

Frequently Asked Questions

USUHS Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program

Although not an exhaustive list, the FAQs below provide insight into life as an active duty graduate student at USU.



Q: How do I apply to the program?

A: Applying to the USUHS program is a multi-step process that consists of two main parts. You must apply to the graduate program itself, and you must apply for a commission in the Navy Medical Service Corps. There are also two phases to the application process. Phase I is an online application submitted to the graduate school. Phase II is an in-person interview conducted in February of each year. See [How to Apply](#).

Q: Will I have to wear my uniform every day?

A: Yes, you are required to be in uniform for any official business while at the university (e.g., attending classes, meeting with faculty, attending seminars, working in your research lab, etc.).

Q: I've never been in the military before. How hard will it be to fit in?

A: If selected for the program, you will attend a five-week Navy officer indoctrination course at the Officer Development School (ODS) in Newport, Rhode Island. This will usually occur during the summer before your first academic year. This program is designed to fully prepare healthcare providers, attorneys, hospital administrators, and other professionals for service as officers in the Navy. Having no previous military experience should not be a hindrance to your graduate school experience at USU. Click [here](#) for more information about ODS.

Q: Will I be required to “stand duty” or carry out other military duties?

A: No, you will not be required to stand duty or “post” while at USU. Because you will be a full-time student, your primary duty will be your academic, research, and clinical duties. These duties will require a lot of your time and energy. You can expect to work several additional hours per day for every hour of class work. You will likely find that you need to spend weeknights and some weekends carrying out your responsibilities.

Q: What will my military rank be while I am in the program?

A: If you are currently a civilian or active duty enlisted, your rank will be an O-1, or Ensign. If you are currently an officer, you will likely receive partial credit for your prior service as a commissioned officer. Unlike the medical students at USU who remain Ensigns (O-1) for their entire 4 years of medical school, you will continue to advance according to regular promotion schedules. Typically, O-1s will be advanced to O-2 after 2 years, then to O-3 two years later, providing you meet all other advancement requirements. Most students advance to the rank of Lieutenant (O-3) at the conclusion of their fourth year of study.

Q: What are the physical fitness requirements for the program?

A: To be accepted into the program you must be physically qualified for commissioning as a Medical

Service Corps (MSC) officer in the Navy. All applicants will have a comprehensive medical and dental exam as part of their application package. Your Medical Programs Officer recruiter can explain more about the details of physical qualifications and the physical exam.

In addition, just like all other active duty personnel in the Navy, you will be required to conduct physical readiness tests, with associated height/weight/body fat measurements, twice each year. The test is designed to measure muscular endurance and aerobic capacity. For more information about the Navy Physical Readiness Test, please see the following link: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/military-life-cycle/new-to-the-military/getting-settled/navy-physical-readiness-test>

Q: Is there a chance I could get deployed while at USU?

A: No. Students in our graduate program are in a training status and are not deployable. However, after you complete your internship (5th year), as a member of the military, there is a possibility of being deployed in support of medical readiness.

Q: Does the military pay for uniforms?

A: Yes and no. When you first enter active duty service, you receive an initial uniform allowance that helps offset the cost of uniforms. After this initial allowance, all other uniform purchases come “out-of-pocket.”

Q: I already have a Master’s Degree. Does USU accept transfer credits?

A: Not likely. The USU Clinical Psychology program does not typically accept transfer credits, but we will consider requests to transfer a small number of credits if the course is clearly comparable to USU’s course. All matriculants must complete all the required courses in the program. However, already having a Master’s Degree may benefit you with regard to your academic studies,

Q: Will I really get paid to go to graduate school?

A: Yes – in addition to free tuition, you will receive all pay and allowances commensurate with your military rank. This includes your basic pay, as well as various allowances that are not subject to tax. For example, the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) in 2020 for an O-1 in Bethesda with no dependents was \$2,298 per month. This is non-taxable income in addition to your basic pay. You can view the latest military pay charts at <https://www.dfas.mil/militarymembers/payentitlements/Pay-Tables.html>

Additional Questions? Please contact Dr. John Ralph at john.a.ralph.civ@mail.mil or (301) 295-2476.