**Clinical Psychology**

Job Summary

As a Clinical Psychologist you will assist individuals to live with a variety of mental, emotional and behavioural problems. Your input would help to minimise distress and promote psychological wellbeing. Clients may present with a wide range of mental health problems including anxiety, depression, obsessions, alcohol or drug abuse, psychosis, autism, personality problems, relationship or learning difficulties. Training and your eventual work would revolve around four main areas: childhood and adolescent problems; adult mental health; older adults and special populations. Experience with one or more of these populations would be of benefit.

You could work in a team with social workers, medics or other health professions. Most work for the NHS in hospitals, clinical or health centres. Clinical Psychologists carry out:

* Assessments (tests, interviews, direct observation)
* Intervention (advice, counselling, therapy, supporting carers). This often involves working in a multidisciplinary team, collaborating with doctors and other specialists.
* Development and monitoring of treatment programmes for patients
* Evaluation of services
* Consultation to other professions
* Research into this particular field

As a Clinical Psychologist, your salary can vary hugely depending on whether you work in public or private settings and how experienced you are. The NHS website provides details of salary scales.

Qualifications – How do I become a Clinical Psychologist?

1) You will need a 3-year degree in Psychology that meets the standards of accreditation by the British Psychological Society. Qualification with a 2i or more provides eligibility to apply for **GBC** (**G**raduate **B**asis for **C**hartered Membership of BPS).

* What to do if you achieved a 2:2 – you will need to complete a Masters (MSc) in Clinical Psychology involving direct patient contact and research (not funded by NHS).
1. Relevant work experience will be needed
2. It is often useful to obtain evidence of research expertise, eg: completing an MSc/PhD, although this is not essential.
3. You will need a 3-year Taught Doctorate in Clinical Psychology to gain eligibility to be registered by the **HPC** (**H**ealth **P**rofessions **C**ouncil) enabling you to become a Chartered Clinical Psychologist.
	* The NHS funds the Doctorate programme; successful applicants are employed by the NHS as a trainee Clinical Psychologist. Applicants must have relevant work experience and demonstrable research skills.
	* The BPS may offer some grants: <http://www.bps.org.uk/what-we-do/awards-grants/awards-grants>
	* The University of Southampton offers a well established Doctorate in Clinical Psychology: <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/psychology/postgraduate/research_degrees/courses/doctorate_in_clinical_psychology_pgr.page>?. The Strategic Health Authority (SHA) funds the Doctorate and placements are primarily in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. This programme is approved for registration with the HPC.
	* Application forms can be found through The Clearing House for Postgraduate Courses in Clinical Psychology - [www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp)
	* Funding for UK/EU Students at University of Southampton: http://www.soton.ac.uk/postgraduate/feesandfunding/pgukeufunding.html
4. Further supervision may be required

What relevant work experience would I need?

It is often very competitive to obtain a place on a postgraduate course in Clinical Psychology; fewer than 30 per cent of applicants are successful each year. At Southampton, the average number of applicants per place is 24.

Work experience may be just as important to a postgraduate selector as your degree. It proves that you are committed to the particular area and makes you stand out from the crowd.

It is often difficult to find work alongside a qualified Clinical Psychologist until you have graduated. You should think about the type of environment that Clinical Psychologists work in, and the type of people they work with, in order to complete relevant work experience. Undergraduates will often need to complete voluntary work before they can obtain paid work.

Sometimes it’s challenging to find work experience in a social or health care setting. If this is the case, shadowing someone to find out more about their job would be useful or even arranging a meeting with them to discuss what their career entails. The BPS allows you to search for psychologists in your area - http://www.bps.org.uk/psychology-public/find-psychologist/find-psychologist

The following points are examples of relevant work experience (some include jobs in the local area):

* The University of Southampton runs a programme for a Voluntary Research Assistant (VRA). This is unpaid and usually runs over the summer or a few hours a week during term time. It is a great opportunity to increase your chances of achieving a place on a postgraduate course. In addition, the researchers could write a letter of reference for you.
* Voluntary work as an Assistant Youth Support Worker (Woolston). Apply through http://www.susu.org/community-volunteering/opportunities-detail.html?opportunity=Assistant+Youth+Support+Worker+%28Woolston%29
* Community service volunteering - http://www.csv.org.uk/volunteering
* Voluntary work with people with disabilities / learning difficulties. The best way to find this work experience is by contacting schools in the local area.
* Working on mental health wards
* Working with the NHS <http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore_teachers_students.shtml>
* Southern Health welcomes volunteers or individuals wanting to obtain short-term work experience.
* Local volunteering at hospitals in Southampton
	+ - * + The Royal South Hants Hospital offers voluntary work for the League of Friends, volunteers run a small coffee shop and go out onto the wards to sell items.
* Solent Mind work all around the Southampton area, supporting people in their local communities or in hospital settings. They work with a range of different people with mental health issues. For more information go to <http://www.solentmind.org.uk/supporting-us.aspx>
* Residential Volunteer at Beaulieu, New Forest – transport is provided from Southampton. Apply through http://www.susu.org/community-volunteering/opportunities-detail.html?opportunity=Residential+Volunteer
* Voluntary work for UK charities for people with brain injuries at Headway Southampton - <http://www.headway-soton.co.uk/volunteering/>. There are currently two opportunities available: one is supporting the individuals with activities and the other is working as a volunteer mentor.
* The Life Foundation UK offers volunteering in countries such as Bulgaria and Romania working with abandoned children, children with learning disabilities or children with Autism. <http://www.lifefoundation.uk.com/international/>
* Mencap offers a wide range of volunteering opportunities working with people with disabilities. The particular areas that would be of most relevance would be a befriender or support worker role. They also offer work with young people which may also be useful. <http://jobs.mencap.org.uk/onlinejobs/voluntarysearch.asp?q=onlinejobs/voluntarysearch.asp>
* Assistant Psychologist role – easier to obtain after graduation and relevant voluntary work experience has been undertaken. These roles can be found in the Psychologist Appointments which is part of The Psychologist (the BPS monthly magazine) http://www.psychapp.co.uk/, in newspapers or in specialist publications.
* Go to the Leeds Clearing House for Clinical Psychology to find out what sort of experience you will need for postgraduate study: http://www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp/BasicEntryExperience.html

**If you are working with children or sensitive information you will need a CRB check.**

To find out more about life as a Clinical Psychologist, take a look at the BPS video:

http://www.youtube.com/user/bpsmediacentre#p/u/3/RDyQd1zUsdA