The Department does not have specific course prerequisites, nor do we require a BA/BS or MA/MS in psychology for students interested in perusing an MA or PhD in our Department. However, the faculty strongly prefer applicants who have a background in psychology at the undergraduate level, with course work in statistics, methodology, abnormal psychology, and other basic areas such as physiological, cognitive, learning, behavioral, social, and developmental psychology. The Community and Cultural Psychology concentration encourages students from diverse educational backgrounds, but also prefers students who have previously completed at least 12 credits in psychology. As a general rule, between 20 and 30 credits in psychology would be appropriate. The Department does sometimes accept students who did not receive a baccalaureate/masters degree in psychology, so you are encouraged to apply if you are interested in the program. However, please be advised that you will likely be competing with applicants with previous training in psychology. It may be helpful to take the Psychology Subject GRE or take additional classes in psychology before applying to the program. For information about taking classes as an Unclassified Graduate Student (PBU student) at UHM, please visit http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/content/pbu-students

Q17: I noticed that the Psychology Subject GRE is not required for admissions. If I took this test, can I still submit my scores?

A17: That is correct- we do not require the Psychology Subject GRE, but if you would like to take it or have already, you can send your scores to UHM and they will be added to your application file. The general GRE is required for all applicants. Information about the GRE can be found at www.ets.org/gre. The Educational Testing Service [ETS] code for the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa is 4867.

Q18: I am an international student. Are there any special requirements for international students, and if so, where can I get more information?

A18: Information regarding admissions for international students can be found at http://manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/content/international-students. These guidelines/requirements are put in place by the Graduate Division- there are no additional requirements for international students through the Department of Psychology. Information about English proficiency requirements can be found at http://manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/content/english-proficiency. You can contact Graduate Division directly at Tel: (808) 956-8544; Tel: (808) 956-8500; Voice/Text: (808) 956-4257; Email: gradadm@hawaii.edu with any questions regarding these guidelines/requirements.
Q19: I study Psychology in England and I would love to go to University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa on exchange. Where can I find more information about your exchange program?
A19: Information regarding Mānoa International Exchange (MIX) can be found at http://manoa.hawaii.edu/international/mix/inbound_students/index.html. If you have additional questions, please contact the MIX coordinators at uhmix@hawaii.edu. If you are interested in taking classes as a visiting student, please refer to the site below ("Visiting students") which might be helpful in your situation: http://www.uhm.hawaii.edu/international/international_visitors/

Q20: I am interested in pursuing a PhD in psychology, but I do not currently have a Masters degree. Should I apply for the MA or the PhD Program?
A20: If you already have a MA in Psychology your application is automatically processed as a Ph.D. application. Otherwise it is processed as a MA application. This means that students who do not yet have their master's degree in psychology apply first to our MA program; as they near completion of the master's thesis they can apply to the PhD program through an internal application process.

Q21: I already have a Masters degree. Can I apply directly for the PhD program?
A21: If you already have a MA in Psychology your application is automatically processed as a Ph.D. application.

Q22: Do you offer a concentration or coursework in marriage and family therapy?
A22: No, we do not offer any graduate education in counseling, marriage and family therapy, school psychology, forensic psychology, or psychoanalysis.

Q23: I am currently a graduate student at another university. Does your Department admit transfer students?
A23: We do accept students who have already completed some graduate work, however, you would have to go through the regular application process. Once you are admitted into the program, you may be able to transfer credits. Whether or not credits transfer depends on the class you took (you will need to supply the syllabus), your grade, and the requirements of the class that you are asking the credits to count for. You would then need to fill out a substitution form and have it approved and signed (generally by the professor teaching the course and the Graduate Chair). The forms will then need to be processed by the Graduate Division. More information can be found at http://manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/content/transfer-pbu-credits.

Q24: Could I enroll as a part-time student and/or take classes online?
A24: Our programs are full–time and there is no provision for distance learning.
After applying to the program

Q25: Will you tell me when my application is complete?
A25: We do not automatically inform students if/when their application is complete, however, if you are concerned about the status of your application, please contact the Graduate Assistant for admissions at gradpsy@hawaii.edu. Please note that all application materials due to the UHM Graduate Division (Stage 1) must first be processed before they are sent to the department, which may take a few weeks (you should not be concerned if your application is processed after the application deadline as long as it was received by the Graduate Division by December 1st). Also, please note that it may take up to a week for mail to be delivered to Hawai‘i from the U.S. mainland or abroad.

Q26: When can I expect to hear back about if I have been accepted or not?
A26: Applicants are generally notified in mid-February to early March as to whether they have been accepted and/or if the faculty would like to schedule an interview. Applicants have until April 15th to notify the department of their decision to accept or reject admission. In some cases an applicant may be wait-listed and final notification of acceptance or denial may not occur until early April.

Q27: I was not accepted into the program. Can I get specific feedback on why I was not accepted?
A27: Unfortunately, due to the large number of applicants and the variety of factors that influence the faculty’s admissions decisions, we are unable to provide specific feedback. However, it may be helpful to compare your credentials to those of students who are accepted for graduate study (see Q15). Also, please be advised that your fit within the Department can influence your admissions decision (see Q14).

Please contact gradpsy@hawaii.edu with any questions related to this FAQ or to UHM psychology graduate admissions in general. Mahalo!