

The University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School and Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Advanced Practicum in Clinical Psychology

2024-2025 Cohort Brochure



WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

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Overview

Thank you for your interest. As part of an integrated, multi-level training program, the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School (UMass Chan) and Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital (WRCH) are pleased to offer an advanced practicum in clinical psychology focused on intervention, assessment, and professional development in working with adults with serious and persistent mental illness.

Clinical training occurs at WRCH, a large, urban, state psychiatric facility for adult and adolescent patients located in a developing biotechnology park and on the site of the former Worcester State Hospital. The advanced practicum will offer four part-time positions. Trainees will be expected to be onsite 20 hours per week over a 10-month period between July and May. Trainees will also receive a \$4,000 stipend.

Applicants must be in good academic standing in a doctoral program in psychology or counseling and be in at least their third year of clinical training. Preference will be given to applicants interested in supporting marginalized individuals, pursuing careers in the public sector, and with some experience working in inpatient settings, but all interested are encouraged to apply. Our program follows the guidelines of the Massachusetts Practicum Training Collaborative (PTC). Offer notifications will be made on the date selected by the PTC, to be determined and updated when available.

Requests for information may be sent to:

Michael Burke, PsyD

Advanced Practicum Co-Director
361 Plantation Street
Worcester, MA 01604
(774) 420-3129
michael.j.burke2@mass.gov

Ariel Ingber, PsyD

Advanced Practicum Co-Director
309 Belmont Street
Worcester, MA 01604
(508) 368-3865
ariel.ingber2@mass.gov

Faith Therrien, PsyD

Advanced Practicum Co-Director
309 Belmont Street
Worcester, MA 01604
(508) 368-3308
faith.therrien3@mass.gov

Deadline: Applications will be accepted from **November 1, 2023**, until **January 8, 2024**.

Additional important information for applicants: As of August 10, 2021, all faculty and staff employees of UMass Chan Medical School must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of employment; this applies to psychology interns, who are considered UMass Chan employees. (Employees of WRCH are also required to be fully vaccinated). UMass Chan allows certain exemptions for individuals with approved medical or religious accommodations. If you have questions or would like to learn more about this policy, please contact the UMass Chan-WRCH Director of Intern Training. Further, UMass Chan requires all of their employees to receive the annual flu shot. All vaccines are provided free of charge by UMass. If you have received these vaccinations elsewhere, you will be asked to provide proof of vaccination to the Human Resource Department.

Our Psychology Training Program

Training Philosophy and Mission

Our philosophy of training is an extension of the scientist-practitioner model of psychology training developed by Dr. David Shakow at Worcester State Hospital. This occurs in the context of a psychology training program whose staff members provide clinical service, basic and evaluation research, and training, and where a multidisciplinary or team approach is utilized for training and research. We believe that the context for training should also be broad rather than narrow, based on principles rather than particular techniques. Moreover, sensitivity to individual differences, needs, and goals is repeatedly stressed with all trainees in their work with clients.

As stated by Dr. Shakow in a 1946 article describing the Worcester State Hospital internship program, “Another principle emphasized from the beginning was the social responsibility which contact with patients involves. The fact that the intern’s findings might actually play a significant role in the disposition of a case required not only an appreciation and respect for the subject as a person, but also an understanding of the social implications of his examination.” Respect for the dignity and rights of those with whom the intern works continues to be central to our training philosophy.

At its broadest, our mission is to provide clinical training experiences with adults with serious mental illness, with an allegiance to the notion that any comprehensive view of human behavior must include an assessment of functioning at different levels of organization. While we do not adhere to any one theoretical orientation, we maintain that understanding one person involves the integration of that individual’s thoughts, feelings, and behavioral interactions in a variety of interpersonal and group structures, cultural contexts, and ethnic origins. In addition, we must be prepared, especially in the case of individuals experiencing severe problems in living, to design programs for change at different levels of psychosocial organization.

Accordingly, the UMass Chan/WRCH Advanced Practicum is designed to provide intensive, supervised clinical training in evidence-based psychological treatment, assessment, and consultation with adults with serious and persistent mental illness, many of whom are also legally involved and present with a wide range of co-occurring psychological and medical disorders. The delivery of professional psychological services is embedded within a recovery-oriented, person-centered culture of care in a public service context. Trainees are equipped with foundational and specialized knowledge, skills, and experience relevant to offering professional clinical services to individuals with serious mental illness.

The Psychology Training Program endeavors to confront disparities in treatment access, promote sensitivity toward those affected by systemic inequity, and encourage the practice of cultural humility by staff. Trainees are expected to carry these values. Furthermore, the training program leadership recognizes the increasingly well-developed cultural awareness of many burgeoning psychologists. As such, we welcome critique and feedback from our trainees as we, too, aim to grow. We hope that trainees carry a strong sense of social justice as they move forward through our training program and onward with their professional careers.

Setting

Opened in 2012, WRCH is the Department of Mental Health's (DMH) newest facility. Built on the ground of the former Worcester State Hospital and replacing three other state hospitals, the physical space was designed to promote the personal dignity of patients and promote dual-recovery-oriented, person-centered care. The recovery center is composed of two adult court evaluation units; nine adult continuing care units; two adolescent units operated by UMass Chan Medical School; and a unit with a mixed acute/continuing care population of hearing and Deaf/hard-of-hearing adults. A forensic service (composed of evaluators from UMass Chan and DMH) provides forensic evaluation services to the hospital.

Perhaps as a reflection of the judicial system's recognition of the over-prevalence of mental health challenges in legal contexts, many patients are referred to the hospital from district and superior courts for assessment and are subsequently civilly committed. In addition to serious and persistent mental illness, between 50 and 70% of the patient population has a co-occurring substance use disorder and significant medical co-morbidities. Other comorbid diagnostic presentations include personality, neurocognitive, and developmental disorders.

Beyond the wide range of clinical presentations, our patient population is composed of people diverse in ages, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical ability, and language and communication needs. Consequently, we are committed to providing equitable, trauma-informed mental health treatment.

Structure of the Advanced Practicum

The training year begins during the first week of July with an approximately two-week orientation, much of which is completed alongside incoming interns and postdoctoral fellows. During this time, trainees will become acquainted with the daily routines of WRCH, receive a formal introduction to the staff and programs of various departments within the recovery center, and are systematically introduced to the principal emphases and lines of work within the psychology department. The orientation consists of a hospital orientation required for all new employees as well as an orientation to the Department of Psychology's workflow, administrative procedures, and a range of foundational, clinically-focused seminar modules. These pertain to mental status exams, understanding and working with people with psychosis and other serious mental illness, diversity issues in assessment and treatment, positive behavior support interventions, and evidence-based risk assessments.

Throughout the advanced practicum year, trainees will receive intensive training in interview techniques and behavioral assessment techniques is given during the orientation period to prepare trainees for a variety of clinical activities. As a main part of their clinical responsibilities, trainees will carry an individual psychotherapy caseload and co-facilitate at least one psychotherapy group. Clients will largely be civilly committed individuals on continuing care units, but opportunities for focused, short-term therapeutic interventions on the court evaluation units may be available. Psychotherapy group opportunities will include Cognitive Enhancement Restructuring Treatment (CERT), CBT for Psychosis, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Relapse Prevention Planning, Legal Education/Competency Restoration, Mentally Ill/Problematic Sexual Behavior (MI/PSB). Trainees will also participate in milieu therapy by facilitating community meetings. Trainees interested in developing their own group may be able to work alongside interns and postdoctoral fellows to achieve this goal.

In addition to clinical intervention, trainees will be engaged in a range of assessment activities and participate in didactic seminars to better prepare them for the task. Trainees will be responsible for conducting psychology admission evaluations—which include collection of biopsychosocial data, a cognitive screening measure, assessments of trauma and risk, and brief clinical formulation—as part of the standard WRCH admission process. Additionally, as a training program housed within a state psychiatric facility providing treatment to a large forensic population, risk assessment is a major component of the clinical work performed by psychologists at WRCH. Trainees will therefore have opportunities to work with supervisors to complete enhanced assessments of violence, suicidality, substance use, and fire-setting. Under the guidance of designated testing supervisors, trainees will also complete psychological testing referrals originating from throughout WRCH. These referrals may necessitate the use of instruments which assess cognitive abilities, personality, effort, and feigning. Lastly, those interested may request to shadow a Designated Forensic Psychologist (DFP) to observe forensic mental health assessments. This opportunity may at times include providing psychological testing as part of the DFP’s evaluation for the court.

Trainees will be assigned a primary supervisor with whom they will meet at least once weekly to review their clinical work, discuss successes and concerns, and receive professional development and mentoring. In addition, advanced practicum students will have weekly group supervision with an intern supervisor from our APA approved internship program. Trainees interested in specialized therapeutic interventions, such as CBT for Psychosis or DBT, may have the opportunity to join ongoing consultation groups as well. Trainees are also encouraged to consult with the other members of their cohort and will have the opportunity to receive further mentoring from interns and postdoctoral fellows in our other training programs.

Trainees will also participate in weekly didactic seminars spanning an extensive range of topics throughout the entirety of the year. These include evidence-based treatment interventions; neuropsychology; forensic evaluation; culturally competent treatment and assessment; professional development; psychopathology and psychopharmacology; social justice advocacy, and psychological treatment modalities with particular emphasis on family and group approaches. The seminar series also includes topics such as psychosocial rehabilitation, and the importance of integration of ethnic diversity in assessment. Trainees are also welcome to attend weekly UMass Chan Grand Rounds on a variety of mental health topics, which are held at the Medical School, as well as other regular seminars and workshops (e.g., biweekly UMass Law and Psychiatry Seminars; monthly WRCH Grand Rounds).

Of note, while certain aspects of our training program are inflexible and are viewed as necessary components of our trainees’ development, we value and hope to meet our trainees’ specific needs and interests. As trainees move through the year, it is anticipated they will become more efficient and expeditious in completing their work, develop more specific interests, and demonstrate growing proficiencies. With these points in mind, trainees will be encouraged to pursue additional clinical opportunities over time and may be given the freedom to structure their time differently with supervisor and training program leadership approval.

The Application Process

Prerequisites and Considerations

As noted above, the Advanced Practicum is open to students in good academic standing and in at least their third year of training in clinical psychology or counseling doctoral programs. Applicants must come from a regionally accredited professional or educational institution. Completion of coursework in psychological testing, particularly cognitive and personality assessment, is required. Candidates should have some experience writing integrated psychological or neuropsychological assessment reports. Strong writing skills overall, as well as efficient and quality formulation abilities, are highly valued.

Regarding ideal candidate qualities, we are seeking students who have a passion for working with marginalized individuals in the public sector, or those who believe they will find this work meaningful. All interested in exposure to serious and persistent mental illness as well as forensic issues are encouraged to apply, although some prior experience working on an inpatient psychiatric unit is preferred. Those who enjoy performing a variety of clinical activities and are easily adaptable will thrive at WRCH. Prospective candidates should also be aware the work is fast-paced and, given the symptom acuity and high level of need of those we treat, often demanding. As alluded to, this training experience is also writing intensive.

Application Materials

Prospective candidates should provide all of the following to Drs. Burke, Ingber, and Therrien by email:

- Cover letter, detailing your relevant experiences and specific interest in the Advanced Practicum
- Curriculum Vita
- Unofficial Transcript
- Three letters of reference, at least one from a field training supervisor
- Fully redacted, HIPAA-compliant case formulation, including a comprehensive biopsychosocial history and mental status exam
- If available, a fully redacted, HIPAA-compliant psychological or neuropsychological testing report

Only complete application packages will be considered. Letter writers may email their letters directly to the Advanced Practicum Co-Directors should they desire to do so. In their cover letters, applicants are encouraged to share not only their professional experiences which make them an appropriate match for our program, but also their personal interests, qualities, and experiences which have led them to be interested in working in this type of setting. Applicants will be notified as soon as possible, but no later than 1/12/24, whether they have been invited for interview.

Applicant Interviews

Interviews will be conducted during the final week of January 2024, dates and times to be determined, and will last three to four hours. With the exception of unexpected circumstances, interviews will be conducted in-person

at WRCH. Applicants who are unable to meet this request should contact the Co-Directors to discuss alternative arrangements. The interview process will include time to meet with the Co-Directors and supervisors for interviews and to ask questions about the program. Interviewees will also be asked to complete a short writing exercise.

Advanced Practicum Faculty

Beth Anderson, PsyD

Staff Psychologist, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education William James College (2000)

Interests Trauma-informed care & treatments, dialectical behavior therapy, substance use treatment, forensic issues, and Mental Illness/Problematic Sexual Behavior (MI/PSB) program

Jeffrey Burl, PhD

Training Director of UMass Chan-WRCH Psychology Internship

Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School

Designated Forensic Psychologist, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education Drexel University (2012)

Interests Forensic mental health assessment, individual psychotherapy, education and training in psychology

Michael Burke, PsyD

Co-Director of the Advanced Practicum in Clinical Psychology

Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School

Designated Forensic Psychologist, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education William James College (2018)

Interests Forensic mental health assessment, forensic interventions, treatment of individuals adjudicated NGRI, social media's impact on forensic mental health assessment

Ariel Ingber, PsyD

Co-Director of the Advanced Practicum in Clinical Psychology

Staff Psychologist and Designated Forensic Psychologist, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education William James College (2020)

Interests Forensic assessment and treatment, assessment and treatment of Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, risk assessment and mitigation training, cognitive and personality assessment

Gregg Januszewski, PsyD

Staff Psychologist, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education University of Hartford (1997)

Interests Suicide risk assessment and treatment, forensic issues, Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I), Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Psychosis (CBTp), dual diagnosis, individual psychotherapy

Peter LaCanfora, PsyD

Director of Psychology Department, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education University of Hartford (2000)

Interests Violence and fire setting risk assessments, assessment and treatment of mental illness and problematic sexual behavior, Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)

Susan Nardella, PsyD

Staff Psychologist, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education Marywood University (2011)

Interests Treatment of severe and persistent mental illness, trauma-informed care and treatments, mindfulness-based interventions, individual psychotherapy

Colleen Nestor, PsyD

Contracted Psychology Staff, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education William James College (2021)

Interests Treatment of severe and persistent mental illness, dual diagnosis, individual and group-based interventions, forensic issues, EMDR-certified

Debika Paul, PhD

Staff Psychologist, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education Suffolk University (2007)

Interests Treatment of severe and persistent mental health diagnoses, individual psychotherapy, individual and group based interventions utilizing Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Psychosis (CBTp), liberation psychology, antiracism, social justice

Heidi Putney, PhD

Co-Assistant Training Director of UMass Chan-WRCH Psychology Internship

Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School

Designated Forensic Psychologist, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education Central Michigan University (2020)

Interests Forensic evaluations, training and education, research in the areas of forensic public policy, professional development, and diversity training

Meredith Ronan, PsyD

Co-Assistant Training Director of UMass Chan-WRCH Psychology Internship
Associate Director of Psychology Department, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education William James College (2015)

Interests Positive behavior support consultation and intervention (PBIS), assessment and treatment of persons with severe and persistent mental illness, cognitive and psychological/personality assessment, cognitive behavior therapy for psychosis (CBTp), program development and evaluation

Danielle Rynczak, JD, PsyD, ABPP (Forensic)

Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging, UMass-WRCH Psychology Internship
Director of Legal Education and Training, UMass Chan Law and Psychiatry Program
Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School
Designated Forensic Psychologist, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education Chicago School of Professional Psychology (2012)

Interests Adult and juvenile forensic evaluations, criminal competencies and responsibility, risk assessment, civil commitment, delinquency; child protection; legal education; anti-racist curriculum; inclusive teaching, supervision, and mentorship practices

Miriam Stoll, PsyD

Staff Psychologist, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education William James College (2017)

Interests Trauma-informed care & treatments, dual diagnoses assessment and related program development, treatment of severe and persistent mental health diagnoses

Faith Therrien, PsyD

Co-Director of the Advanced Practicum in Clinical Psychology
Staff Psychologist, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education William James College (2019)

Interests Treatment of severe and persistent and mental illness, individual and group-based interventions utilizing CBT for Psychosis (CBTp), liberation psychology, racial trauma, and social justice

Katie Treiber, PhD

Cognitive Enhancement & Restructuring Therapy (CERT) Program Coordinator
Contract Clinical Neuropsychologist, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

Education Utah State University (2010)

Interests Neuropsychological assessment in psychiatric populations and individuals with comorbid SPMI, neuromedical, and forensic concerns; cognitive reserve and rehabilitation in SPMI and aging