



Masters of Clinical/Counseling Psychology Professional Paper Guidelines

The professional paper in clinical psychology involves a theoretically-driven conceptualization and critical investigation of a clinical case study. The written product resulting from this effort is a professionally written manuscript providing a literature review and a comprehensive discussion of a selected case study. Following successful production of the written manuscript, students are required to successfully present their product to their Professional Paper team. To successfully pass the Professional Paper requirement students must receive passing evaluations on both the written manuscript and the oral presentation. To be eligible to complete the Professional Paper, students must have completed 30 hours of coursework and have a minimum GPA of 3.0.

Chair and Reader Selection

Students will work with a faculty team comprised of two clinical faculty members, a chair and a reader. Students will select a chair ***no later than October 1st of the fall semester of the student's second year.*** Each student's Professional Paper team will be comprised of full-time departmental clinical faculty and/or part-time or external clinical faculty; however, the chair must be a full-time departmental clinical faculty member. It is the student's responsibility to define the contents of the final manuscript with her/his team. Students should discuss their ideas for the professional paper with their chairperson in advance of preparing the paper. The role of the chair is to provide guidance and clarification regarding the content areas and organization of the paper.

In consultation with the chair, the student will identify a second faculty member to serve as reader ***no later than October 15th of the fall semester of the student's second year.*** The reader can be a full-time departmental clinical faculty and/or part-time or external clinical faculty. Once the Professional Paper team is identified and ***no later than October 31st,*** the student and their Professional Paper team will convene an initial planning meeting to discuss timelines and expectations.

Case Selection

Students will select the case for which they will complete their professional paper by no later than November 30th of the fall semester of their second year. Selected cases should include individual clients who students have seen a *minimum of three (3) sessions*. One of the sessions can be the clinical intake (if applicable).

Written Paper

In consultation with their chair, students will prepare a written document. The written manuscript will provide a case summary which address the chief complaint and pertinent history. The written manuscript should include a literature review that thoroughly discusses evidence-based information relevant to the case as well as the information based on the student's personal theoretical orientation and perspective. The written manuscript should also include information concerning etiology, differential diagnosis, diagnostic impression using the DSM 5 system, ethical considerations, and multicultural issues. Further the paper should discuss the primary and secondary treatment issues and goals as well as treatment strategies and prognosis based upon a critical analysis and implementation of their personal theoretical orientation and conceptualization of the case taking into consideration any identified ethical

and multicultural issues. The rationale for treatment should be explained within the context of the theoretical framework, and empirical comparisons of treatment approaches/strategies should be addressed.

Although inclusive of a literature review, the professional paper requires students to demonstrate their skills in case conceptualization using their personal theoretical framework, their knowledge and application of advanced psychopathology as it pertains to etiology and diagnosis, and their ability to critically use their theoretical perspective pertaining to the issues presented in the case and justify their proposed treatment approach/strategies based upon their appraisal and synthesis of the relevant information. Students are required to identify their preferred case and submit a written case summary to their Professional Paper team **no later than November 30th of their second year**. Students are also required to submit an annotated outline of their entire manuscript by **no later than February 15th of their second year**.

It is in the best interest of the student to submit as many drafts as possible; however, students are required to submit a minimum of one draft of their paper to their Professional Paper team prior to scheduling a meeting to present the paper. The chairperson (and reader if agreed) will review and comment on drafts, and the student will make revisions as appropriate before presenting it. Before presenting, both the chairperson and reader must provide approval that the student's written document is satisfactory and ready to go forward to presentation. In order to schedule a presentation dates, **the final written document must be completed and approved by the Professional Paper Team no later than April 15th**. Students who do not satisfactorily complete the written document by this date will not be allowed to move forward with presentation and will receive a grade of "Unsatisfactory." A delineated timeline is provided at the end of this document.

The range of topics addressed in the cases that will be covered by the professional papers is diverse. The length of the manuscript will vary and does not have to conform to any *specific* requirement, but as a guideline the professional paper will normally range from 15-25 pages, including references. The paper must be typed with double-spaced text lines, one-inch margins all around, and 12 point font. The paper should be properly numbered, and written using the guidelines provided in the latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

The sections of the paper should include:

1. Title Page
2. Abstract
3. Introduction
4. Case Summary
5. Literature Review
6. Case Conceptualization and Discussion which includes etiology, differential diagnosis, diagnostic impression using the DSM 5 system, ethical considerations, multicultural considerations, primary and secondary treatment issues and goals, and treatment strategies and prognosis
7. Conclusions and References

Oral Presentation

At the end of the preparation of the written professional paper and upon approval of the written document by the Professional Paper team, the student must orally present the paper in an open meeting scheduled with the Professional Paper team, departmental faculty, and program students. **Students are required to receive approval that the written document is complete prior to scheduling a meeting to present the paper**. The oral presentation has to be successfully completed **no later than the last day of finals during the spring semester of the**

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student's second year. If the last day of finals falls on a weekend, the oral presentation will need to be completed no later than the following Monday.

The Oral Presentation is a formal presentation of the professional paper, summarizing the literature reviewed pertinent to the case addressed and the theory-driven conceptualization of the case including etiology and diagnostic impressions, as well as the treatment approach/strategies aligned with the theoretical framework. The presentation should last approximately 30 minutes. The student should be prepared to present his or her information in a 15-minute case discussion and then answer questions from the Professional Paper team and audience regarding the case for the remaining 15 minutes. The Professional Paper team will evaluate and make a final decision on the oral presentation no more than one week following the presentation.

Grading Classifications

Students may receive one of three grade designations for the Professional Paper project: **(1) Pass/Pass with Minor Revisions (student will receive a grade of "S"); (2) Conditional Pass (student will have presented and receive a grade of Incomplete and be required to re-present); or, (3) Fail (student will receive a grade of "U" and be required to complete and present a new professional paper).** It is within the authority of the Professional Paper Team to require revisions to the professional paper following the presentation and before granting final approval. Grading designations for the oral defense are: **(1) Pass; (2) Conditional Pass-Re-Present (the current professional paper); (3) Fail.**

In order for a student to successfully complete the Professional Paper requirement, they must receive a Pass/Pass with Minor Revisions on the written manuscript AND a Pass on the Oral Presentation. If a student receives an Unsatisfactory grade (U), they will be required to complete and defend a new professional paper. All combinations of designations and the subsequent grade are as follows:

Written Manuscript Grade	Oral Defense Grade	Final Grade
Pass/Pass with Minor Revisions	Pass	Satisfactory (S)
Pass/Pass with Minor Revisions	Conditional Pass/Re-Present	Incomplete (I)
Pass/Pass with Minor Revisions	Fail	Unsatisfactory (U)
*Fail	N/A	Unsatisfactory (U)

**Students who do not complete their written manuscript by the April 15th deadline and/or who do not receive Professional Paper team approval of the final written manuscript.*

Upon final approval, the student and/or Professional Paper Committee Chair must submit the finalized Professional Paper in electronic form accompanied by verification that the student has successfully passed to the Graduate Director (via email) who will forward it to the School of Graduate Studies.

Professional Paper Completion Timeline (Please note all dates are NO LATER THAN):

Identification of Chair and Reader (Forms here).	No later than October 1st (Chair) and no later than October 15th (Reader) during fall semester of student's second year
Initial Planning Meeting w/ Professional Paper Team	No later than October 31st of student's second year
Identification of Professional Paper Case and Submission of Case Summary	No later than November 30th of student's second year

Development and Submission of Annotated Outline of Professional Paper to Professional Paper Team	No later than February 15th of the student's second year
Submission of Written Manuscript for Approval by Professional Paper Team	No later than April 15th of the student's second year
Oral Presentation	MUST be completed no later than last day of finals of spring semester of student's second year
Submission of Final Professional Paper w/ Professional Paper Team Approval to Graduate Director	No later than July 18th
Submission of Final Professional Paper to School of Graduate Studies by Graduate Director	No later than July 25th
Submission of all paperwork (Masters Degree Plan of Study, Professional Paper, etc.) to School of Graduate Studies	No later than August 1st