

Master of Science in Psychotherapy Program Handbook 2020-2021

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Introduction

Welcome from the Program Director

Welcome to the Master of Science (MSc) in Psychotherapy Program! Our goal is to provide each student who enters the program with comprehensive theoretical and practical knowledge in application of psychotherapeutic skills for the treatment of mental health problems. The program has been designed to meet students' learning objectives by incorporating a range of learning opportunities, including courses that contain self-directed, problem-based and small-group learning components. We have also incorporated opportunities for the direct application of clinical skills via practicum placements.

We are excited to welcome you to the program and to be a part of your educational journey towards excellence in your clinical practice of psychotherapy!

Handbook Overview

This handbook provides students who are enrolled in the program with specific program information and will act as the main reference document for students to refer to during their 20-months in the program. In addition, the handbook outlines specific academic regulations within the program and McMaster University and general guidelines, which are in keeping with McMaster University Policies. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the Program Handbook and the policies and procedures in the School of Graduate Studies Calendar (<https://academiccalendars.mcmaster.ca/>). Links to these resources are found throughout the handbook. If there is any discrepancy between this document and the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) Calendar, then the SGS Calendar shall prevail, with the exception of policies that are approved by the McMaster University Senate.

In addition to this handbook, recent program updates, news, and announcements can also be found on the MSc in Psychotherapy website. Please review this website regularly: <https://psychotherapy.mcmaster.ca/>

Program Administration

The MSc in Psychotherapy Program is housed within the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences (<https://psychiatry.mcmaster.ca/>) in the Faculty of Health Sciences (<https://fhs.mcmaster.ca/grad/>) at McMaster University (<https://www.mcmaster.ca/>).

Program Director	Dr. Elizabeth Pawluk	pawluke@mcmaster.ca
Admission and Curriculum Committee Lead	Dr. Laura O'Neill	oneill@mcmaster.ca
Program Manager	Tracey Oliphant	psychoth@mcmaster.ca
Coordinator of Clinical Education	TBD	

Who to contact for help?

- If you have questions about McMaster University or program-based policies and procedures, please contact the Program Manager, Tracey Oliphant. Some inquiries will be directed to the Program Director.
- Students may consult with the Program Director about topics that are beyond routine inquiries, such as concerns about progress in the program, personal problems affecting course work and clinical placements, etc.

Program Overview

Requirements

The MSc in Psychotherapy program is a full-time, course-based professional degree. The duration of the program is 5 terms that span over 20 months (Year 1: September to August; Year 2: September to early May). Please see the SGS Graduate Calendar for important dates for each term.

All students must complete the 7 required courses, 2 elective courses and 2 clinical practicums to graduate from the program.

For students to continue progressing through the program, they must: 1) Achieve the minimum passing grade of B- or PASS in each course and 2) Consistently demonstrate professional behaviours as outlined in the Professional Behaviour Code for Graduate Learners, Health Sciences.

Program Learning Outcomes

The MSc in Psychotherapy Program Learning Outcomes encompass the main competencies that successful graduates from the program will acquire via course work and clinical practicum. By the end of the program, students will be able to:

Theoretical Knowledge

1. Demonstrate and apply knowledge of key theoretical models of mental illness and wellness, including understanding the role of human development, physical health, and sociocultural factors, in their professional practice.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the theory and research support for evidence-based psychotherapies in the treatment of mental health disorders.

Therapeutic Skills

3. Demonstrate the competency to conduct clinical assessments, formulate case conceptualizations and develop treatment plans for a range of clinical presentations.
4. Engage in effective and competent clinical practice, which is demonstrated through the proficient use of evidence-based psychotherapies, ability to form therapeutic rapport, and effective communication with patients or clients.

Self-Awareness and Professional Standards of Conduct and Ethics

5. Demonstrate and integrate knowledge of professional standards of practice and ethical conduct in clinical practice.
6. Accurately appraise personal levels of clinical competence and identify areas for professional growth and self-directed learning.

Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

7. Use critical thinking skills to identify and solve complex problems and to appraise the success of the solutions employed.
8. Exhibit the ability to identify and make improvements in the delivery of patient or client care.

Communication Skills

9. Engage in effective written and oral communication skills with patients and other healthcare providers.

Research Knowledge and Skills

10. Demonstrate an understanding of clinical research methods, including the ability to critically evaluate the validity of clinical theories and research findings and the ability to conceptualize and develop a research study.
11. Integrate and apply knowledge of clinically relevant research findings in clinical practice, including the selection of appropriate evidence-based therapies, and measuring and evaluating clinical outcomes.

Required Courses

The program includes 7 required courses (see chart below) that are taken during specific terms in the program. No exceptions or substitutions will be granted for the required courses. The semesters are approximately 12 weeks in duration and the total courses hours per class is 36 (3 hours per week).

Practicum Courses

The program includes 2 practicum. The first practicum will be taken during Term 3 (approximately 4 days per week) and the second practicum will be taken across Terms 4 and 5 (approximately 2 days per week). Practicum may be conducted in various locations including community hospitals, community-based counselling centres, university wellness centres, family health teams, and private practices. Practicum may occur outside of Hamilton. Students are responsible for their own transportation and all associated costs in order to meet this program requirement. The program may defer a student's clinical practicum under special circumstances (e.g., the student has not met the academic requirements required to go on practicum). The program will assist students in finding clinical placements, but given that the placements are not directly affiliated with the program, the program cannot guarantee a practicum for each student.

The practicum provides students the ability to apply and demonstrate their skills in a clinical setting and receive ongoing support from a practicum supervisor who: is a member of a regulated health profession who has the competency to provide the controlled act of psychotherapy; has extensive clinical experience in the practice of psychotherapy; and is competent to provide clinical supervision.

Students will have a primary supervisor at the practicum site who will provide ongoing clinical supervision and guidance. Practicum supervisors will complete a standardized written evaluation of the student's clinical skill (i.e., application of interventions, ability to build a therapeutic alliance), communication skills, and ethics and professional standards. The supervisor will submit a midpoint and final evaluation at the end of the practicum. The evaluations will be reviewed by the student and submitted to the Coordinator of Clinical Education.

Prior to the end of each practicum, students are required to complete an integrative paper related to the practicum. The paper will involve selecting a topic that is relevant to their current practicum (e.g., a mental health problem, psychotherapy protocol) and discuss the theoretical knowledge that they have gained on this topic and how it relates to their current practicum. This paper will be reviewed by their practicum supervisor and formally graded by the Coordinator of Clinical Education.

With recommendations from the student's supervisor, the Coordinator of Clinical Education will provide a final grade for the practicum (pass/fail). Unsatisfactory evaluations or poor professional conduct when interacting with patients/clients, staff and supervisors while on practicum may result in the termination of the practicum. If a practicum is terminated, in most situations this will result in the student receiving a failing grade for the practicum and subsequently lead to a dismissal from the program.

Please refer to the *Practicum Handbook* for additional information and evaluation forms.

Elective Courses

Students are required to complete 2 elective courses offered by the program. The elective courses are offered on a rotating basis and therefore, not all elective courses are offered each year. The curriculum committee is responsible for identifying the electives that will be offered each year. In the chart below, specific Terms are recommended for when a student should take an elective course, however a student can take an elective on any term where one is available.

Required SGS Online Modules

There are 2 required SGS courses that ***must be completed first month of the Year 1 fall term***. Students may not graduate or register in a subsequent academic term without having successfully completed these online modules:

- SGS 101/ Academic Research Integrity and Ethics course
- SGS 201/Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA)

Enrollment

Section 2.5 of the graduate calendar provides detailed information, definitions and regulations about being a full-time student at McMaster.

Example timeline for completing the MSc in Psychotherapy

Year 1

	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3
	September – December	January – April	May - August
Required Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Principles of Evidence-Based Psychotherapy (3 units) ▪ Introduction to Mental Health and Wellness (3 units) ▪ Assessment and Case Formulation (3 units) ▪ <i>SGS 101/ Academic Research Integrity and Ethics course</i> ▪ <i>SGS 201/Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (3 units) ▪ Ethical Standards and Professional Practice (3 units) 	
Elective Courses		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elective (3 units) * 	
Practicum			Practicum I (4 days/week)

Year 2

	TERM 4	TERM 5
	September – December	January – April
Required Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clinical Research Methods (3 units) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applied Psychotherapy Skills (6 units) 	
Elective Courses		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elective (3 units) *
Practicum	Practicum II (2 days/week)	

* Suggested term for Elective Courses, however, students can take the electives during any term of either year 1 or 2. Elective course offerings can be found on the MSc in Psychotherapy website.

Student Evaluation in the MSc in Psychotherapy Program

Academic Regulations

The University Regulations affecting graduate students, including policies around Academic Integrity, Code of Conduct and Appeal procedures can be found in the McMaster - Graduate Calendar and are available via the following link:

<https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=8151>

Grading system

The official results of graduate courses are reported as letter grades. Each course has its own evaluation criteria that typically involves a range of assignments, quizzes, papers, presentations and class participation. Instructors may record grades for individual evaluation components of the course either as letter or numeric grades as shown below. Final grades are reported in Mosaic once they have been approved.

A+	=	90 to 100
A	=	85 to 89
A-	=	80 to 83
B+	=	77 to 79
B	=	73 to 76
B-	=	70 to 72
F	=	failure

Annual Performance Reviews

Students' performance in the MSc in Psychotherapy program will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they are meeting the program requirements. Students will be required to complete a standardized Progress Report that includes completed course work, practicum, and professional development activities and goals for the upcoming year. The progress report will be reviewed by the Academic Study Committee.

McMaster University procedures help ensure that students who encounter academic difficulty are dealt with appropriately with plans for remediation or recommended withdrawal. As per the regulations of the Graduate Calendar, following failure in a course or other requirement the program will conduct a review of the student's progress, and the student may be required to withdraw from the program. A student who fails a second course is required to withdraw.

On Being a Psychotherapist

Psychotherapist Profession

Completion of the MSc in Psychotherapy **does not** provide students with status as a Registered Psychotherapist or the ability to practice the controlled act of Psychotherapy. To practice Psychotherapy in Ontario, individuals are required to register with a specific regulatory college that under the Regulated Health Professions Act has been identified as a profession who can perform the controlled act of psychotherapy.

To practice as a Registered Psychotherapist in Ontario, individuals are required to register with the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO). Please review the CRPO's website for relevant registration material: <https://www.crpo.ca/>

The MSc in Psychotherapy Program will inform students of the requirements for registration with the CRPO. Specifically, the CRPO outlines a competency profile that individuals registering to become a psychotherapist must possess. Students will be informed of this competency profile and asked to keep record of their course work and clinical training as examples of their experiences in the various competency areas. This will be reviewed with students on an annual basis. Students who are interested in applying to the CRPO can begin their registration with the CRPO when they have completed 90% of their program requirements (i.e., prior to graduation).

Should a student be interested in providing psychotherapy or registering with a professional college outside of Ontario, they will be required to identify the specific training requirements.

Recognized Programs by the CRPO

As a new program, the MSc in Psychotherapy program is not yet a recognized program by the CRPO, but will apply to be recognized once eligible (i.e., a graduating cohort has completed the program).

Completing a non-recognized program will not limit a student's ability to register with the CRPO. When registering, students will be required to submit additional documentation regarding how they have met the competencies required for registration. The program will assist students with their applications to the college which can be completed when the student has completed 90% of the program requirements (i.e., in the last term of the program).

Important McMaster Policies, Guidelines and Procedures

Additional detail on the sections below can be found on the McMaster website:

<https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/quick-link-students/>

Professionalism

- Faculty of Health Sciences Professional Behaviour Code of Conduct for Learners
All Faculty of Health Sciences learners shall demonstrate the following professional behaviours in all academic and clinical settings at all times: Professional Responsibility, Integrity and Accountability
 - Self-Improvement and Pursuit of Excellence
 - Respectful Professional Relationships and Communication

For the purposes of this Code, Faculty of Health Sciences learners, shall be governed by this policy whether they are engaged in purely academic or academic/clinical activities, engaged in administrative functions associated with their learning, or conducting or assisting in research, and whether the activities are on or off site, in in-person interactions or online environments. The policy shall be applicable to all contexts and circumstances in which learners are, or could reasonably be considered to be, representing their educational program. The full guideline is available here:

<https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/quick-link-students/>

- **Student Code of Conduct**

As current and future members of the caring professions, Health Science learners at McMaster shall demonstrate their commitment to the professional behaviours that are outlined in this document - <http://fhs.mcmaster.ca/pcbe/policies.html>

- **Online Behaviour**

Avenue to Learn course pages are considered an extension of the classroom and usage is provided as a privilege subject to the same code of conduct expected in a lecture hall (see relevant section of the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities below). This privilege allows participation in course discussion forums and access to supplementary course materials. Please be advised that all areas of Avenue to Learn, including discussion forums, are owned and operated by McMaster University. Any content or communications deemed inappropriate by the course instructor (or designated individual) may be removed at his/her discretion. Per the University Technology Services Code of Conduct, all members of the McMaster community are obligated to use computing resources in ways that are responsible, ethical and professional. Avenue to Learn Terms of Use are available at <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>.

Students attending courses that are offered online via Web and Videoconferencing Platforms (e.g., Zoom, WebEx) should also assume their participation is equivalent to a in-person class and the same code of conduct applies. For online courses that are scheduled as a “virtual classroom” students are expected to attend the course at the time that the course is offered, as they would attend an in-person class.

Appeals Procedures

McMaster University Appeals Procedures are located here:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/StudentAppeal.pdf>

Please contact the Hearings Officer (in the University Secretariat Department) for more information.

Academic Integrity Policy

<https://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/>

Religious Holiday and Observance

Please refer to the Policy on Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO) located here:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-Observances.pdf>

University Student Identification Cards

Fully registered students (financially registered) will receive a University Student Photo Identification (ID) card with an ID number and bar code. Instructions for obtaining a Student ID card can be found here: <https://registrar.mcmaster.ca/services/student-card/>

Important Deadlines and Dates

Please see the Graduate Calendar: <https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/>

General Information

▪ **Change of Address/Name**

Students may change personal information (e.g., name and/or address) within MOSAIC. It is imperative that this information is kept current in case of emergencies.

It is the responsibility of the student to inform the Program Manager of a change in name, address, or telephone number.

▪ **Email Information**

Information from the program, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences, Faculty of Health Sciences is sent regularly to students via their McMaster e-mail accounts. Email is a critical communication avenue and students are expected to monitor their McMaster email accounts at least daily. Student email accounts are active from September 1st of the enrolment year and to October 15th of the graduation year.

<https://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/students/gettingstarted/electronicMail.html>

▪ **Confirmation of Enrollment Letters**

Occasionally a student requires a letter confirming enrollment in the program. Students may obtain this type of letter by logging into MOSAIC (Student Services Center/ Finances) and selecting the “Course Enrollment” letter option from the drop-down menu.

- **Confirmation of Graduation Letters**

Between the completion of Term 5 and convocation, students occasionally require a letter acknowledging that upon successful completion of all requirements of the program, the student is eligible to graduate in May. Students may obtain this type of letter by logging into MOSAIC (Student Services Center/ Finances) and selecting the “Approved to Graduate” letter option from the drop-down menu.

- **Transcripts**

Information on requesting a transcript: <https://registrar.mcmaster.ca/services/transcripts/>

- **Withdrawal Procedures**

Students seeking voluntary withdrawal from the Psychotherapy Program are requested to book an appointment with the Program Director and the Program Manager.

McMaster Student Services and Resources

Avenue to Learn (A2L)

<http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/>

Faculty of Health Sciences

<https://healthsci.mcmaster.ca>

Graduate Student Resources

<https://gs.mcmaster.ca/current-students/resources/>

Indigenous Students Health Sciences Office

<https://ishs.mcmaster.ca/>

International Student Services

<https://iss.mcmaster.ca/>

Library Services

<http://library.mcmaster.ca/>

Mosaic

<https://gs.mcmaster.ca/academic-services/how-enroll>

Student Accessibility Services: Accommodations for Chronic Conditions and Disabilities

<https://gs.mcmaster.ca/current-students/resources/graduate-disability-and-accommodations/>

Student Associations

Graduate Student Association: <https://gsamcmaster.org>

Health Sciences Graduate Student Federation:

<https://fhs.mcmaster.ca/grad/HSGSF.html>

Student Financial Aid and Scholarship Office

<https://sfas.mcmaster.ca/>

Student Office of the Registrar

<https://registrar.mcmaster.ca/>

Student Success Centre

<https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/>

Student Wellness Centre

<https://wellness.mcmaster.ca/>