

Training in Clinical Psychology and Law

The UNL Clinical Psychology program collaborates with the UNL Law Psychology program to prepare students for careers in research and clinical practice that combine behavioral science, mental health and legal scholarship. This may include earning the **Master of Legal Studies (M.L.S.)** degree as well as the Ph.D. in clinical psychology. Areas of study within clinical psychology and law include mental health law and policy, therapeutic jurisprudence (using the law for therapeutic purposes) and forensic psychology. Students interested in forensic psychology should consider the **Ph.D.-M.L.S. track** and forensic emphasis options. Students interested in mental health law, policy, therapeutic jurisprudence or other applications of law in clinical psychology should contact clinical faculty with interests similar to their own. Faculty interests are described at <http://www.unl.edu/psypage/grad/clinical.shtml>.

The Master of Legal Studies Degree Program

The Master of Legal Studies (M.L.S.) Degree Program is designed for individuals who are interested in developing a formal understanding of the law as it affects their research and practice in psychology. It is not for individuals preparing to practice law. Students enrolled in the program are required to complete 33 credit hours of coursework in the College of Law, including three hours of Legal Research and Writing and six hours of Contracts, Property or Torts. The M.L.S. Degree is conferred upon the successful completion of the 33 credit hours and an oral final examination. More detailed information regarding the M.L.S. degree is available at http://law.unl.edu/academics/degree_programs.shtml#masterls.

Clinical Ph.D./M.L.S. applicants must apply to the College of Law for the M.L.S. degree after admission to the Clinical Program.

Clinical Ph.D./M.L.S. students should expect an extra year duration for their graduate training compared to other graduate students. Their law coursework will be completed in the second year of graduate school, although their involvement in law psychology research and practicum training extends throughout their Ph.D. program of studies.

MLS students are required to participate in the Law/Psychology research seminar and other related activities. In addition, MLS students will be required to perform relevant psycholegal research related to Masters-level and Dissertation research projects.

Clinical Ph.D./M.L.S Track

Training in Forensic Psychology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln includes the Ph.D. in clinical psychology and Masters of Legal Studies (M.L.S.). Students are admitted to both the Clinical and Law/Psychology Programs. The goal of training is specialization in forensic practice and research. Individuals with such training are expected to perform legally-informed research and clinical practice related to forensic mental health issues.

Forensic training at UNL is designed to prepare students for careers in research and clinical practice related to forensic and legal processes. The Ph.D./M.L.S. track is operated jointly by the Clinical Psychology and Law Psychology programs. Both programs strive to train scientist practitioners who engage in legally sensitive clinical and research activity. This program best suits the applicant who desires to engage in active research and clinical activity. The Clinical Ph.D./M.L.S track is not intended for individuals who desire training in “behavioral profiling” or “criminal investigative analysis”.

Consistent with many faculty within the Department of Psychology, Dr. Scalora and other forensic training faculty strive to integrate research activity within a multiple clinical and other applied contexts. Graduates who have obtained extensive forensic training have subsequently been employed in a wide range of settings, including:

- academia
- correctional settings
- federal threat assessment settings
- forensic hospitals
- policy settings
- public sector mental health settings

Clinical training is an important component of the Clinical Ph.D./M.L.S track. Forensic students receive at least 1000 hours of practicum experience involving assessment or services to legally-involved populations. Forensic students also have access to other practicum opportunities in the Clinical Psychology Training Program. Graduates of the Clinical Ph.D./M.L.S track have proved very competitive for prestigious internships, where solid clinical preparation is prerequisite.

Forensic Psychology Emphasis:

Students who desire specialized forensic psychology training but choose not to complete the MLS can complete a Forensic Psychology Empahsis.

For Forensic Emphasis training status, the following courses are required in addition to the core clinical training requirements (there may be some overlap of these requirements in some students' program of studies):

- Forensic Assessment
- Law & Behavioral Sciences Prosem or Topics in Law and Psychology
- Mental Health Law

At least one of the following law courses for at least three credits after the above courses:

- Criminal Law
- Criminal Procedure
- Family Law
- Juvenile Law

Torts

(Other related legal coursework with the approval of supervisory committee)

The **Forensic Emphasis** also requires that at least 1000 hours of practicum activity be performed at a site involving assessment or services to legally-involved populations. If such experiences are unavailable, a set of relevant alternatives can be considered.

Forensic Emphasis students are required to participate in the Law/Psychology research seminar and other related activities.