

2025

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY HANDBOOK

PGDIPPSYCH(CLIN)



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato



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1.0 WHAT IS CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY?

Clinical psychology is a discipline and a profession that applies psychological science, with a firm empirical foundation, and an emphasis on objective data to support assessment and treatment. Training in clinical psychology involves learning academic, practical, interpersonal, and emotional skills. An integration of science and practice is emphasised so that research informs practice, practical understanding and issues guide meaningful research, and individualised and unique clinical work is strengthened by the systematic application of the scientific method.

1.1 PRACTICING AS A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

Clinical psychologists base their assessment and treatment on the evidence generated through research. The assessment and treatment of clients raises new questions which inform theory and help design research. For these reasons, clinical psychologists need to be trained in research, practice, and theory as well the integration of these. The work of clinical psychologists can involve experiences that are complex, challenging, and confronting. Issues commonly encountered with clients during clinical training and professional practice can include:

- severe compromises in mental health and wellbeing, such as self-harm and suicidal behaviour
- challenging behaviour, such as interpersonal aggression and violence
- criminal offenses and severe antisocial behaviour
- sexually harmful behaviour towards adults and/or children
- sexual victimisation as a child and/or an adult
- substance misuse and addictions

If these types of behaviours or experiences bring particularly strong emotional reactions for you, please take time to work through these with a mental health professional before applying for this programme.

It is important that applicants are aware of what their 'triggers' maybe, to practice safely and ethically, as well as to ensure quality service delivery to clients.

1.2 WHAT QUALIFICATIONS ARE NEEDED TO PRACTICE AS A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST?

To practice as a clinical psychologist in New Zealand, it is necessary to become registered with the New Zealand Psychologists Board - <http://www.psychologistsboard.org.nz/>. The following qualifications have been prescribed for registration as a psychologist in the clinical psychologist Scopes of Practice:

A minimum of a master's degree in psychology from an accredited educational organisation and an accredited Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology, or equivalent qualification. Eligibility for a Clinical Psychologist scope of practice shall require a Board approved practicum or internship involving 1500 hours of supervised practice.

Please note the Masters degree requires a research based thesis with a minimum of 90pts, usually 120pts. If you have completed a taught Masters or a Masters with a 60pt dissertation, you will need to enrol in a Masters research thesis degree.

Applicants for registration must complete the appropriate academic programmes and provide character references. A record of criminal convictions must be supplied with the application to the clinical programme, and Police vetting must be completed prior to commencing the clinical programme. If an applicant does have a criminal conviction, registration must be considered individually by the New Zealand Psychologists Board, based on materials the applicant submits regarding the criminal history. If you are considering training as a clinical psychologist and do have a criminal conviction, we recommend that you consult with the Psychologists Board before applying to any programme to be certain you will be eligible for registration.

1.3 POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

The mission of the clinical psychology training programme at the University of Waikato is to collaborate with the professional community to train culturally and clinically competent, thoughtful, and reflective clinical psychologists who will contribute to the health and well-being of their communities.

The University of Waikato offers a three-year Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology (PGDipPsych(Clin)). Most students complete their Honours or postgraduate year (including the prerequisite papers for the clinical programme) prior to applying for the clinical programme. After entering the clinical program, students undertake the coursework and clinical work for the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme concurrently with their Master's for the first two years of the clinical programme.

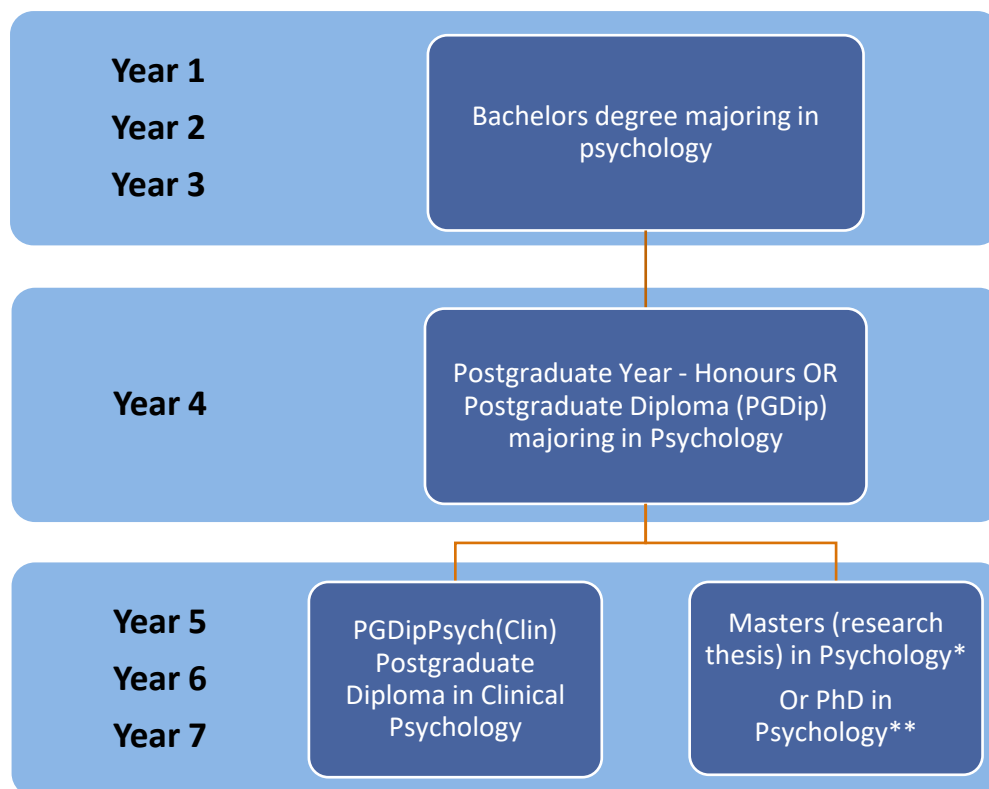
Following completion of the Master's research degree in psychology, the third and final year of the programme involves supervised clinical work in an internship setting four days per week

and one day per week of university classes and meetings. It is expected that these two qualifications will be completed in three consecutive years. An exception to this would be an enrolment for a PhD instead of the Masters.

Students who may be interested in the PhD option must discuss their programme of study with one of the Clinical Psychology programme team. Students would complete Year 1 and 2 of the PGDipPsych(Clin) then apply for a deferral from the clinical programme to complete the PhD (usually 1 to 2 years). Once the student has submitted their PhD, they would then re-join the diploma to complete Year 3/internship year.

If students have already been awarded a Masters or PhD in psychology, the coursework and practical clinical experience required for the diploma are still spread over three years, but the first two years are half-time. Students should be aware that this may limit their eligibility for student assistance grants.

1.4 CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY PATHWAY OUTLINE



*The Masters research thesis will be completed part time over Years 1 and 2 of the PGDipPsych(Clin)

** A PhD will add a minimum of two years to the PGDipPsych(Clin)

2.0 CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAMME STAFF

**Armon Tamatea, Programme Director and Associate Professor,
PhD (Massey), PGDip(Clin)Psych (Waikato)**

Armon was the Senior Advisor (Psychological Research) for the Department of Corrections and has worked extensively in the assessment and treatment of violent and sexual offenders. His research interests include institutional violence, personality disorders (especially psychopathic and antisocial patterns), New Zealand gangs, and general criminal justice and forensic issues.

Amy Bird, PhD (Otago), PGDipCIPs with Distinction (Otago), Senior Lecturer

Amy has over 15 years clinical experience in both public and private mental health settings with adults, adolescents and children. Amy's main clinical and research interests are in early prevention of mental health difficulties, particularly the role of early parent-child interactions and attachment relationships. Amy has a particular interest in longitudinal research and the intersection of physical and mental health during development.

**Dennis de Jong, Senior Clinical Tutor and Teaching Fellow,
PhD (Waikato), PGDipPsych(Clin) (Waikato)**

Dennis has six years clinical experience in a Kaupapa Māori mental health organisation working with adults, adolescents, and children. More recently Dennis has been involved in the supervision of clinical psychology trainees in Student Health Services along with providing pastoral care for clinical psychology students. Dennis' areas of interest in clinical psychology include family therapy, parenting issues, autistic spectrum disorder and gender dysphoria amongst others. Prior research interests include road safety and participatory design.

Simone Mohi, Lecturer

MPsych (Clinical) Wollongong, Doctor of Psychology (Clinical) Wollongong.

Simone is a clinical psychologist with 12+ years practice experience working across the lifespan in both public community mental health and hospital settings, as well as in the private sector. Simone is a board approved supervisor trainer for psychologists in Australia and is interested in their development, well-being and promoting sustainability within the profession. Simone is currently doing research in this context investigating the potential relevance of personal therapy for psychologists.

The Psychology Centre (TPC)

Teaching and Guest Lectures are also provided by The Psychology Centre (TPC) who are based at our Hamilton campus. The TPC staff, Joshua Myers, Natalie Parkes, Dawn Willix-Payne, Jayne Hartstone, Julia Davis and Tracey Irving are all registered clinical psychologists who provide support to the programme with teaching, supervision, placement, and internships.

Chellie Keenan, Clinical Programme Administrator

Chellie provides programme support for staff and students and programme enquiries.

The programme is also supported by Hauora Waikato (first year observations), clinical psychologists from several organisations provide supervision for placement and internships along with guest lectures.

3.0 RECOMMENDED AND REQUIRED COURSE WORK

3.1 UNDERGRADUATE COURSE WORK

In second year, the following papers (or papers on similar topics) are recommended:

- PSYCH202 Mauri Ora: Social Psychology of Human Flourishing
- PSYCH203 Cognitive Neuroscience
- PSYCH204 Behavioural Psychology and Perception
- PSYCH211 Understanding Psychological Research

In third year, the following papers are required, as they serve as prerequisites for subsequent requirements:

- PSYCH307 Psychological Research Methods
- PSYCH337 Individual Differences and Measurement
- PSYCH338 Mental Health and Wellbeing

Recommended Courses:

- PSYCH302 Community, Culture and Diversity
- PSYCH314 Behaviour Analysis
- PSYCH319 Infant and Child Development

3.2 GRADES

A minimum of a B+ average in Honours or Postgraduate Diploma courses in psychology is required to be considered for entry into the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme.

3.3 GRADUATE COURSE WORK

Students are required to complete an Honours or a Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology, including the following required prerequisite papers:

- PSYCH562 Theories of Psychotherapy
- PSYCH564 Developmental Psychopathology
- PSYCH575 Kaupapa Māori Psychology
- PSYCH581 Psychological Assessment * *(limited entry paper, if you have not completed this paper, and are offered a place in clinical programme, you will complete this in first year of clinical programme)*

If you have completed your postgraduate degree but have not completed one or more of the required papers, and you are accepted into the programme, you will be required to complete the papers you have not completed during your first year of study.

These papers are considered fundamental in the training of clinical psychologists. Applicants from other universities will need to demonstrate that they have completed courses that are similar in content to the above or be prepared to enrol in some additional courses to reach the required standard in these topics. Under special circumstances, or where a paper was not offered previously, an alternative but relevant paper may be substituted. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis after discussion with programme staff. University of Waikato papers have been restructured in recent years, so numbers and names may not match exactly; for required papers, the important matter is that the content of the paper is equivalent to the content of the paper indicated here.

3.4 RECOMMENDED COURSES

We are often asked what other papers might be taken during the postgraduate year. The following papers are recommended but not required for preparation for clinical training:

- PSYCH511 Evaluation Research Design
- PSYCH539 Graduate Research Methods in Psychology
- PSYCH560 Applied Behaviour Analysis - Theory and Issues
- PSYCH580 The Psychology of Criminal Conduct

Additionally, it is strongly recommended that applicants complete at least basic training in te reo Māori and tikanga before applying to the clinical programme. Bicultural competence is an important component of working as a clinical psychologist and is integral throughout the clinical psychology training process. Many students continue to study te reo Māori throughout their clinical training.



4.0 RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

Applications should show relevant experience. Relevant experience may include a previous employment history in related areas such as working in an agency alongside clinical psychologists, or working in social work, nursing, drug and alcohol services, occupational therapy, or other helping professions. It may also include voluntary work with people with psychological or social problems. Previous students have obtained valuable experience by volunteering at organisations such as Lifeline, Youthline, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Hospice, Emerge, Explore, Autism New Zealand, the Department of Corrections, HAIP, and Hauora Waikato.

The importance of such experience is that it allows applicants to demonstrate that they appreciate, understand, and empathise with the issues that people from a range of backgrounds may face. This kind of experience can also be valuable to you in clarifying your career goals and seeing how comfortable you are with the kinds of roles clinicians can take.

It is also critical that applicants can demonstrate understanding of the role and practice of clinical psychology. It is often helpful if they have sought out experienced clinical psychologists and discussed professional activities with them.

5.0 AGE, GENDER, AND ETHNICITY

There is no upper or lower age limit. All applications will be evaluated based on the applicant's previous academic and personal experience, bicultural responsiveness, commitment to training, and understanding of the profession.

We are committed to training a workforce that reflects the diversity of Aotearoa's population. We welcome applications from groups that are underrepresented in the current workforce, particularly Māori as well as Pacifica and LGBTQIA+ applicants.

6.0 REFERENCES

All applicants are required to have two recent letters of recommendation. It is also very helpful if the referees know something about the practice of clinical psychology and can describe the applicant's potential strengths in this area. It is suggested that one should be an academic staff member who can report on the applicant's performance in psychology courses. The other letter should be from someone who can discuss the applicant's personal strengths as they relate to the field of clinical psychology (e.g., the applicant's interpersonal and communication skills, responsibility, reliability, and honesty).

References need to come from people who know the applicant well, ideally in some relevant professional context such as a volunteer or paid job. *References from relatives or whanau will not be accepted.*

7.0 APPROACHES TO PRACTITIONERS

If you think that clinical psychology is the career choice for you, but you are not certain about what the job entails, it is helpful if you approach someone who is practising to find out. Clinical psychologists are employed in many different sectors, including the psychological services in Ara Poutama Department of Corrections, Te Whatu Ora, specialist services in Oranga Tamariki, Group Special Education, private practice, disability services, and at The Psychology Centre (TPC), which is the clinic based at the University of Waikato clinical training programme in Hamilton.

You may wish to talk to someone at one or more of these agencies in order to gain more information, but please remember that clinical psychologists are busy people and may not be able to see you within a short timeframe.

8.0 PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

Currently all classes are held at the University of Waikato's Hamilton campus. There will, occasionally, be additional activities that will be offered to those enrolled in the programme. Involvement in these activities is mandatory. Where possible, considerable advance warning will be provided. Such activities may include wānanga, noho marae, local and national conferences, workshops, and seminars.

Students are expected to attend class in person. All placement and internships are offered in the Waikato/Bay of Plenty/Taranaki region. If you have commitments or obligations outside of this area, and would find it difficult to attend these classes, placements and internships, you may like to consider applying to a clinical psychology programme closer to your home.



9.0 COURSE OUTLINES

The Diploma programme is made up of coursework, academic research, and supervised clinical practice. There is a gradual transition over the three years from a substantial coursework component in the first year to mainly supervised clinical experience (internships) in the final year.

The clinical programme at Waikato is regionally focused; this means that placements, internships, agency visits, and other programme activities predominantly take place in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions. Attendance at classes is mandatory, and in the first and second years, students may have class and programme activities on three or more days per week. In the internship year, students will have classes at the University one day per week, and four days per week of supervised clinical work. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that students plan to live in Hamilton or nearby or be prepared for significant expenditures of time and money for travel.

The following describes the programme structure during 2024; the days and time allocations may shift from year to year.

Year 1 Papers	Clinical papers (PSYC521 and PSYC522) are interwoven in Trimester A and Trimester B, with the classes alternating weeks. The classes run for three hours each Monday afternoon. On Fridays, a three-hour Clinical Skills class is delivered in the morning. On Friday afternoons students either visit local agencies to learn about various psychological services or TPC staff deliver classes based on group case discussions using example video-taped sessions with clients.
Year 1 Practica	Clinical observations include significant pre-term reading, followed by clinical observation rotations of approximately six days within a two-week period. One of the observed assessments will be written up as a case study and presented to the programme in the Case Conference class.
Year 2 Papers	One clinical paper (PSYC523 and PSYC524) runs for four hours each Monday afternoon during term time throughout the year.
Year 2 Practica	Students complete two 13-week placements of two full days per week, one in Trimester A and one in Trimester B. Placements are usually in the Waikato region, it is possible that some may be in other regions (Taranaki, Bay of Plenty,) and would therefore require significant travel, depending on availability. An Interviewing Workshop and other pre-placement trainings are held at the beginning of the first trimester of Year 2, usually comprised of four to five full days during the first week of classes. Please note that Year 1 and 2 students may also be completing their Masters theses. The thesis must be submitted prior to beginning their internship.
Year 3 Interns Papers	One clinical paper (PSYCH526 and PSYCH527) runs for three hours each Monday afternoon during term time throughout the year.

Year 3 Interns Practica	<p>Students complete either two 23-week (6 month) internships or one 46- week (12 month) internship of four full days per week.</p> <p>Internships are usually in the Hamilton/Waikato region, however some may be in other regions (Thames, Bay of Plenty, Taranaki) requiring significant travel, depending on funding.</p>
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In addition to the classes outlined above, all clinical students are required to attend Case Conference seminars, which are held on Monday mornings. Case Conference involves practitioners and students presenting current clinical cases in which they discuss their assessment, conceptualisation, and treatment approach. Each student presents one case each year. The purpose of the case conference is to provide experience in presenting and discussing clinical cases and related issues in a team setting. In addition, two or three times per trimester there may be special sessions or workshops that start earlier on Monday and run through part or all day.

The activities outlined above ensure that students are extremely busy keeping up with the demands of the programme. Students who enter this training programme need to be committed and well organised.

10.0 INTERNSHIPS

Internships are offered in a range of workplaces such as Te Whatu Ora services in Adult Mental Health Service, Infant, Child, and Adolescent Mental Health Service (ICAMHS), Hauora Waikato, Ara Poutama Department of Corrections, and private practice, among others. Each year the internships available to us vary and are dependent on funding. Before the beginning of the third year, prospective interns are advised which internships are available and guided by programme staff on their options. However, there is frequently competition for internships so we cannot guarantee that everyone's choice will be available, nor can we guarantee that all internship placements will be paid.

Normally, as noted above, the internship year will consist of either a one full year or two half year internships. Internships start late January with interns working four days per week (excluding Mondays) in their internship. Mondays are kept free for university programme requirements and related studies. Note: A full draft of the thesis (Masters or PhD) must be completed prior to applying for internships, typically mid-September of the second year of training, and the thesis must be submitted prior to commencing internship in January.

No applications for internships will be considered until a complete draft of your thesis has been submitted to your supervisor.

11.0 THE PSYCHOLOGY CENTRE (TPC)

The Psychology Centre (TPC), previously an independent charitable trust which has a longstanding relationship with the University of Waikato, is now part of the University and is based at our Hamilton campus. TPC is a core part of the clinical training programme, and students will experience several activities at TPC across all the years of their training. TPC is staffed by experienced clinical psychologists who provide training and supervision for our students, conduct research activities, and who generally involve themselves in a range of clinical endeavours.

12.0 RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS

As has been mentioned, the integration of research and practice is one of the hallmarks of a professional clinical psychologist and of a clinical psychology training programme. Research activities should be thought of as an integral part of clinical training, not as an add-on or hurdle that you must overcome to obtain the clinical diploma.

All students, at some point in their training, are required to engage in some research activity. This is most likely to begin at the postgraduate level (e.g., a directed study or Honours thesis) and continue at the master's level (i.e. thesis) but may also be in the form of a PhD. For those who have not completed their research degree before starting the programme, the topic of the study is required to be clinically relevant; this is broadly construed and includes most of the research conducted in the School of Psychology. Clinical students may be supervised by any of the staff in the school, so long as the topic is clinically relevant.

The research process can involve unexpected challenges (e.g., recruitment, equipment). Given the challenges of completing a research thesis alongside clinical training, students should work with their supervisor to develop a feasible project and timeline to ensure they do not need to defer their final year internship.

Being an intelligent consumer of research literature is a key outcome of your university education and training. You will be expected to use the empirical and theoretical literature critically in your clinical work and written case studies during your training. Students who have skills in the critical consumption of research literature will have an advantage. Students enrolled in the Clinical Diploma are encouraged to present their research findings in forums outside the Programme including hui, symposia, and national conferences.



13.0 COMMITMENT

As has been outlined in this document, clinical psychology training is quite intensive. Therefore, applicants are expected, prior to selection, to have considered their commitment to at least three consecutive years of intensive study and practice.

At the present time, up to twelve places are offered each year with the expectation that unless formal dispensation is provided by the Programme Director, each student will proceed through each year in sequence, contingent on passing each year's examinations. Permission may be granted to deviate from this norm where a student is enrolled in a PhD. Consideration of other matters, such as ill-health and family commitments, is at the discretion of the Programme Director and is dependent on the resources and needs of the programme.

Any leave of absence from the programme in any year of training will need to be approved in advance by the Director of Clinical Training. Extended absences beyond one year will only be approved in exceptional circumstances and return to the programme will require a demonstration of competence to the satisfaction of the Director of Clinical Training.

14.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

Students are expected to self-fund their training. While internships generally are paid positions in field agencies, there have been times when interns have not been remunerated. Students must cover their own costs for travel and accommodation, and this should be considered before applying since sometimes placements and internships can be outside the Hamilton area, requiring relocation and significant travel. The programme cannot predict or be responsible for placement or internship requirements; for example, agencies now require all student trainees to have up-to-date vaccinations before any clinical practica can begin, resulting in significant costs for some students (approximately \$750) even before students are allowed to attend their first day of classes in the programme.

As with any tertiary course, training is expensive, and many students do have to apply for student loans.

STUDYLINK INFORMATION: *Under current StudyLink guidelines an enrolment must be 0.8EFTS to be considered full-time. A student enrolling in the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme who has already completed their Masters/PhD in Psychology will be studying less than 0.8EFTS and therefore, not meeting the full-time requirement. Students are encouraged to explore their options with StudyLink directly.*

The University of Waikato does have several scholarships on offer; information on these can be found here <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/scholarships>.

15.0 PROFESSIONAL BODIES

Students may be interested in the following professional organisations for clinical psychologist/psychologists in New Zealand. They often offer free student membership and access to professional training opportunities.

- The New Zealand Psychological Society: www.psychology.org.nz
- New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists: www.nzccp.co.nz/
- He Paiaka Totara: Māori Psychology: <https://hepaiakatotara.org/>
- Pasifikology: <https://pasifikology.co.nz/>

The New Zealand Psychologists Board (<http://www.psychologistsboard.org.nz>) is the government constituted body that oversees the registration and practice of registered psychologists. The Psychologists Board was established by the Psychologists Act 1981, and was subsequently appointed as an authority in respect of the practice of psychology under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (HPCA) Act 2003.

16.0 REQUIREMENT TO REGISTER AS A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST IN NEW ZEALAND

Clinical psychology students who satisfactorily complete our three-year training programme can apply to the New Zealand Psychologists Board for registration. Registration carries with it various rights and responsibilities and is required in New Zealand to practice clinical psychology.

All psychologists practising in New Zealand are expected to meet the standards of practice that are outlined in the Board's [Core Competencies for the Practice of Psychology in New Zealand](#) and the [Code of Ethics for Psychologists Working in Aotearoa New Zealand 2002](#).

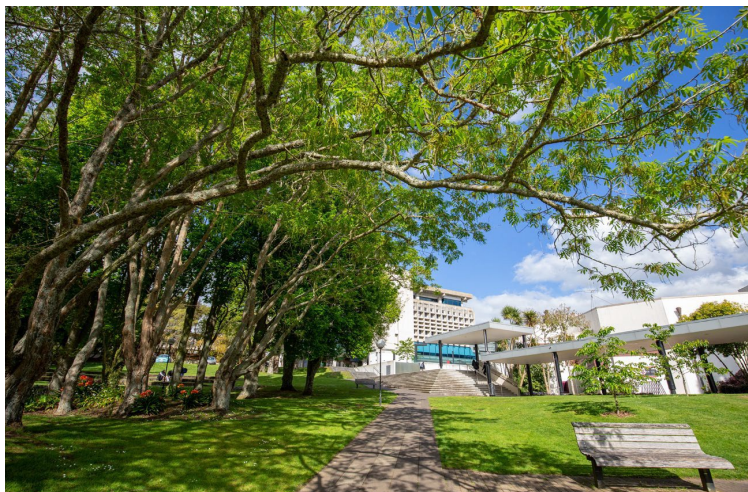
[Fitness to Practice](#) requirements are set by the NZ Psychologist Board. The principal purpose of the Act is to protect public health and safety by ensuring health practitioners are competent and fit to practice. The Board is charged with ensuring that psychologists are competent and fit to practice when they apply for registration and on an ongoing basis. Areas considered include effective communication, proficiency in English, criminal conviction, mental and physical conditions, disciplinary proceedings or a risk of endangerment to the public.

All successful graduates who wish to practice psychology in New Zealand are required to become registered and maintain an Annual Practising Certificate as protection for themselves, and under the HPCA Act, their clients. Under the Act, interns need to be registered as Intern Clinical Psychologists. Second year students are advised to complete and submit the appropriate forms (downloadable from the Registration Board website) in October/November of the preceding year.

17.0 CAREER OPTIONS

A degree in clinical psychology opens many different doors in terms of career development, such as:

- Te Whatu Ora, including work with young children who have developmental and/or behavioural problems, children and adolescents with mental health difficulties, adults with mental health difficulties who live in the community and/or who may be inpatients for a period, clients in crisis, older people, rehabilitation for those with neuropsychological impairment, clients who experience pain, in forensic psychology, and so on.
- Ara Poutama Department of Corrections (Psychological Service) employs clinical psychologists throughout the country. In this setting, psychologists work with offenders who are on probation or in prison, sometimes in specialist units such as the Youth Offenders Unit or units that provide treatment for sexual offending.
- Hauora Waikato employs clinical psychologists to provide a range of community and hospital-based Kaupapa Māori, bicultural, pan-cultural, and mainstream services for people in the Tainui rohe who are experiencing mental health and other difficulties.
- There are a growing number of agencies around the Motu who employ clinical psychologists and emphasise Kaupapa Māori approaches to psychological intervention.
- The Oranga Tamariki Service employs clinical psychologists in some cities. These clinicians work with children, caregivers, and families by providing assessments and sometimes treatment.
- Others work with people with disabilities (physical and intellectual) in specifically developed settings.
- Many clinicians eventually become self-employed in private practice after extensive experience and work with clients who self-refer as well as those who are referred by other individuals and agencies.



18.0 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following are some commonly asked questions of both staff and students in the clinical diploma programme. The list is not meant to be exhaustive but does cover some of the main issues.

1. Why choose the University of Waikato clinical programme?

All programmes have individual characteristics that allow trainees the opportunity to follow their interests. At Waikato, we focus on the application of the scientist-practitioner model through training in understanding and implementing the cognitive-behavioural theoretical model. There is a strong focus on clinical skill development and the training of practitioners for a wide variety of service settings. Because our School is fortunate enough to have strong Māori representation, we can offer a Kaupapa Māori framework and a bicultural approach to research. The clinical psychology programme has a commitment to a bicultural focus and encourages students and staff to incorporate bicultural perspectives in clinical practice.

We also consider the community of students and staff in the programme to be a crucial part of our training and the experience of developing a professional role. We encourage students to create positive, supportive networks within the programme, and to come to see peers and staff as colleagues and resources for personal and professional growth.

2. What is the difference between a clinical psychologist, a counsellor, and a psychiatrist?

As mentioned above, clinical psychologists specialise in the application of psychological knowledge and theory to the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural problems affecting adults, children, couples, and families. They may work with an individual client, or with couples, families, or groups. Clinical Psychologists are registered with the New Zealand Psychologist Board.

Counsellors provide help and support for a range of matters, including problems with relationships, mental health, and lifestyle. Counsellors offer their clients an opportunity to express their feelings and discuss what is happening in their lives, while listening, responding, and reflecting. Counsellors use a variety of techniques and theoretical frameworks, and they may work in private practice or agency settings.

Psychiatrists have a medical degree and additional specialist medical training. Their specialty is the provision of medical treatments for psychiatric disorders and the evaluation and treatment of mental disorders within a medical model.

3. Is the diploma available via distance learning?

No. This is a taught postgraduate qualification, and students need to attend classes at our Hamilton campus and placements and internships within the Waikato region.

4. How many people are accepted each year into the programme?

In the 2024 selection round, 12 students were offered a place in the programme. The number of practical clinical placements and internships available during the programme limits the number of students accepted each year into the training programme.

5. Does it really take 7 years of university training to become a registered clinical psychologist?

Yes. The steps to registration (based on full time study) are:

Bachelor degree (BA, BSc, BSocSc) in Psychology *3 years*

Honours year or Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology *1 year*

PGDipPsych(Clin). Maybe completed concurrently with Masters research thesis degree in Psychology *3 years*

6. I have come straight through university after leaving secondary school, would I be considered for selection?

There are no age barriers or preferences to selection. Applicants with well-rounded life experiences and well-developed interpersonal skills are likely to be preferred. The selection committee will consider an application based on academic preparation, life and work experiences and exposure to clinical issues, commitment to psychology as a career (which includes really understanding what a career in psychology entails), and the social skills and maturity that are necessary to work with people in distress. It is possible to develop this kind of knowledge and experience base during undergraduate and honours study, but it does go beyond the typical purely academic programme.

7. What experience should I have had before I apply?

Experiences that include interacting with people and finding ways of assisting them are generally useful. Some applicants have worked previously in related fields such as nursing, teaching, social work, and occupational therapy. Others have been involved in volunteer organisations. Working alongside a clinical psychologist in an agency is a good way to learn what the role entails. Previous students have obtained valuable experience by volunteering at organisations such as Lifeline, Youthline, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Hospice, Emerge, Explore, and Autism New Zealand.

8. I have studied clinical psychology overseas; can I just complete the internship component?

No, the internships available are only available to students who have been accepted into the PGDipPsych (Clin) programme and have completed the first two years of training.

9. How can I complete my Masters and PGDipPsych(Clin) at the same time?

Year 1 and 2 of the PGDipPsych(Clin) is considered a part time qualification and is usually completed concurrently with the Masters degree which is completed part time over two years. Students cannot start their internship year until their thesis has been submitted.

10. Will my internship be paid?

While we try to arrange paid internships for students, we cannot guarantee that all internships will be as paid employment. The internships can be offered in the Hamilton or Waikato region depending on the funding capacity of the providers. Note that Bay of Plenty and Taranaki options are also sometimes available depending on funding.

11. I want to do a PhD as well. Is that OK?

It may be, providing you meet the entry requirements for PhD study, can manage the workload requirements, and have sufficient funding for the extended period of training. Your PhD should bear a relationship to clinical matters. You are likely to need to take two years deferral from the clinical programme after Year 2 to work full time on your research while maintaining an association with the programme.

NB. Once completed, you would have a PGDipPsych(Clin) and a PhD in Psychology, not a PhD in Clinical Psychology. If you are wanting to apply for a PhD, you will need to discuss this with the Selection Committee at the time of application. The Selection Committee would need to consider whether your research plan can feasibly be combined with the demands of the clinical programme, and how this timeframe will fit with available placements and internships.

12. I am only interested in working with a certain population of clients. Why do I have to do three years training?

The programme is structured to allow students to build and develop their clinical skills. Students will complete generalist training in the understanding and application of sound, empirically informed psychological principles. Once students graduate, they should have a knowledge base and sufficient practice skills to allow them to work in a range of relevant workplaces. Successful completion of our training programme or one of the other University-based programmes leads directly to registration as a clinical psychologist.

13. How much does it cost?

Information on fees can be found on our website. <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/study/costs/>

14. Will I get a job at the end of the programme?

There is an extremely high rate of employment throughout New Zealand for students who graduate with the Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology. You will likely gain references in the practical components of your intern year that will assist you in gaining employment.

15. I am an international student, can I apply?

The PGDipPsych(Clin) programme is a three-year professional programme which includes coursework, academic research, and supervised clinical practice. There is a gradual transition over the three years from a substantial coursework component in the first year to mainly supervised clinical experience (internships) in the final year. The first two years of the programme are considered part time study, with the third year being paid work, which can make it difficult for international students to obtain a study visa. We recommend that international students gain residency first before applying.

16. How do students juggle the programme, whānau, work commitments, and have a life as well?

It is recognised that the programme is very demanding. It is important that students in the programme realise the need to balance their academic life with their personal life. It is also important that students have good organisational skills and clear boundaries, as well as enlisting family and whānau support and understanding. There will be busy times, but the staff are there to help if you feel you are under too much pressure.

17. Can I register as a psychologist after completing the clinical psychology programme?

Yes. Graduates can apply for registration under the Clinical Scope of Practice with the New Zealand Psychologists Board once they complete the PGDipPsych(Clin) and their Masters degree. The New Zealand Psychologist Board states:

“The following qualifications have been prescribed for registration as a psychologist in the Clinical Psychologist scope of practice:

A minimum of a Masters degree in Psychology from an accredited educational organisation and an accredited Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology, or equivalent qualification. Eligibility for a Clinical Psychologist scope of practice shall require a Board approved practicum or internship involving 1500 hours of supervised practice.”

The New Zealand Psychologists Board’s website provides further information on registration as a psychologist, scopes of practice, cultural competence and other professional issues relevant to practising in New Zealand.

18. I already have a Master’s research thesis degree in psychology, can I still apply?

If you have already completed a Master’s degree in psychology with a significant research component (minimum of 90pts) or a PhD in psychology, you won’t need to complete another one. You will just need to apply for the PGDipPsych(Clin) qualification. Please note that the PGDipPsych(Clin) qualification is considered to be part time study.

19. What happens if I am applying to other University programmes, and I get more than one offer?

All the University programmes have an agreed date by which time applicants must respond to the programme to accept an offer (and decline other offers). No programme should pressure you to respond before that date, and you should have responses from all programmes before that date, unless you are waitlisted.

20. Am I able to apply for a scholarship?

Information on scholarships available at the University of Waikato can be found here: <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/scholarships>.

21. I am an older student and have been told you take only young students. Is that true?

Definitely not. Again, age does not constitute an advantage or disadvantage. Applicants are selected based on what they have to offer the discipline of clinical psychology.

22. Can I work overseas as a clinical psychologist once I have completed training?

There is mutual recognition of psychologist registration between Australia and New Zealand, but the registration must be transferred to the relevant Board prior to commencing work as a registered psychologist. You would need to check with other countries regarding their registration requirements.

23. I have studied at another university and believe I meet the equivalent to the pre-requisites.

If you completed papers you believe to be equivalent to the University of Waikato papers, you will need to provide an official course outline from the institution you attended, detailing the content of the course. These details can then be added into the application form for the selection panel to assess. If there are papers that are equivalent, you may be given a waiver.

24. I have studied at another university, and I don't think I have completed the equivalent pre-requisites; can I still apply?

It may still be possible for you to apply for entry into the first year of the clinical programme. All our pre-requisites do need to be completed, but it may be possible for some students to do this alongside the clinical training. We will assess your application and determine how many pre-requisites you would need to complete (and whether any of your existing courses can be equivalent). If you already have a Masters or PhD, then taking additional pre-requisites alongside the first clinical year may be feasible. If you would like advice on this before applying, please contact us.

25. I have studied at the University of Waikato, and I don't have some of the prerequisites, can I still apply?

As outlined above, it may be possible to complete pre-requisites alongside the first year of clinical training. This could be manageable for students who have already completed a Masters or PhD and/or who have demonstrated strong academic capability. It may also be possible for a student to complete 1-2 pre-requisites alongside the first year of clinical training and research, and this would be considered by the Selection Panel. However, the training is demanding, and student wellbeing is an important consideration.

26. I meet all the entry criteria, have a Masters degree and work experience, can I just apply for the internship year?

No, the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme is a three-year programme. If you are only looking for an internship year, you will need to look at other options. The University of Waikato offers a PGDipPracPsych internship programme in Behaviour Analysis and Community Psychology. Information can be found [here](#).

27. I am still completing my Honours or PGDip but will complete this year, can I still apply?

We are aware that some students may not have completed their Honours degree or Postgraduate Diploma by the closing date of 1 October. You can still apply. However, offers of admission are contingent upon the satisfactory completion of the Honours degree prior to enrolment in the programme.

28. I want to be a clinical psychologist, but my degree does not have a psychology major.

You would need to complete a Graduate Diploma in psychology, which will give you the equivalent to a major in psychology. This would be followed by one year of post graduate study (Honours or PGDip). You would then be able to apply for the PGDipPsych(Clin) programme. Please check the handbook for information for prerequisite paper requirements and entry requirements.

29. What issues may I face as a clinical psychologist?

The work of clinical psychologists can involve experiences that are complex, challenging, and confronting. Applicants are advised that issues commonly encountered with clients during clinical training and professional practice can include:

- severe compromises in mental health and wellbeing, such as self-harm and suicidal behaviour
- challenging behaviour, such as interpersonal aggression and violence
- criminal offenses and severe antisocial behaviour
- sexually harmful behaviour towards adults and/or children
- sexual, violent, and emotional victimisation as a child and/or adult
- substance misuse and addictions

If these types of behaviours or experiences bring up particularly strong emotional reactions for you, please take time to work through these with a mental health professional before applying. It is important that applicants are aware of what their 'triggers' may be in order to practice safely and ethically as well as to ensure quality service delivery to clients.

30. I meet all the entry requirements; can I start the PGDipPsych(Clin) in Tri-B?

There is only one application round per year. Applications close on 1 October of the year prior. No application will be considered outside of this time. Successful applicants start the programme in Tri-A in the year following application.

19.0 PGDIPPSYCH(CLIN) APPLICATION PROCESS FOR 2025 ENTRY

Thank you for your interest in the Clinical Psychology programme at the University of Waikato. The information below outlines everything you will need to apply for admission for 2025 entry.

19.1 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- An Honours bachelor's degree in psychology - BA(Hons), BSc(Hons), BSocSc(Hons) or a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) majoring in Psychology from a New Zealand university, or an equivalent qualification acceptable to the University and approved by the Head of Department with a minimum of a B+ average.
- The Masters research thesis degree is considered a separate qualification and students will need to apply for this qualification via My Waikato. You are strongly advised to discuss possible research interests with potential supervisors prior to submitting this application. Entry to the Masters programme is subject to supervision availability.
- Students who are in the process of completing their Honours or PGDip year may still apply; however, offers of admission are contingent upon the satisfactory completion of the Honours degree or Postgraduate Diploma prior to enrolment in the programme. The following papers are pre-requisites:
 - PSYCH338 [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)
 - PSYCH337 [Individual Differences and Measurement](#)
 - PSYCH562 [Theories of Psychotherapy](#)
 - PSYCH564 [Developmental Psychopathology](#)
 - PSYCH575 [Kaupapa Māori Psychology](#)
 - PSYCH581 [Psychological Assessment](#) – *limited entry paper. If you have not completed this paper and are offered a place, you would get automatic entry in the first year of the clinical programme*
- If you have not completed one or more of these papers at University of Waikato, but believe that you've completed a similar paper at another university, please look at the outline of the paper(s) and note the details - <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/study/subjects/psychology>. You will be asked for information on these papers in the Selection Form.
- If you have one or two pre-requisite courses outstanding, you may still apply. If you are selected for the programme, a plan for completion of your outstanding papers will be arranged with the clinical team.
- **For students who are new to the University of Waikato:**
If you have gained academic qualifications at a university outside of New Zealand, you must first meet the criteria for admission to the University of Waikato before applying. You will need to apply via the My Waikato portal on <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/> Please apply as early as possible to prevent delays in the assessment of your qualifications. You will need to apply for admission to the University of Waikato before you can apply for the PGDipPsych(Clin).

19.2 HOW TO APPLY

The deadline for applications for entry in 2025: 1 October 2024, midnight (MDT)

There is a **TWO-STEP** application process for the Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology - PGDipPsych(Clin). It is important that you complete BOTH applications before the deadline, as without confirmation of both applications, the selection panel cannot review your application.

Step One: My Waikato application

Apply for the PGDipPsych(Clin) qualification via <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/study/apply>

Your enrolment will be assessed and if you meet basic entry criteria, you will be contacted by the Clinical Administrator and asked to complete the School of Psychological and Social Sciences Selection form.

Step Two: School of Psychological and Social Science Selection form

In this selection form, you will be asked to provide or upload the following documentation:

- **A copy of your academic transcript:** Attach certified transcripts to this application.
- **Prerequisite papers:** Confirmation of completion of prerequisite papers, or information on papers you believe are similar. A list of papers is outlined in the Selection form.
- **A Curriculum Vitae:** Please upload a copy of your most recent CV, with details of your educational experience, degrees obtained, honours and accomplishments, work experiences, and other professional kinds of activities. Please do not include general letters of recommendation from past employers.
- **Statement of Purpose:** Outline your reasons for considering clinical psychology as a career, a brief overview of your major interests within psychology and what you might hope to accomplish in your training
- **Reflections on cultural responsiveness:** Short questions asking include personal reflections about working with people from a different cultural context to yourself, your cultural background and experiences, the relevance of Te Tiriti in clinical practice.
- **Letters of recommendation:** You will be sent a letter template (along with the link to the selection form), which you will send to TWO referees who will be able to provide a confidential evaluation of your suitability for clinical psychology training. We require one academic referee who knows of your performance in psychology courses and one clinical/work reference. Work references should be from a line manager, not a colleague. Please ask your referees to email their confidential letter to chellie.keenan@waikato.ac.nz. It is your responsibility to ensure these letters are received by the closing date of 1 October 2024. Letters received after this date will not be considered.

19.3 SELECTION PROCESS

The Selection Committee consists of staff from the clinical psychology team and psychologists from the community.

- Full and complete applications must be received by midnight on 1 October 2024. Late applications will not be accepted. Please be aware that the application is a two-step process (see below), so both the My Waikato and the internal School of Psychology applications must be received by this deadline.
- Incomplete applications will not be shortlisted.
- Shortlisting of applicants will take place in late October. Applicants who are being offered an interview will then be contacted.
- Interview Dates will be in November 2024 (TBC). The interview process requires all shortlisted candidates to attend interviews over two days. Day 1 involves a group activity and two assessments in the morning, followed by individual 20-minute interviews will take place in the afternoon for candidates from outside of the Waikato region. On Day 2 individual interviews will continue for those who did not have an interview on Day 1.
- Interview dates cannot be changed, and applicants must be able to attend in person.
- The final decision on who will be offered a place in the programme will be based on your performance on the selection day, your application material, and references.
- Candidates will be advised of their application status by the end of November. If you are not successful in the first instance, you may be offered a place on the waitlist.
- Any offers may will be conditional on meeting entry requirements, a clear police vetting, reference checking, vaccination status and whether you need to complete further course work in the first year of training.
- The Selection Panel decision is final, and no correspondence can be entered into.
- Successful candidates will start on the 24 February 2025, at the Hamilton campus.



19.4 SELECTION CRITERIA

Entry into the programme is competitive. The number of places available is limited by the number of practical clinical placements and internships available. 12 places were offered for places starting in 2024 from over 100 applicants. The main criteria for selection for interview are based on:

- **Academic record:** We need to see evidence that you can perform very well in academic tasks such as critical reading of literature and written communication and have a solid background in the concepts and methods of psychology. Postgraduate grades must be at least a B+ average.
- **Prerequisite papers completed:** Applicants who need to complete more than two prerequisite papers alongside the first year of the clinical programme would need to demonstrate outstanding academic capacity as this would be a challenging workload, especially if you are also enrolled in a Masters research thesis degree.
- **Letters of recommendation:** **TWO** letters are required. Please choose people who can comment on your academic skills and record, and your suitability and capacity to relate to others.
- **Suitability for training:** Consideration is given to demeanor, self-awareness, relevant experience, maturity, capacity for critical thinking, motivation to complete a three-year programme, and fitness for registration.
- **Personal essay:** a one-page essay outlining your reasons for considering clinical psychology as a career, include a brief overview of your major interests within psychology and what you might hope to accomplish in your training.
- **Reflections on cultural responsiveness:** include personal reflections about working with people from a different cultural context to yourself, your cultural background and experiences, the relevance of Te Tiriti in clinical practice.
- **Work experience:** paid or unpaid relevant work experience.

Incomplete applications or applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

19.5 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR CONSIDERATION

Masters research thesis

All clinical psychology students must complete a Masters research thesis or a PhD to gain registration as a clinical psychologist. If you already have a Masters or PhD in Psychology, you will only need to apply for the clinical programme. All other students must apply for a Masters degree as well as submitting their application for the clinical psychology programme.

What if I don't have some or all the prerequisites required by the University of Waikato clinical psychology programme?

We will still consider your application if you meet the other entry criteria. Applicants who completed their Honours or Postgraduate diploma at the University of Waikato will likely have some of the prerequisites and be able to complete 1-2 papers alongside the first year of the clinical programme. Applicants who completed their Psychology Honours (or equivalent) elsewhere may not have any of the prerequisites (or equivalent papers). If you need to complete more than two pre-requisites' papers alongside the 1st year of the clinical programme you would need to demonstrate outstanding academic capacity as this would be a challenging workload, especially if you are also enrolled in a Masters research thesis degree.

Police Vetting

Government safety checking regulations made under the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014 require all those who work with children for state-funded organisations or as part of an educational or vocational training course be safety checked. All students who are offered a position in the clinical programme at the University of Waikato must comply with police vetting requirements. If the police vetting highlights information that suggests you may be a risk to children or vulnerable clients, the information will be discussed with the Programme Directors and other clinical staff and your offer for a place maybe withdrawn.

You will be asked to complete the required documents after accepting the offer of a place in the programme. Students will not be allowed to attend the first clinical practicum training if the police vetting has not been returned by the start of Trimester A. You will also be asked to confirm that you do not have any convictions or pending convictions each year. Police vetting is also required by the New Zealand Psychologists Board when applying for intern psychologist registration.

Vaccination for health care workers

As students will be completing placements and internships with a variety of community organisations, proof of student's vaccination status is required. These vaccinations comply with the Waikato District Health Board Vaccination for health care workers policy. All students who accept a position in the clinical programme at the University of Waikato must have proof of up-to-date vaccinations submitted before any clinical practica can begin. This may require significant costs (approximately \$750).

The series of vaccinations required may take up to three months to complete, so students are encouraged to make an appointment with their GP immediately after accepting the offer of a place in the programme. Students will not be allowed to attend the first clinical practicum training if they have not submitted their completed proof of vaccination by the due date.

Demands of the Clinical Psychology Training

This is a three-year Waikato based training programme. Applicants need to be aware that some Year 2 placements and Year 3 internships will be in Hamilton City and the Waikato region. This year, for example, some students were placed in Rotorua, Tauranga and Taranaki.

Please take time to consider whether there may be issues that may limit your ability to complete the training at this time. These may include:

- High academic demands – completing a Masters degree concurrently with the clinical diploma classes
- Client issues or behaviours that may be challenging and confronting.
- Family commitments, financial issues and other personal circumstances – you may need to study during semester breaks to complete your thesis
- Financial issues, if you have already completed a Masters degree, you would be considered part time study by StudyLink and may not be eligible for a student allowance. We suggest you contact StudyLink to check your eligibility prior to applying for the programme.
- While we endeavor to find paid internships for students, this cannot be guaranteed.

20.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

The School of Psychological and Social Sciences is based in the IJK Block at the Hamilton campus. Enquiries can be made in person to the School's Administration office, which is located on level 1 of K Block, room K.1.12.

Enquiries:

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

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