4+1 Accelerated M.S. Program in Behavioral Health

Overview of the 4+1 Program in Behavioral Health

The 4+1 terminal Master’s program in Behavioral Health provides qualified students earning a baccalaureate degree in Psychology or related fields (e.g., Public Health and Neuroscience) from Tulane University with graduate training in a specialty area of psychology. Behavioral Health is a broad term generally understood to subsume mental health, substance use disorders, and health related behaviors. Students who pursue the M.S. in Behavioral Health apply to one of two tracks: (1) Applied or (2) General. Students either may pursue the M.S. with an empirical thesis, concentrating in depth on a particular area of Behavioral Health, OR students may pursue the M.S. with a broad training base in Behavioral Health without a thesis. Admissions criteria and curricular requirements are detailed below.

Core Components of Program

The 4+1 M.S. program in Behavioral Health was developed with two goals in mind: (1) To provide students with training in basic areas in Behavioral Health, and (2) To provide students who are new to psychology or who wish to improve on their knowledge of psychology with a more in-depth understanding of the major areas of concentration at the graduate level. By the end of the +1 year, students are expected to develop knowledge and skills relevant to a broad range of topics in Behavioral Health directly relevant to future careers in clinical practice, research, or policy.

All students admitted to the 4+1 M.S. program in Behavioral Health will complete a two-semester Health Psychology course series. The primary purpose of the fall lecture course (PSYC 6700 Health Psychology I) is to provide a broad introduction to the study of health psychology by examining how biological, psychological, and social factors interact with and affect the efforts people make in promoting good health and preventing illness, the treatment people receive for medical problems, how effectively people cope with and reduce stress and pain, and the recovery, rehabilitation, and psychosocial adjustment of patients with serious health problems. The purpose of the spring seminar course (PSYC 6710 Health Psychology II) is to delve more deeply into contemporary topics in health psychology with direct relevance to the priorities outlined in recent healthcare reforms.

In addition, all students will complete two graduate research methods and statistics courses: (1) PSYC 6090 Univariate Statistics I (fall semester), and (2) PSYC 6100 Research Methods and Data Analysis in Behavioral Health (spring semester). PSYC 6090 is an introductory graduate-level course in applied statistics designed to prepare students to understand statistical results presented in journal articles and research reports, to select and conduct statistical analyses for methodology courses as well as independent research, to interpret the results of these analyses, and to think critically about the use of statistical analyses in studies reported in the media or in scientific journals. PSYC 6100 is designed to introduce students to methodological issues in clinical trials, which are research studies designed to evaluate clinical interventions in humans.

Students who pursue the M.S. in Behavioral Health apply to one of two tracks: (1) Applied or (2) General. Both thesis and non-thesis options are possible in the Applied and General Behavioral Health tracks. Please refer to the checklists below for additional details regarding the curriculum for the: (a) Applied thesis track, (b) Applied non-thesis track, (c) General thesis track, and (d) General non-thesis track.

Up to six graduate credit hours may count toward both the bachelor’s degree and the master’s degree. Also, up to six additional graduate credit hours taken as an overload during undergraduate study may be applied toward the M.S. degree. It is expected that students will complete some coursework toward the M.S. during their senior year. Note: students admitted to the Applied track must take PSYC 7400 Developmental Psychopathology during the spring semester of their senior year. In addition, it is expected that students pursuing the thesis option have conducted empirical research as an undergraduate student.

For advice on senior year courses that are appropriate for 4+1 M.S. applicants, please contact Dr. Julie Alvarez at jalvar@tulane.edu.
Applied Track – Behavioral Health M.S.

The Applied track in Behavioral Health provides students with training in the use of psychological principles and theories from the field of health psychology to overcome problems in real life situations. Specifically, there are three learning objectives for students admitted to the Applied track in Behavioral Health:

1. Students will gain a basic understanding of the scientific knowledge regarding the interplay between psychology and health and illness, including examining (a) psychological factors related to prevention and management of chronic disease, and (b) psychological factors affecting the treatment of health problems;
2. Students will learn about factors related to effective health care delivery and health care systems including the role that psychologists may play in integrated health care; and
3. Students will gain a basic scientific understanding of the major forms of psychopathology and assessment and treatment of the major mental disorders affecting individuals across the lifespan with a focus on youth.

In addition to the core courses discussed in the “Core Components of Program” section, students in the Applied track must take three applied courses: PSYC 7400 Developmental Psychopathology (during the spring semester of the senior year) and either the Assessment course sequence (PSYC 7610 Psychological Assessment I and PSYC 6670 Clinical Neuropsychological Assessment) or the Intervention course sequence (PSYC 7630 Behavioral and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention and PSYC 7660 Evidence-Based Interventions for Children and Adolescents). Only students admitted to the Applied track may take the applied courses. Note: Because the applied courses are capped at a small class size, not all students who apply for admission to the Applied track will be accepted into that track. Some students who apply to the Applied track may be offered admission in the General track. Moreover, students who are admitted to the Applied track may not receive their first choice of the Assessment or Intervention course sequence (which will depend each year on the number of students who are admitted to the Applied track).

The Applied thesis track in Behavioral Health requires 24 credit hours plus the thesis. Students electing to pursue the thesis option should have initiated empirical research as an undergraduate student and identified a specific area of research interest. A regular full-time faculty member in Psychology must commit to thesis supervision prior to admission; in some instances, adjunct and research faculty may serve as co-directors.

The non-thesis option in the Applied track in Behavioral Health comprises 30 graduate credit hours (as no thesis is required). Students electing to pursue this option desire a broad background in Applied Behavioral Health rather than specialization in a particular research area.

See Checklists below for additional details regarding the Applied track curriculum.

General Track – Behavioral Health M.S.

The Behavioral Health General track is for students who wish to increase their knowledge of psychology in a greater number of domains beyond the Applied Behavioral Health area described above, and students in this track will have the opportunity to tailor their curriculum to meet these needs. Specifically, there are two learning objectives for students admitted to the General track in Behavioral Health:

1. Students will gain a basic understanding of the scientific knowledge regarding the application of psychological theory and concepts to the study of physical health and disease; and
2. Students will have the opportunity to gain basic familiarity with the major concepts and theories in developmental psychology, psychopathology, social psychology, research design and methods, and physiological psychology.

The General thesis track in Behavioral Health requires 24 credit hours plus the thesis. Students electing to pursue the thesis option should have initiated empirical research as an undergraduate student and identified a specific area of research interest. A regular full-time faculty member in Psychology must commit to thesis supervision prior to admission; in some instances, adjunct and research faculty may serve as co-directors.

The non-thesis option in the General track in Behavioral Health comprises 30 graduate credit hours (as no thesis is required). Note: Students in this track may take up to 3 credits of independent study (or special topics).

See Checklists below for additional details regarding the General track curriculum.
Admissions Information

Criteria for Admission

Note: Applications for the 4+1 program in Behavioral Health are accepted only from students pursuing a baccalaureate degree from Tulane University.

Application Deadline: November 1

Students at Tulane working toward the baccalaureate degree in psychology or a related field (e.g., Public Health, Neuroscience) must apply for admission no later than November 1st of their senior year.

To be competitive for admission, students should meet the following criteria:

- GRE scores: Verbal = 150 or higher, Quantitative = 150 or higher, Analytical Writing = 3.5 or higher. Please plan ahead and place the order for your GRE scores to be sent to Tulane at least one month in advance of the application deadline (https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/scores/send/asr) – use school code 6173 for GRE scores. Although GRE scores are encouraged, 4+1 applicants may substitute SAT or ACT scores for GRE scores (SAT = Critical Reading + Mathematics Total of 1100 or higher; ACT Composite = 22 or higher). Note: If you choose to use your SAT/ACT scores instead of GRE scores, you must grant the Department of Psychology permission to access your SAT/ACT scores from your undergraduate record.

- Undergraduate grade point average of 3.5 or higher

- A letter grade of B or higher earned in PSYC 3090 (Univariate Statistics I)

- Baccalaureate degree from Tulane pending successful completion of requirements

- Letters of Reference:
  - You must obtain letters of recommendation from TWO full-time faculty members in the Department of Psychology at Tulane University. For applicants to the thesis track, one recommendation MUST contain a graduate faculty member’s commitment to supervise the thesis research (and at least 3 credits of independent empirical research in psychology should have been earned as an undergraduate).

Required Application Materials

1. Application for Graduate Study in the School of Science and Engineering: https://applygrad.tulane.edu/apply/
2. 4+1 Supplementary Application Form (pdf) uploaded to the online SSE application under “Optional Document(s)”
3. Current Undergraduate Transcript (a copy of the unofficial audit is acceptable)
4. Two letters of recommendation from full-time faculty members in the Department of Psychology at Tulane
5. Statement of Purpose uploaded to the online SSE application
6. Curriculum Vitae uploaded to the online SSE application under “Optional Document(s)”
7. GRE (or SAT/ACT) scores

Advising

All students admitted to the 4+1 Accelerated M.S. Program in Behavioral Health will be assigned an adviser (either Dr. Julie Alvarez or Dr. Mike Hoerger) to assure that each student’s uniquely tailored curriculum satisfies degree requirements, as well as the student’s own academic goals. The checklists (see below), which highlight the requirements of each track, should be helpful in planning your curriculum with your adviser.
Course Descriptions for Applied Behavioral Health Track: Assessment and Intervention Sequences

Assessment Course Sequence
Fall: Psychological Assessment I (PSYC 7610)
This course is the first in a two-semester sequence covering psychological assessment. Consistent with the view of psychological assessment as a dynamic and inherently therapeutic process, students learn to collect test data that provide an integrated view of a human being, with contextual, developmental and historical data, subjective experiences, presenting concerns, signs and symptoms, observational data, and information provided from multiple informants. Information is integrated to provide an understanding of the person evaluated in order to answer referral questions and develop interventions and/or therapeutic plans. Topics include the history of cognitive assessment, theories of intelligence and current issues affecting the field of cognitive assessment. Instruction includes foundational skills for administration, scoring, and interpretation of commonly used cognitive assessment instruments, interviewing skills, assessment of academic functioning, and report writing. Volunteer clients provide opportunities for practicing skills. Adherence to standardized test administration, and practice consistent with professional ethical principles and codes of conduct are emphasized throughout the course. In addition, client strengths and needs are embedded in an appreciation of diversity relevant to cognitive assessment and education. Students are taught to use self-reflection to understand their own performance and understand their contributions to the processes of conducting effective evaluations.

Spring: Clinical Neuropsychological Assessment (PSYC 6670)
Clinical neuropsychology is an applied science concerned with the behavioral expression of brain dysfunction. The primary objective of this course is to provide students with an introduction to the field of clinical neuropsychology. The course will begin by presenting an overview of the theory and practice of neuropsychological assessment, including a review of brain structures and functions. Following this overview, the course will introduce students to a variety of neuropsychological topics including cortical organization, plasticity, and disorders that are due to a nervous system malfunction. By the end of the course, students are expected to develop a working understanding of the basic domains of cognitive functioning (e.g., orientation and attention, perception, memory, verbal functions and language skills, concept formation and reasoning, executive functions, etc.) and how clinical neuropsychologists measure these functions.

Intervention Course Sequence
Fall: Behavioral and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (PSYC 7630)
This course will provide students with the theoretical and technical foundation necessary to implement behavioral and cognitive behavioral interventions in schools and other settings serving children and adolescents. The course will be equally split between a) behavioral assessment and intervention and b) assessment and intervention in the context of cognitive behavioral therapy. Assessment, case conceptualization, and treatment planning, with attention to treatment fidelity and multicultural competence, will be emphasized throughout. Lastly, students will be expected to critically evaluate behavioral and cognitive behavioral approaches within efficacy, effectiveness, and dissemination and implementation frameworks.

Spring: Evidence-Based Interventions for Children and Adolescents (PSYC 7660)
This course will provide students with the theoretical, empirical, and clinical knowledge to conduct Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and other evidence-based treatments in schools and other settings serving children and adolescents with psychological disorders. Case conceptualization and review of the available research of specific manualized therapies will be emphasized. Students will learn to integrate the best available research with clinical knowledge and to consider client characteristics, culture, and preferences when selecting interventions.
Checklist for 4+1 M.S. in Behavioral Health – Applied Track
Thesis Option

Spring Senior Year:
____ PSYC 7400 Developmental Psychopathology

General Curriculum:
____ 24 graduate credits in Psychology (8 graduate courses)
____ Empirical Master’s thesis (6 credits of MS Thesis Research)
____ Prospectus meeting (Held before October 1 for students entering in August and February 15 for students entering in January)
____ Successful Master’s thesis defense (typically held by April 15)

Required Courses (Fall +1 Year):
____ PSYC 6700 Health Psychology I
____ PSYC 6090 Univariate I
____ PSYC 7610 Psychological Assessment I OR PSYC 7630 Behavioral and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention
____ Elective
____ PSYC 9980 MS Thesis Research

Required Courses (Spring +1 Year):
____ PSYC 6710 Health Psychology II
____ PSYC 6100 Research Methods and Data Analysis in Behavioral Health
____ PSYC 6670 Clinical Neuropsychological Assessment OR PSYC 7660 Evidence-Based Interventions for Children and Adolescents
____ PSYC 9980 MS Thesis Research

Examples of Elective Courses:
PSYC 6060 Behavioral Endocrinology; PSYC 6180 History and Systems of Psychology; PSYC 6330 Neurobiology of Learning and Memory; PSYC 6590 Stress and Trauma; PSYC 7000 Social Psychology; PSYC 7010 Personality; PSYC 7020 Developmental Psychology; PSYC 7100 Psychopharmacology; PSYC 7150 Advanced Adolescent Psychology; PSYC 7160 Children of Color; PSYC 7170 Intergroup Relations; PSYC 7180 Social Identity

Other Requirements:
____ All courses counting towards the 24 credits must have a B- or higher grade. Grades below a B-do not count towards the degree.
____ The minimum grade point average calculated over the 24 credits counted toward the degree must be greater than 3.0.
____ No more than 6 credits can count towards both the Bachelor’s and the Master’s degree.
____ No more than 6 credits taken as an overload during undergraduate studies can count toward the Master’s degree.
____ Application for degree and submission of degree fees to the School of Science and Engineering is required.
____ Submission of thesis to the School of Science & Engineering.
Checklist for 4+1 M.S. in Behavioral Health – Applied Track
Non-Thesis Option

**Spring Senior Year:**
- PSYC 7400 Developmental Psychopathology

**General Curriculum:**
- 30 graduate credits in Psychology (10 graduate courses)

**Required Courses (Fall +1 Year):**
- PSYC 6700 Health Psychology I
- PSYC 6090 Univariate I
- PSYC 7610 Psychological Assessment I OR PSYC 7630 Behavioral and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention
- Elective
- Elective

**Required Courses (Spring +1 Year):**
- PSYC 6710 Health Psychology II
- PSYC 6100 Research Methods and Data Analysis in Behavioral Health
- PSYC 6670 Clinical Neuropsychological Assessment OR PSYC 7660 Evidence-Based Interventions for Children and Adolescents
- Elective

**Examples of Elective Courses:**
PSYC 6060 Behavioral Endocrinology; PSYC 6180 History and Systems of Psychology; PSYC 6330 Neurobiology of Learning and Memory; PSYC 6590 Stress and Trauma; PSYC 7000 Social Psychology; PSYC 7010 Personality; PSYC 7020 Developmental Psychology; PSYC 7100 Psychopharmacology; PSYC 7150 Advanced Adolescent Psychology; PSYC 7160 Children of Color; PSYC 7170 Intergroup Relations; PSYC 7180 Social Identity

**Other Requirements:**
- All courses counting towards the 30 credits must have a B- or higher grade. Grades below a B-do not count towards the degree.
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- No more than 6 credits can count towards both the Bachelor’s and the Master’s degree.
- No more than 6 credits taken as an overload during undergraduate studies can count toward the Master’s degree.
- Application for degree and submission of degree fees to the School of Science and Engineering is required.
Checklist for 4+1 M.S. in Behavioral Health – General Track
Thesis Option

**General Curriculum:**
- 24 graduate credits (8 graduate courses)
- No more than 3 credits from courses outside of Psychology
- No more than 3 credits in a Psychology independent study or special topics
- Empirical Master’s thesis (6 credits of MS Thesis Research)
- Prospectus meeting (Held before October 1 for students entering in August and February 15 for students entering in January)
- Successful Master’s thesis defense (typically held by April 15)

**Required Courses (Fall +1 Year):**
- PSYC 6700 Health Psychology I
- PSYC 6090 Univariate I
- Elective or Core Course
- Elective
- PSYC 9980 MS Thesis Research

**Required Courses (Spring +1 Year):**
- PSYC 6710 Health Psychology II
- PSYC 6100 Research Methods and Data Analysis in Behavioral Health
- Elective or Core Course
- Elective
- PSYC 9980 MS Thesis Research

**Other Required Course (Fall or Spring):**
- One core course (i.e., PSYC 7000-7090): PSYC 7000 Social Psychology; PSYC 7010 Personality; PSYC 7020 Developmental Psychology; PSYC 7030 Cognitive Neuroscience; PSYC 7040 Evolutionary Models of Psychology; PSYC 7070 Cognitive Psychology; PSYC 7080 Sensory and Motor Systems; PSYC 7090 Physiological Psychology

**Examples of Elective Courses:**
- PSYC 6060 Behavioral Endocrinology; PSYC 6110 Univariate II; PSYC 6130 Multivariate Statistics; PSYC 6180 History and Systems of Psychology; PSYC 6330 Neurobiology of Learning and Memory; PSYC 6590 Stress and Trauma; PSYC 7100 Psychopharmacology; PSYC 7150 Advanced Adolescent Psychology; PSYC 7160 Children of Color; PSYC 7170 Intergroup Relations; PSYC 7180 Social Identity

**Other Requirements:**
- All courses counting towards the 24 credits must have a B- or higher grade. Grades below a B- do not count towards the degree.
- The minimum grade point average calculated over the 24 credits counted toward the degree must be greater than 3.0.
- No more than 6 credits can count towards both the Bachelor’s and the Master’s degree.
- No more than 6 credits taken as an overload during undergraduate studies can count toward the Master’s degree.
- Application for degree and submission of degree fees to the School of Science and Engineering is required.
- Submission of thesis to the School of Science & Engineering.
Checklist for 4+1 M.S. in Behavioral Health – General Track
Non-Thesis Option

**General Curriculum:**
- 30 graduate credits (10 graduate courses)
- No more than 3 credits from courses outside of Psychology
- No more than 3 credits in a Psychology independent study or special topics

**Required Courses (Fall +1 Year):**
- PSYC 6700 Health Psychology I
- PSYC 6090 Univariate I
- Elective or Core Course
- Elective
- Elective

**Required Courses (Spring +1 Year):**
- PSYC 6710 Health Psychology II
- PSYC 6100 Research Methods and Data Analysis in Behavioral Health
- Elective or Core Course
- Elective
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