



Example DClinPsyc course interview questions

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I have gathered together some course interview questions that should give you an idea of what to expect. Some of these may well be useful to consider in the context of job interviews (particularly for assistant psychologist posts), but I should do a separate page for that.

This page contains questions sorted by broad topic area, compiled from actual interviews at courses across the country. If you would like to see past questions asked at specific courses over recent years, please see www.psychick.org.uk/course-questions where these are being compiled. But if you're going for an interview, it's obviously a good idea to have a think about all of these questions, regardless of where you're being interviewed.

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Clinical

- Talk about a client you have worked with and the theory that underpins it.
 - What were the benefits for this client?
 - What were the (dis)advantages of this way of working?
 - What did you learn from the experience?
 - Did you come across any difficulties / problems whilst working in this way?
- Can you tell us about a book (not a paper) that has influenced / inspired you?
 - How did you choose this book / what did you learn from it?
 - How was it influential?
 - How would you recommend it to other people?
 - Can you relate its importance to clinical psychology?
 - Do you have any criticisms of it?
- Two similar research vignettes were outlined. Something about measuring treatment outcomes using a baseline measure, mid-therapy measure and end of therapy measure.
 - Can you talk about the (dis)advantages of measuring therapy in this way?
 - How might this benefit / affect the client?
 - How might it affect the therapeutic alliance?
 - What would you do if the outcome appeared to be bad?
- Can you talk about a client that elicited some strong emotions in you (possibly negative), and tell us something about the situation you were in?
 - How did this affect you?
 - How did you go about trying to deal with it?
 - What did you learn from the situation?
 - Has it changed the way that you work?
 - What did you take from the situation that you may make use of today?
- The previous question was quite a complicated one about power / oppression issues, and situations we may be placed in, in today's socio-cultural climate. Can you tell us about a time in work, or with a client, when you feel you may have been placed in such a situation?
 - What did you learn from the situation?
 - How did it affect you, or the way you might treat other people in the same situation?

- How can you relate this understanding to the way you work now?
- Talk about the differences between clinical psychology and counselling, in terms of theory and therapy
- How would you approach [a case example]?
- If you qualify, what type of job would you like to be doing in 5 / 10 years time?
- Is [whatever] your preferred specialism?
- What areas of clinical psychology particularly interest you?
- Would you read a report to a patient?
- If a patient could not provide consent, what would you do?
- How would you treat bulimia?
- What undergraduate theories have underpinned your work with X?
- Describe a relationship you had with a client and how you viewed this relationship
- Describe a time when you were unable to help a client. What did you do?
- Talk about a time you found it difficult to work with someone
- Describe a piece of clinical work you have been involved in and which psychological models inform this work
- Is the cognitive-behavioural model all-encompassing, or does it have limitations?

Professional issues

- Why should clinical training NOT consist of a series of assistant posts?
- How do you see the future of clinical psychology?
- Do you think clinical psychologists are innovative? Give an example from your experience
- What is the role of a clinical psychologist?
- How does the role of the clinical psychologist differ from that of other health care professionals?
- Describe the scientist-practitioner model
- Although trained as scientist-practitioners, many clinical psychologists end up working as plain practitioners. Can you identify some reasons why this might be?
- How are most clinical psychology departments managed and structured?
- What is the contribution of a clinical psychologist to a multi-disciplinary team?
- If a department receives too many referrals and develops a waiting list, how should this best be managed?
- Tell us about what you know about audit procedures / quality enhancement / peer review
- Do you think that clinical psychologists should train non-clinical psychologists?
- Do you think patients with short- or long-term problems should be prioritised?
- What makes clinical psychology different from other mental health professions?
- How does the role of the clinical psychologist differ from that of other mental health professionals?
- What motivates a clinical psychologist?
- What values are important to them?
- What makes a good clinical psychologist?
- Can you talk about the importance of confidentiality?
- What is clinical psychology?
- Is clinical intuition a good or bad thing?
- What are the (dis)advantages of multi-disciplinary working?
- What is the difference between instrumental and classical conditioning?
- I play golf. How could I improve using psychological techniques?
- What psychology models have you used in your work?
- How do psychological models relate to clinical psychology?
- From your experience, which model of psychology have you found most useful? Why?
- How would you explain the principles of reinforcement / the cognitive model of depression / goal setting / the principles of normalisation to the lay person?
- Tell me about a psychological theory and its application
- Describe a psychological concept and...
 - relate it to a psychological theory
 - describe an example of its clinical application

NHS issues

- Tell us about recent changes (or a current issue) in the NHS
- Clinical psychologists are subject to the same pressures that everyone else to help government achieve their health aims and objectives.
 - Do you know what the current government priorities are?
 - How do these particularly affect clinical psychologists?
 - How can psychologists participate in achieving these aims?
- What do you know about the supervision register?
- Have you any direct experience of community care? What are the pros and cons of this approach?
- How are the current changes in the NHS affecting clinical psychology?
- What were the main recommendations of the MAS report on clinical psychology services? [maybe not asked directly, but you should know them]
- What have been the chief effects on clinical psychology services of current NHS reforms?
- What is your view about the separation of learning disabilities, including clinical psychology, into separate trusts?
- One aspect of the NHS reform is an emphasis upon consumer involvement and empowerment. What implications does this have for clinical psychology services?
- If you had a million pounds, how would you use it in the NHS?
- If you had a million pounds, how would you reduce a clinical psychology department's waiting list?

Personal issues

- What area of undergraduate psychology could be used in clinical psychology?
- From your undergraduate study, what can you apply to clinical psychology?
- What skills have you acquired during your degree?
- Do you feel that your previous work experiences have relevance to clinical work?
- What have you learned from your career so far?
- What have you learned from your assistant post(s)?
- If you could choose only one of your assistant posts, which would it and why?
- Can you tell us about some individual work you have done?
- Have you ever had difficulties working with a client? How did you resolve them?
- Can you describe a situation or case you have learned a lot from?
- Have you been involved in any group work? Do you think that group work is more valuable than individual therapy?
- What do you think is the best approach in supervision between the supervisor and the trainee?
- From your experience, which model of psychology that you have used seems the most useful? Why? Are there any other explanations?
- What personal qualities do you feel a good clinical psychologist should possess?
- What have you got to offer clinical psychology that someone else has not?
- What attracts you personally to clinical psychology?
- Which area of clinical psychology would you like to work in when you qualify?
- What are your main strengths / weaknesses? How do you intend to improve yourself?
- How would you deal with a situation at work if you had been upset / made angry by a colleague / client?
- How do you spend your spare time?
- Do you feel your hobbies benefit you?
- Clinical training is very stressful. How do you deal with stress?
- Describe a paper that you have recently read that had an impact on you, and explain why.
- Could you name one reference or recent book that had assisted you with your clinical work and explain why.
- Do you feel confident in a group situation? How do you contribute to discussion on psychology? Can you give an example?
- How do you get along with small, close knit groups of people?
- What are your views about the amount of emotional involvement in clinical work that is

appropriate?

- Do you feel a particular drive to help others? Why?
- If you qualified, would you want to stay in clinical psychology, or might you leave for another career?
- What will you do if you do not get on a clinical course this year?
- Why have you chosen to apply for this course?
- What do you hope to get out of clinical training?
- Why do you want to be a clinical psychologist?
- How has your personal development influenced your professional development in psychology, and vice versa?
- Tell us about a professional and a personal experience that made you better equipped to be a clinical psychologist.
- Can you describe the factors that have led you to want to be a clinical psychologist?
- What stresses do you think you will face on the course?
- What methods do you have for coping with stress?
- What is the greatest challenge you are looking forward to on the course?
- Which aspect of the course (or placement) do you think will be the most challenging?
- What do you hope to gain from the course?
- Why psychology rather than psychiatry / medicine / nursing / counselling?
- What client group do you feel drawn towards?
- What aspects of your degree did you find good / bad?

Research issues

- Design an experiment to test whether social phobia is driven by internal or external cues
- What is reliability and validity?
- Describe research you have done. Was it a quasi study?
- Comment on your undergraduate research project
 - What were your hypotheses?
 - What stats did you use?
 - How would you improve the study if you were to repeat it?
- With improved design etc., which journals might you submit to?
- Do you regularly read any particular journals?
- Do you think publishing research is a good thing? What are some problems with it?
- Design a study to assess the effectiveness of a suicide intervention
- Why is research important?
- Why are clinical psychologists good at research?
- What do you feel the value of research is to clinical work?
- What do you think qualitative research has to offer clinical psychology?
- Do you think research or clinical practice is the more important?
- What area of psychological research / theoretical development has interested you recently?
- What do you consider to be the main research advances in clinical psychology as an academic subject in recent years?
- What are the main types of experimental design used in clinical research?
- Describe the concepts of statistical significance
- You are developing a questionnaire to measure X. What are the principles to bear in mind when developing a questionnaire?
- You are conducting service evaluation research into Y. How would you design the study?
- What is a double blind treatment outcome study?
- What is A-B-A design?
- What is useful about single case research?
- If you were developing a new memory test, what psychometric principles would you need to follow?
- In a treatment outcome design, why is it necessary to have an alternative method of psychological treatment to the experimental condition, as well as a no treatment condition?
- Describe your research experience

- Tell us about a piece of research that you have done or are currently involved with
 - How could you have improved if you had limitless resources?
 - Does the research have any implications for clinical practice?
 - Which journals might you submit it to (if design/method better)?
- What are reliability and validity?
 - How did you develop these for your research?
 - How could you have improved these?
- Tell us about qualitative and quantitative research methods
 - Definitions and differences
 - (Dis)advantages
 - Which would your research be?
- What similarities can you draw between cognitive and psychodynamic theories?
- What psychological model / orientation are you drawn to?
 - What intrinsically appeals about this approach?
 - Are there any other models you would like to know more about?

Supervision issues

- Supervision is very important as a trainee, and in 'relevant experience' posts. It particularly relates to the issue of working within your levels and areas of competence.
- You could be asked any of the following, which are all different forms of the same basic question:
 - Describe good and bad experiences of supervision.
 - What is the best form of supervision?
 - What makes supervision work?
 - What are the good and bad aspects of group versus individual supervision?
 - What is the role of supervision?
 - Tell us about good / bad elements of your current supervision
- Supervision requires...
 - Setting a time
 - At least an hour a week
 - No interruptions
 - Identifying needs
 - Setting agenda from this
 - Evaluating if needs are being met
- Supervisors must be...
 - good communicators
 - focused
 - empathic
 - approachable
- Supervision should ideally include...
 - informing
 - supporting
 - evaluating
 - observing
 - training
 - educating
- If you had a difference of opinion with your supervisor, what would you do?
- How might you deal with a situation where you did not get on with your supervisor?

Equal opportunities

- How would you treat a black client that was referred to you?
- How would you feel about working with a client who spoke no English / held strong racist views? How would you deal with this situation?
- Why do you think that some people have difficulty accessing psychology services?
- Which populations tend to be affected and why?
- Are there ways that services are structured which discourage their use from ethnic minority groups?

- How might services be made more accessible to them?
- What issues should a psychologists be aware of when working with someone from a different culture / gender to themselves?

Audit

- What does audit mean?
- What sort of methods might enable clinical psychologists to evaluate direct and indirect work?

Prescription privileges and the role of medication

- This is not as hot a topic as it was a few years ago, but it's something you should be aware of, as it's a debate that rumbles on.
- There are many discussion papers about this - see the April 2003 edition of 'The Psychologist' and past issues of 'Clinical Psychology Forum' (especially the April 1995 issue).

Diagnosis (versus formulation)

- Another perennial area of controversy, and one that can be a significant issue in the day-to-day working of clinical psychologists.
- It's a huge and fascinating subject, but suffice it to say here that both diagnosis and formulation have positive and negative aspects. You should be able to discuss both sides if asked about this.
- A great deal has been written about the moral, philosophical and political issues around diagnosis, but it's also important to be aware of the 'real world' impact. For example, what it means for clients, for clinical psychologists and for the systems (e.g. multidisciplinary teams) they work in.
- Be clear about what you mean by formulation (and learn about it if you haven't already!)

Your application form

- Why did you apply to this course [or these courses]?
- What made you choose your degree?
- Do you think you deserved the grade you received? (particularly relevant if you got a 2ii)
- You will be asked something about your past experience, which could be more or less anything.
- Think about the work you have done, how you have explained it on your form, and how it is relevant to clinical psychology.
- For example, you may be asked what a past research project tells us about X, how theory Y fitted in, how it might be applied to problem Z.
- You'll probably get a statistics question sooner or later, and often it is in connection to a past project. Revise the stats you used, and think about how appropriate they were. Could they have been improved? What did that correlation (or t-test or whatever) *actually mean*?

The 'stress' question

- This seems to come up time and time again: How would you deal with course stresses?
- Think about how you have dealt with stress in the past - what worked and what didn't? What *could* you have done differently?
- Generally, the things to mention are time management, personal resources and supervision.

This document covers many topic areas, but is not complete, and course questions do change. If you have been to an interview in recent years and would like to add to this list, please get in touch via www.psychclick.org.uk/contact. Perhaps you could also share your impressions and experience of interviews with other users of the site at www.psychclick.org.uk/forum/

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