

# TOP TIPS FOR D-CLIN APPLICATIONS: DO'S & DON'TS



Completing the doctorate in clinical psychology application form can be overwhelming & it can be hard to know where to start. Our 'Top Tips' series provides a guide to helping you to get the most out of the form so that you can effectively showcase your suitability for training & increase your chances of interview. Below we outline some of the Do's & Don'ts when completing the form:

## ANSWER THE QUESTION!

First & foremost - answer the question asked! A common mistake we encounter when reviewing q1 of the personal statements section is that the answer does not reflect the question. Q1 asks *'in what way have your experiences made you a better candidate for training?'*. This is essentially asking **HOW** have your experiences made you ready to train. Ensure that you reflect on the skills, competencies, attributes & qualities that you are developing that make you a strong candidate for training, rather than listing your experiences & sharing examples of your work. Consider what you are gaining from your experiences, rather than the experiences themselves.

## UTILISE EACH SECTION WELL

Ensure that you utilise each section well. The work experience section should document the extent & depth of your clinical experiences - aligning these with the job description & person specification. Showcase your roles, duties & responsibilities here, speaking to the key duties of a psychologist. CPD needs should be documented in the 'hopes from training' question & research publications should be listed in the 'publications & disseminations' section. A common mistake we encounter is the repetition of information from other sections in q1 of the personal statements section. Situating your reflections on specific roles & experiences is not necessary - it does not demonstrate transferability or generalisability of skills & it utilises word count!

[www.thirdwavepsychologist.co.uk/  
mentorship-programme](http://www.thirdwavepsychologist.co.uk/mentorship-programme)

THIRD WAVE  
PSYCHOLOGIST



## DO

Answer the question!  
Showcase your  
developing  
skills &  
competencies



## DON'T

Fall into the  
trap of listing  
& detailing  
experience



## DO

Utilise each section well  
& wisely &  
demonstrate  
transferable  
learning



## DON'T

Repeat info  
from other  
sections or  
key points





## DO

Showcase an awareness of challenges & a proactive stance to these



## DON'T

Be overly critical of NHS services



## DO

Refer to the holistic competencies of a psychologist



## DON'T

Focus solely on clinical duties



## DO

Be specific & concise with your reflections & key points



## DON'T

Use lengthy examples or superfluous words



### PROACTIVE CRITICISM:

Be mindful of how you phrase critical comments & reflections regarding working in the NHS or other elements of your experience & learning. Whilst many of the reflections we see are valid & important to acknowledge, it is important to remember that you are applying for an employment position within that very institution. It can be helpful to bring a pro-active acknowledgment of challenges such as resource barriers or competing clinical models, whilst adopting a forward-facing view - showcasing the skills, approaches & qualities you utilise to overcome these.

### DEMONSTRATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE:

When reflecting it is important to ensure that the form does not solely reflect clinical & therapy experiences. Ensure that you situate the role within NHS multi-disciplinary teams & that you reflect on the wider duties a psychologist performs in such teams, for example supervision, consultation, service development, policy development, training & research. Consider the competencies related to these, holding in mind the scientist-practitioner role of the psychologist & how this influences practice.

The hopes from training question is a good opportunity showcase your understanding of what you are applying for, demonstrating that you understand what the role of the clinical psychologist entails. This is your opportunity to explain why you personally wish to train as a psychologist, aligning this with the wider competencies & skills of the psychologist that you may wish to develop.

### MAKING THE MOST OF THE WORD COUNT:

The character count places a restriction on the space available, so make each word count! Don't use superfluous words & ensure that you write clearly, concisely & succinctly- directly spelling out your key points & reflections. Avoid unnecessary elaborations. Speak generally to key duties such as consultation, training, assessment, formulation, clinical skills etc. - don't situate them within specific roles. Very briefly acknowledge such duties & then use the space to share your reflections on performing them.

### ADD STRUCTURE:

Finally, adding structure to your statement can aid with the flow and readability of the form. Try to group your paragraphs into themes & sections, for example clinical skills, research skills, NHS & team working skills & reflective practice. This also aid with word count as it groups themes together, helping with avoiding repetition of points & words.