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### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

#### **WCU Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) Program in Clinical Psychology**

**(1) Are there graduate assistantships for your PsyD students?**

Yes. We are pleased to offer all incoming PsyD students a graduate assistantship (GA) which covers 50% of tuition, plus a stipend, during their first year (Fall, Spring, and Summer), with the potential to renew for up to 3 years total. Every effort is made to ensure that the graduate assistantship is in the research lab of the student's dissertation advisor. In addition to the 3-year GA, our program has competitive tuition rates when compared to other regional PsyD programs, making the WCU PsyD an attractive option.

**(2) Is the PsyD program accredited?**

West Chester University is a regionally accredited institution with full accreditation from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and the PsyD Program has *Associate Member* status in the National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology (NCSP). **The WCU PsyD Program is not currently accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) because doctoral programs are not immediately eligible to apply for APA accreditation. We initiated the accreditation process when our second cohort entered the Program (2017-2018 academic year), which was the earliest point possible, based on APA Commission on Accreditation operating procedures.** We believe that we are well prepared for the doctoral program accreditation process, given that **we have structured the program to be aligned with APA standards for accreditation and developed the program in partnership with an external reviewer who is also an APA site visitor.** Every effort is being made to ensure that we will ultimately secure APA accreditation by the time our first cohort graduates. However, APA requires applicant programs to inform prospective students that there is no guarantee that the program will be APA accredited. Questions related to the PsyD Program's accreditation status should be directed to the Commission on Accreditation: Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation, 750 First St, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242, Telephone: (202) 336-5979, TDD/TTY: (202) 336-6123, Fax: (202) 336-5978.

**(3) How long will it take for the PsyD program to gain APA accreditation?**

According to APA (see <http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/about/accreditation-process.aspx>), the "CoA [Commission on Accreditation] cannot guarantee a specific timeframe," and prospective students are encouraged to contact the Commission (see contact information above) with questions about the accreditation process.

**(4) Since this program is not APA accredited yet, will I have difficulty obtaining a pre-doctoral internship or becoming licensed as a Psychologist in Pennsylvania after graduating from the program?**

Doctoral program accreditation status can impact the likelihood of getting matched with an APA accredited predoctoral internship (completing a 1-year predoctoral internship is a requirement for all Clinical Psychology PsyD and PhD students prior to earning their doctorate) and the process of getting licensed as a Psychologist in the state of Pennsylvania.

In terms of the predoctoral internship, we are developing an internship program through our in-house clinic, WCU Community Mental Health Services (CMHS), which opened in August 2017. CMHS is sponsoring its first predoctoral interns during the 2018-2019 academic year, and CMHS will seek APA accreditation for the predoctoral internship during this year as well. The CMHS predoctoral internship admits students who are affiliated with the WCU PsyD Program, as well as students from unaffiliated doctoral programs. **Therefore, WCU students hoping to complete internship before the doctoral program earns APA accreditation will be eligible to complete their pre-doctoral internship through CMHS if they are unable to obtain an internship match elsewhere.**

In terms of licensure, the PA Board of Psychology requires that applicants for licensure have graduated from a program that has earned APA accreditation “within 1 year from the award of the doctoral degree” (see <http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/049/chapter41/s41.31.html>). This means that, **even if the PsyD program obtains APA accreditation up to 12 months after you graduate with your doctorate, you will still be eligible for PA licensure.**

**(5) Since this program is not APA accredited yet, will I have difficulty finding a job after graduating?**

We expect to have APA accreditation by the time the students in our first cohort graduate, which means that they (and all subsequent cohorts) will be able to say that they have graduated from an accredited program. If we do not earn accreditation by the time that you graduate, it is unlikely that the accreditation status will impact your job prospects. However, there are some federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which require Psychologists to be graduates of an accredited program in order to obtain employment.

**(6) Is it possible to continue to work full- or part-time while working on my PsyD?**

Full-time employment will not be possible while enrolled in the PsyD program because, unlike our existing Psychology MA programs that offer evening classes, our PsyD classes will typically be offered during daytime hours. The PsyD program is a full-time, year-round program with required courses offered during the Fall and Spring semesters, as well as during Summer sessions. PsyD students will enroll in five courses (15 credits) in Fall-Year 1, Spring-Year 1, Fall-Year 2, and Spring-Year 2, along with Summer Session courses. In addition to the coursework, doctoral students will need to have schedules that are flexible enough to accommodate their clinical practicum training and any relevant research lab activities. Part-time employment may be possible while pursuing the PsyD; however, it would be to your advantage to engage in part-time employment that is relevant to the clinical psychology field. We strongly advise that students in the PsyD program minimize or completely eliminate any work commitments that are not related to their doctoral studies and training.

**(7) Is it possible to transfer directly from the General Psychology MA program into the Clinical Psychology PsyD program?**

No. A direct transfer from any MA program is not possible. You must apply for admission to the PsyD program and be considered along with the larger pool of applicants seeking admission for the Fall semester.