

# I want to be a.....

## Clinical Psychologist

---

### Overview of the role

Clinical psychologists use psychological methods and principles to assess and treat psychological problems. They promote and enhance mental well-being and research and evaluate new models of psychological therapy. Clinical psychologists support people with anxiety, depression, relationship problems, learning disabilities, child and family problems and serious mental illness. They also work with other professionals such as doctors, social workers. The majority of clinical psychologists are employed by the National Health Service in health and social care settings such as hospitals, child and adolescent mental health services, social services or in the community as part of a mental health team. Some clinical psychologists work in private practice while others become teachers or university researchers.

### Qualifications and training

To become a Clinical Psychologist you need:

- Graduate basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) - a degree (Usually a 2:1 or equivalent) in Psychology from a BPS (British Psychological Society) approved course. If you have a 2.2 you **may** need a masters/higher degree.
- On average, three years of relevant work experience gained while studying and after graduation.
- A three year Clinical Psychology Doctorate

The NHS funds the costs of the Doctorate programme. Applicants who are successful in gaining a place on the programme are also employed by the NHS as trainee clinical psychologists. In order to use the title Clinical Psychologist, you will need to be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) .

### Work experience

There is fierce competition for places on clinical training courses and the average age of successful applicants is 28. To increase your chances of success, you will need a good degree classification (normally a 2:1 or above), relevant work experience. This can vary in length from a minimum of 9 to 12 months, gained in a setting where you can meet and observe clinical psychologists, develop your knowledge of psychological theories and models and implement psychological interventions. You will also need evidence of strong research skills. It is worth contacting admissions tutors to enquire about entry requirements and understand exactly what they are looking for as course requirements may vary.

The University of Manchester Clin. Psy. D. Programme requires that "A minimum of twelve months' FTE paid clinically-relevant experience, such as work in a healthcare setting or clinical research, is ... essential." Linda Steen, Clinical Director for the Programme, states

The University of Manchester Careers Service – Psychology Careers Team (Aug, 2019)

Contact: [bmhcareers@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:bmhcareers@manchester.ac.uk)

that, “ in practice, this could be a role other than psychology assistant but the main thing we want to see is that the candidate has had some experience of delivering ‘psychological’ interventions under supervision (ideally by a clinical psychologist or psychological practitioner) or undertaking relevant research rather than simply ‘befriending’ patients. Very often nowadays, the type of relevant experience people come with is to have worked as a High intensity IAPT worker.”

Examples of roles to explore as an undergraduate and also after graduation in order to gain relevant experience include:

**Starting out....**

- Healthcare assistant, residential care assistant, nursing assistant, auxiliary nurse,
- Mental health support worker
- Assistant in a special needs school
- Helpline volunteer e.g. Nightline, Childline, Samaritans
- Mental health charity volunteer
- Clinical psychology departments - shadowing
- Undergraduate/postgraduate psychology departments –research assistant

**Build up to.....**

- Assistant Psychologist - NHS and private sector
- Trainee Psychological wellbeing practitioner (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies - IAPT) , leading onto High Intensity Therapist
- Research Assistant on a health related project

**Relevant research experience – Tip for current students**

Make your final year project / dissertation as clinically relevant as possible by working with clinical psychologists, NHS staff or clients or producing a project that will inform real world practice. Talk to your academic adviser or tutors to explore this.

**Where to find work experience vacancies**

Care related posts may be advertised in the local press, on local council and health authority websites or in journals such as Community Care. Approach charities for volunteer or support worker roles or try these sites:

- PsychMinded [www.psychminded.co.uk](http://www.psychminded.co.uk)
- Mental Health Jobs [www.mentalhealthjobs.co.uk](http://www.mentalhealthjobs.co.uk)
- NHS [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk)
- Healthjobs UK [www.healthjobsuk.com](http://www.healthjobsuk.com)
- Creative Support [www.creativesupport.co.uk](http://www.creativesupport.co.uk)
- Turning Point [www.turning-point.co.uk](http://www.turning-point.co.uk)
- The Big Life Group [www.thebiglifegroup.com/](http://www.thebiglifegroup.com/)
- The Priory Group [www.priorygroup.com](http://www.priorygroup.com)

Be prepared to be proactive – don’t just wait for posts to be advertised. You can approach organisations with a speculative application. Support roles are a great way to get into an

organization as more responsible roles are usually advertised internally to staff already working for the organization, before they go externally.

#### **For more experienced vacancies:**

The BPS Psychologist Appointments advertises assistant psychologist jobs and similar posts.

- **NHS jobs.**  
Assistant psychologist posts are advertised on the NHS website.  
[www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk)
- **Mental health jobs.**  
A recruitment website dedicated to mental health  
[www.mentalhealthjobs.co.uk](http://www.mentalhealthjobs.co.uk)
- **PsychMinded.**  
News, courses and job vacancies for all who work in psychology, psychiatry and mental health.  
[www.psychminded.co.uk](http://www.psychminded.co.uk)

Try writing to your **Regional Assistant Psychologists Group**. These groups meet regularly, invite outside speakers and offer general support to psychology graduates preparing for clinical psychology training. A full list of groups can be found at: [www.bps.org.uk/member-microsites/division-clinical-psychology/dcpgroups](http://www.bps.org.uk/member-microsites/division-clinical-psychology/dcpgroups)  
(click on Pre-qualification group)

#### **Contact a psychologist.**

Use the BPS's online directory to identify practicing psychologists that you could approach to find out more about roles, shadow or try to set up some experience  
[www.bps.org.uk/public/find-psychologist](http://www.bps.org.uk/public/find-psychologist)

#### **Clinical Psychology: Useful websites**

- **The Division of Clinical Psychology.**  
The organisation devoted to furthering the development of clinical psychology both as a body of knowledge and skills and as a profession.  
[www.bps.org.uk/member-microsites/division-clinical-psychology](http://www.bps.org.uk/member-microsites/division-clinical-psychology)
- **Clearing House for Postgraduate Courses in Clinical Psychology.**  
This is the route for making applications for the Clinical Doctorate. Includes practical advice on the experience needed, how and when to apply.  
[www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp) (Open in September)
- **ClinPsy**  
The only website of its kind run by qualified Chartered Clinical Psychologists. Careers advice and information about entry to the profession plus a discussion forum.  
[www.clinpsy.org.uk](http://www.clinpsy.org.uk)

## Find Manchester graduates doing this role

### LinkedIn

Use LinkedIn to see and connect with other psychology graduates from UoM who have gone into this and other roles. You can filter for “Psychology” graduates on the second page of the alumni tab, or just search for the job title you are looking for.

[www.linkedin.com/school/university-of-manchester/](http://www.linkedin.com/school/university-of-manchester/)

Join the **Psychology Graduate Network** just for Manchester students & graduates on LinkedIn and view members here too: [www.bit.ly/psychologynetwork](http://www.bit.ly/psychologynetwork)

NB) You can also use LinkedIn to click through to the organisations where people work in this role, connect with other people who work there and view any job vacancies.

The alumni office run **The Manchester Network** which is a similar platform for all Manchester alumni. You can also use this tool to send alumni any questions about their work. [www.network.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.network.manchester.ac.uk)

## More information about the role

For more information see the NHS Health Careers website

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/assistant-clinical-psychologist>

[www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/clinical-psychologist](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/clinical-psychologist)

And the Prospects job profile: [www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/clinical-psychologist](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/clinical-psychologist)