



United States Air Force Academy Health Professions Advisory Committee (HPAC) FAQs about Clinical Psychology Scholarships



Can I go to clinical psychology graduate school right after I graduate from USAFA?

Yes! Each year, the Air Force gives USAFA 5 slots for cadets to enter specific Biomedical Science Corps (BSC) career fields, which includes Clinical Psychology. In addition, USAFA has up to 6 additional “flex” slots that can be awarded to any health professions program (after coordination with the respective Corps, as needed). Each year, the Air Force offers two positions Air Force-wide for the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) for which cadets may compete.

What are the requirements for one of these scholarships?

To qualify for a scholarship you must meet the following requirements. Recommendations that you’ll need to be a competitive candidate are also listed.

	GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS	
	USAFA Minimums	Recommendations*
GPA	3.0	3.4
Admissions Tests	GRE: none (Advanced Test in Psychology is not required)	GRE: 300
Major	Any	
Overall Performance	Cadet-in-good-standing at end of 2 ^o year, cannot be on any type of probation	
Recommended Coursework / Prerequisites	The clinical psychology program at USUHS has no prerequisites for specific coursework. All applicants with clearly demonstrated strengths in math, science, and writing will be considered. Coursework in psychology, statistics, chemistry, and biology is encouraged but not required.	

*Based on past experience, these are the numbers it takes to be a strong candidate with a good chance of acceptance into graduate school.

What should I focus on as I start the hunt?

First and foremost, focus on maintaining good grades. Volunteer to help others in ways that you are passionate about. Be a leader within the squadron and score well on the GRE. Come talk to the HPAC advisors and participate in the events. Also, find a mentor clinical psychologist and shadow psychologists in a hospital or clinic. If you have the opportunity to work with others in a laboratory or research setting, this could also strengthen your application package.

What if I validated some courses?

USUHS will **NOT** count your validated (or AP/IB) courses towards meeting their prerequisites.

Tell me about the standardized admissions test, the GRE.

The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) assesses your verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, analytical writing, and critical thinking skills- and is usually used in the admission process for graduate schools. You should take the GRE by September of your Firstie year. It is important to do well on this test, so plan ahead, and start studying early! You should prepare well for this standardized examination so that you meet the GRE score requirement. Cost is approximately \$195 (although AF will reimburse for your first exam -- contact DFRR at x3970 to confirm). You can take the test at the Prometric Test Center in Colorado Springs. You must make an appointment.

What are the “hoops”?

You will first need to gain the Superintendent’s approval before you are officially a candidate, because you must be given permission to be released from the Line of the Air Force. Briefly, here is how the selection process works. In the spring of your 2^o year, the HPAC will interview you and look at your GPA, MPA, and extra-curricular activities. Based on that information they’ll recommend “yea” or “nay” to the Commandant. If approved, you may then start the process of applying to USUHS.

What happens after USAFA approves me to apply to USUHS?

In the fall of before your Firstie year, you will apply to USUHS. If all goes well, you will be accepted into their Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program. Ultimately, your Board Order of Merit will determine if you are one of the candidates selected for a BSC slot. If you are not one of the top 5 candidates, you will be placed on an alternate list and may still receive one of 6 “flex” slots that we can award to any health professions Corps [after receiving approval from USUHS and the appropriate Corps utilization branch at the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC)].

What exactly is the Air Force going to pay for when they send me to graduate school?

When you attend USUHS you will be a 2d Lt for your 4 years of school. In addition, there is no tuition and the university will pay for some of your books. At this time the Air Force does not offer a stipend for books. You earn 7 more years of commitment to the AF; this includes the 3 year commitment incurred with internship. Internships and post-doctoral fellowships are not credited toward satisfying this obligation.

How long does the clinical psychology program take?

Five years including traditional coursework (4 years) and internship (1 year).

What commitment do I incur if I accept the scholarship?

You will earn 7 more years of commitment to the Air Force, in addition to your 5-year USAFA commitment.

But, my time in graduate school will be subtracted from the five-year commitment I already earned at USAFA, right?

No! Your “commitment clock” will start when you rejoin the Air Force as a clinical psychologist, after your internship.

Fair enough. Once I complete the program, then what happens to me?

After completing coursework, you will enter a psychology internship program, usually at a military training facility, for additional training. This is a one year program. You will be in uniform. You will not yet be paying back your commitment to the Air Force, but you will be earning Air Force pay and time towards your retirement. Your commitment clock will start ticking after your residency is completed. Bottom line – you will be free to leave the Air Force when you are about 40 years old. At that time you will not have earned enough time to retire with benefits.

This opportunity sounds like a great deal, how do I get started?

Contact your HPAC advisors. The HPAC director is Dr. Katherine Bates in the Department of Biology (719-333-6030), email katherine.bates@usafa.edu. Also, read more on our SharePoint site <https://sharepoint.usafa.edu/academics/biology/Health%20Profession%20Information%20Library/Forms/Standard%20View.aspx> and <https://www.usuhs.edu/mps>