

# Prospective Graduate Student Application Guidelines

# Questions & Answers

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**Determinants of  
Child Development Lab**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY**

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*\*The information contained in this document is specific to UCalgary's Clinical Psychology MSc/PhD program, where Dr. Madigan is a core faculty member and currently the Director of Clinical Training. For information about UCalgary's Counselling Psychology program or School and Applied Child Psychology program, visit their website [here](#).*



## Part 1: General Application Questions for Clinical Program

### 1. Will you be accepting graduate students for fall 2026?

A list of faculty members accepting students is typically posted [here](#) and is updated each fall. This year, I will be accepting new graduate students for admissions starting in September 2026.

### 2. Where can I find information on UCalgary's Clinical Psychology Program?

- [Clinical Psychology Program homepage.](#)
- [Clinical Psychology Program brochure.](#)

### 3. What are the application requirements?

Please refer to the following webpages for application information:

- [University of Calgary: Clinical Psychology Program.](#)
- [University of Calgary: Graduate Student FAQ.](#)

Important considerations to keep in mind:

- Our clinical program does not normally consider students who are only interested in completing the MSc.
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are currently **not** required or considered at this time.

There are two steps to completing the UCalgary application. In the first part, you complete an online form where you will be asked to provide the following: general contact information; academic history; program of interest; program specific questions, including which faculty member(s) you are interested in working with; a personal statement, an EDI statement, and referees. You also must pay the application fee ([application guide](#)).

*After submitting this form, you will upload your CV, unofficial transcript, and research proposal through your Student Dashboard ([how to upload supporting documents](#)).*

*Any further questions specific to application requirements should be directed to the Graduate Program Advisor ([artsgradsc@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsgradsc@ucalgary.ca)).*

### 4. What additional requirements are there for international applicants?

Additional application requirements will vary depending on your country of residence and/or where you completed your previous studies. More information can be found [here](#).



**5. Are reference letters due at the same time as the application (November 15)?**

Yes, reference letters are due at the same time as the application. Please allow enough time for your referees to receive and complete the reference form when preparing your application. If they are not submitted at the time of application, we do email referees with a reminder.

**6. Can I use the same research proposal for my UCalgary and CGS-M applications?**

Yes, you can use the same research proposal for your UCalgary application and the CGS-M application. However, as part of our admissions evaluation criteria, we assess the research fit between you and the prospective supervisors that you have listed. This should therefore be an important consideration for the research proposal you submit for admission at UCalgary.

**7. What is the application and interview timeline at UCalgary?**

Applications are typically prepared for review the last two weeks of November, then reviewed by faculty members the first two weeks of December and long-listed applicants are determined. Prospective supervisors then interview long-listed applicants. Following the interviews, they send a short list of 2-5 students to the Chair of Admissions for our program. The Chair of Admissions and the Director of Clinical Training then review these applications, and the top two ranked prospective applicants for each faculty member are invited to participate in a structured faculty interview over Zoom (typically in January). At this time, shortlisted prospective applicants meet with current graduate students from our program. The strongest applicants to our program are then offered admission (typically in February) and waitlisted applicants are also notified. All applicants who are not offered admission or waitlisted receive an email notification (February to April).

When	Application Stage
November 15	Application deadline
December	Faculty review applications and interview select applicants (virtual).
Late December	Faculty submit shortlist of students to Chair of Admissions.



January	<p>Shortlisted applicants complete structured faculty interviews with the Chair of Admission and the Director of Clinical Training (virtual).</p> <p>Shortlisted applicants can meet with current Clinical Psychology graduate students to get their current perspectives about the program.</p>
February to April	<p>Offers are extended to strongest students on shortlist. Offered students are given opportunity for site visit.</p> <p>Shortlisted applicants who do not receive first offers are placed on waitlist.</p> <p>Unsuccessful applicants are notified via email.</p>

*\*The exact timeline of the application process may vary depending on the faculty member you apply to.*

## 8. What funding is available to graduate students?

UCalgary Clinical Psychology now guarantees a minimum funding package of \$27,000 CAD to Master's level students (for a maximum of 2 years), and \$30,000 CAD to PhD students (for a maximum of 3 years, with typically a paid clinical residency in the 4<sup>th</sup> year). Dr. Madigan also typically gives students additional funding stipends on top of the minimum funding package.

More information on funding including scholarships and awards can be found [here](#).



## Part 2: Questions about Working with Me and the DCDL

### 1. Should I email you to express my interest?

I have compiled this document for all prospective applicants, aiming to address the majority of your inquiries comprehensively. My objective is to ensure you have the most thorough information available. If, after reviewing this document, you find yourself with a **specific question pivotal to your decision to apply or not**, please contact me. I will do my best to respond promptly. However, I receive approximately 100-150 emails per day, many of which require responses; thus, my email responses can sometimes be delayed. It is important to note that reaching out via email will not influence the success of your application. I am committed to reviewing all applications equitably and considering each one individually (in December), regardless of whether a student has contacted me via email or not.

### 2. Do you meet with students ahead of the application deadline?

To maintain equity and fairness in the application process, I follow a policy of *not* holding individual meetings with applicants prior to the deadline. This ensures that all candidates have equal access to information and opportunity. *However, I will be hosting a virtual Q&A session in the fall for anyone interested in applying to work with me.* If you are interested in attending this session, please email [DCDLab@ucalgary.ca](mailto:DCDLab@ucalgary.ca) with the email title: *Q&A session for Prospective Graduate Students* to register. I will also share the date and time via social media (find us at X @sherimadigan and Bluesky @sherimadigan.bsky.social).

### 3. Can I connect with your current grad students to ask them questions?

Applicants that I shortlist will have the opportunity to connect with current graduate students in my lab as part of the application process (see 7. application timeline). Current graduate students will also be present at the prospective student Q&A session I will host in the fall.

### 4. Who is a good fit for your lab?

In general, I am looking to recruit students who have interests that align with one of my research streams. Please see the links below for more information about my current research programme:

- [The Determinants of Child Development Lab website.](#)
- [My UCalgary profile page.](#)
- [My publications.](#)

In addition, our lab includes 7 staff members, 4 graduate students, 4 postdoctoral fellows, and several undergraduate students and volunteers. We operate as a cohesive and collaborative team. I am looking for graduate students who are enthusiastic about contributing to and integrating into this dynamic, inclusive, and supportive environment.

### **5. How would you describe your mentorship style?**

My mentorship style is collaborative, supportive, and tailored to the unique goals and learning needs of each trainee. I strive to create an inclusive and interdisciplinary environment where trainees—from undergraduates to postdoctoral fellows—can thrive. I emphasize intellectual engagement and shared ownership of research by involving trainees in every stage of the process, from conceptualization to knowledge dissemination and translation.

My mentorship approach also includes strategic career support. All graduate trainees in my lab are funded by SSHRC or CIHR. I have also supported trainees in publishing their work (>100 trainee-led publications) and transitioning into clinical or faculty positions. I also prioritize capacity-building through initiatives like international research exchanges and data analysis workshops and training camps. Importantly, I encourage knowledge mobilization and community engagement, with a strong focus on translating research for impact.

### **6. How would you describe the culture of your lab?**

Our lab fosters an open, inclusive, and supportive environment where feedback is welcomed, collaboration is encouraged, and diversity of identity and perspective is seen as a strength. We are committed to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA), and actively work to create a safe and affirming learning space for all lab members.

Through regular biweekly one-on-one meetings, monthly lab meetings, and journal clubs, we focus on skill-building in research, scientific communication, and professional development, while also making space for critical conversations around systemic barriers, privilege, and oppression.

Recently, our lab came together for a core values exercise, where we collectively identified the following values as central to our lab culture: bravery, community, compassion, curiosity, honesty, inclusivity, sustainability, and sympathy. These values guide how we engage with each other, our research, and the broader communities we serve.



## 7. What should I include in my personal statement?

Your statement should express specific and developed interests in the topics of the lab's research and in UCalgary (see more details below). Keep in mind is that the UCalgary personal statement is very short compared to other programs (max. 500 words). This is an opportunity to demonstrate clear, compelling, and succinct writing.

## 8. How can I increase my chances of acceptance?

Acceptance into a clinical psychology program is extremely competitive. We typically receive ~200 applications and we typically accept 6-8 students into our program each year. Below is a table outlining the key criteria I focus on when reviewing applications, along with examples of what strong evidence for each criterion might include.

Criterion	Example Evidence
Clear and specific fit with lab and program.	In your statement of interest, provide a clear, focused narrative showing how your research interests and experiences align with the work done in the lab and at UCalgary. Mention specific topics, methods, or papers that resonate with your goals. This helps me assess whether I'd be a good supervisor for you and if your interests align well with my research program.
Motivation and perseverance	Demonstrate how you persist through challenges - these can be personal (e.g., navigating socioeconomic or cultural barriers) or professional (e.g., long-term commitment to a research project). Share specific examples of grit, adaptability, and follow-through. These can be drawn from academic, volunteer, work, or life experiences.
Strong interest in quantitative methods	We like statistics in our lab (really, we do!). Show evidence of this interest through your academic record (e.g., success in statistics or methods courses), and research experience as a research assistant or



	<p>coordinator. Comfort with data and methods is a strong asset.</p>
<p>Strong writing and reasoning skills.</p>	<p>Your research proposal is a key component of the application. I look for well-defined research questions, a clear and feasible methodology, and a thoughtful rationale that demonstrates your ability to think critically about your topic. Strong written communication skills are essential for success in graduate school, so I also consider your previous research writing experience. This may include conference presentations, or peer-reviewed publications. Typically, students admitted to my lab have at least a few co-authored publications or manuscripts published or in progress at the time of application.</p>
<p>Willingness to engage in a collaborative lab.</p>	<p>Our lab is highly collaborative and strongly committed to inclusivity. I value applicants who show enthusiasm for being part of a team - contributing to group projects, supporting peers, and sharing knowledge. Evidence may include experience working in team-based research settings, participating in lab meetings, co-authoring work, or expressing a desire to learn from and contribute to a community-based research culture.</p>



<p>Strong potential for scholarship funding</p>	<p>At UCalgary, application for Tri-Council funding is recommended in the year you apply for graduate school and is assessed favourably as part of the review process. To be eligible to hold the award at UCalgary, you need to list UCalgary as a potential host organization; however, you are only permitted to list 3 schools in your application.</p> <p>Elements of applications that indicate a strong likelihood of scholarship funding as an <a href="#">MSc</a> and <a href="#">PhD</a> student include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous scholarships, awards, and distinctions</li> <li>• Academic record</li> <li>• Professional, academic, and extracurricular activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Teaching, mentoring, supervising, and/or coaching.</li> <li>◦ Managing projects.</li> <li>◦ Participating in science and/or research promotion.</li> <li>◦ Conducting community outreach, volunteer work, and/or civic engagement activities.</li> <li>◦ Chairing committees and/or organizing conferences and meetings.</li> <li>◦ Participating in departmental or institutional organizations, associations, societies, and/or clubs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## Appendix A. Additional Resources\*

- [Dr. Craig Rodriguez-Seijas –Application Guide](#)
- [Mitch’s Uncensored Advice for Applying to Graduate School in Clinical Psychology \(by Dr. Mitch Prinstein\)](#)
- [A Comprehensive Guide for Applying to Clinical Psychology Programs \(Canada\)](#)

*\*The resources provided here are not specific to UCalgary or the Determinants of Child Development Lab, though they do include comprehensive information about the graduate application process that you may find helpful.*