



University Counseling Center

Postdoctoral Fellowship in Health Service Psychology

2025-2026 Training Year Recruitment Cycle

Information Brochure

INTRODUCTION

Vanderbilt University (VU), located in Nashville, Tennessee, is a private research university offering a full range of undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees. Vanderbilt is situated on a 330-acre campus near the economic center of the city, serving 13,710 students and employing more than 6,000 faculty and staff. The university is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelors, masters, education specialists and doctoral degrees, as well as a full range of graduate and professional degrees, including business, law, medicine and nursing.

The Vanderbilt University Counseling Center (UCC) is committed to working with campus and community partners to provide holistic, inclusive, and accessible mental health and prevention services to support the academic and personal success of Vanderbilt's diverse student community. We promote social justice and an affirming community of care through our clinical, outreach, consultation, and training services. We know that each student is unique both in terms of their identity and lived experiences, and we work with our campus partners to provide a comprehensive pathway of support options for students that are flexible and attentive to each individual's particular needs, opportunities, and challenges in a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect.

THE STAFF

The Training Director, Assistant Training Director, and Assistant Athletic Director for Sport Psychology and Mental Performance and all primary supervisors of postdoctoral fellows are licensed psychologists with Health Service Provider (HSP) designation in the state of Tennessee. In addition to the training team, UCC clinical staff represent a diverse range of mental health disciplines, theoretical orientations, interests, and

treatment modalities, including expertise in psychological assessment and evaluation, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, psychodynamic psychotherapy, trauma-informed care, sport and performance psychology, and multicultural counseling. Additional opportunities for training and supervision in EMDR and hypnosis may also be available.

The UCC has full administrative support, including front desk staff and a designated administrative staff person whose job responsibilities include providing support to trainees and to the Training Director, including communication with fellowship applicants, onboarding of fellows into the university, and coordinating training activities. The front desk administrative staff assists all UCC clinical providers with coordination of client care, including scheduling. The UCC Office Manager works collaboratively with the Vanderbilt University Human Resources department to coordinate onboarding and off-boarding processes, along with addressing any paycheck, vacation time, insurance, or other such issues which might come up during the fellowship year.

TRAINING PHILOSOPHY

The postdoctoral year is one in which the fellow is transitioning from the status of “student in training” to that of licensed professional. The UCC training staff recognizes this important developmental transition and seeks to provide an extensive training experience that both supports and challenges fellows to make meaningful contributions through their direct clinical service, as well as through consultation, weekly staff meetings, case conference discussions, outreach opportunities, and didactic seminars. While fellows function within a training capacity, they are viewed and approached as valuable members of the clinical staff. From this perspective, fellows are seen as being early in their career but at an advanced level in terms of training. Thus, while great emphasis is placed on assisting fellows in continuing to cultivate their knowledge, skill, and overall professional identity, they are also expected to serve as colleagues to the clinical and administrative staff, as well as models of professionalism for the graduate-level practicum students and doctoral interns who also train at the UCC.

TRAINING OBJECTIVES/COMPETENCIES

The training objectives of the Postdoctoral Fellowship program are aligned with the profession-wide competencies specified by the APA for practice in health service psychology. UCC postdoctoral fellowship training objectives include the development of competence in the following areas:

- **Professional Values and Attitudes:** as evidenced in behavior and comportment that reflects the values and attitudes of psychology, including reflecting on, critically evaluating and improving one’s own professional performance.
- **Individual and Cultural Diversity:** awareness, sensitivity and skill in working professionally with diverse individuals, groups and communities who represent

various cultural and personal backgrounds and identities.

- **Ethical-Legal Standards:** application of ethical principles and awareness of legal issues regarding the practice of psychology with individuals, groups, and organizations.
- **Research:** ability to critically evaluate, disseminate, and generate research that contributes to the professional knowledge base and/or evaluates the effectiveness of various professional activities.
- **Evidence-based Intervention:** ability to provide clinical interventions grounded in science to alleviate suffering and to promote the health and well-being of individuals, groups, and/or organizations.
- **Evidence-based Assessment:** develop knowledge and competency in the selection, administration and interpretation of psychological assessments consistent with the best scientific research evidence.
- **Evidence-based Supervision:** supervision and training in the professional knowledge base of enhancing and monitoring the professional functioning of others.
- **Consultation:** engage in interprofessional and interdisciplinary collaboration to improve client outcomes and quality of care.
- **Communication and Interpersonal Skills:** ability to communicate effectively, to interact appropriately, and to develop meaningful and helpful relationships in all professional roles.

TRAINING GOALS

Training experiences are grounded in the competencies above to provide advanced training to postdoctoral fellows to:

- perform initial clinical consultations/evaluations
- practice multi-modal psychotherapy (individual and group)
- practice psychology guided by professional ethics and research
- promote development of healthy professional identity
- develop cultural humility and respect for and awareness of human diversity
- develop skills in conducting outreach programming, professional presentations, and interprofessional consultation
- develop skills in professional mentoring

These goals are addressed by a number of training experiences that occur weekly or monthly, including didactic seminars, case conferences, campus outreach presentations, provision of individual and group psychotherapy, participation in individual and group/peer clinical supervision, mentoring of practicum level trainees, and completion of a scholarly project.

FELLOWSHIP OVERVIEW

The fellowship year typically begins in mid-August and runs through mid-August of the following year. The fellowship experience is considered full-time, based on a 2000-hour year-long training experience with an expectation of approximately 18-20 hours of

direct clinical service per week. Fellows gain experience with a variety of direct service activities throughout the year which are described in detail below. Although there is a predetermined set of expectations required to complete fellowship, the degree of involvement in some activities is negotiable and determined by the interest and experience of the fellow, as well as the needs of the center.

All fellows have a private office with a personal computer linked to the University network, and library privileges. Fellows receive Paid Time Off (PTO) commensurate with Vanderbilt University exempt employees as well as university holidays and professional development funds for activities such as trainings and conferences. Fellows may also opt into employee medical and dental insurance, as well as other employee benefits, which require an employee contribution.

Depending on the area of focus, all fellowship-related training and clinical services are provided at the University Counseling Center or at the Vanderbilt Athletics facilities, with the exception of outreach opportunities, including Drop-In Consultation, which typically takes place at various sites across the university campus. As with all Vanderbilt University buildings, the counseling center and the athletics facilities are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and are equipped with accessible entrances and parking as well as an elevator. Additionally, as for all VU employees, postdoctoral fellows also have access to the VU Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/eeo/>) if they have need of accommodations for disabilities.

Training Areas of Focus (Generalist Track and Athletics Track)

While all UCC clinical providers, including postdoctoral fellows, are expected to function as generalist practitioners who effectively manage the mental health needs of students presenting with a range clinical concerns and intersecting identities, the fellowship training program offers two training areas of emphasis: a generalist track and an athletics track. Fellows in both tracks engage in similar learning activities that include individual and group therapy, urgent care support, campus outreach presentations, didactic seminars, case conferences, participation in individual and group supervision, and completion of a fellowship project. However, the primary office location, student populations, outreach initiatives, and supervisory and assessment opportunities, will vary depending on the area of focus.

- Generalist Track (2 positions available):

The generalist track postdoctoral fellowship is intended for an individual pursuing licensure as a psychologist and seeking advanced training to build a career and assume leadership positions within a university counseling center setting. Fellows in the generalist track will be primarily located at the UCC and will gain experience working in a fast-paced, multidisciplinary team environment with a wide range of university students and presenting concerns, as the UCC has a high utilization rate (~25%) among university students. Fellows in this track will also have an opportunity to provide group supervision for practicum trainees and participate in optional advanced training

opportunities based on availability.

- Athletics Track (1 position available):

The athletics track postdoctoral fellow is intended for an individual pursuing licensure as a psychologist and seeking specialized experience providing sport psychology and mental health services to NCAA student-athletes. The fellow will spend 60% of the week working alongside the Sport Psychology team, which is fully embedded within the Vanderbilt Athletic department and provides comprehensive mental health and performance psychology services to approximately 400+ student-athletes within an integrated, multidisciplinary team-based model of care. Fellows in this area of emphasis will provide confidential individual counseling, mental health screenings, crisis work, outreach programming, and team/group interventions under the supervision of UCC Sport Psychologists and Certified Mental Performance Consultants (CMPC). Additional training opportunities include consulting with sports medicine staff and coaches, and participation interdisciplinary treatment teams. Specific responsibilities will be based on interest, availability, and training needs.

The fellow in the Athletics Track will spend the other 40% of the week at the UCC providing comprehensive mental health services to university students and working alongside the large, multidisciplinary staff. Given that the fellow in this track will be located in the Vanderbilt Athletic department for 60% of the fellowship and at the UCC for 40% of the fellowship, some of the learning activities below, which are primarily located at the UCC, may be adjusted to support the individual professional goals of the fellow.

Learning Activities/Training Curriculum

The primary training method is experiential. The following learning activities are a part of the fellows' weekly or monthly schedule. Satisfactory completion of these learning activities during the year-long (i.e., 2000 hours) postdoctoral fellowship meets supervised practice requirements for licensure as a Psychologist with Health Service Provider designation in the State of Tennessee.

- Individual and Group Psychotherapy (approximately 18-20 hours/week)

Fellows provide a wide range of direct clinical service at the UCC, including initial clinical assessment (intake), individual therapy, group therapy, and crisis care intervention. Through coordination and communication with the fellow and their primary supervisor, care is taken to balance the fellow's case load with respect to clinical acuity and presenting concerns, and consideration is given to the fellow's stated interest in working with a specific presenting concern or identity group (e.g., trauma treatment; LGBTQI- identified students).

Fellows typically see 18-20 individual psychotherapy clients per week. In addition, each fellow is required to co-facilitate one therapy group with a licensed mental health provider each semester during the academic year, with the option to co-facilitate more

than one therapy group if desired and available. Fellows also participate in the weekly crisis response rotation shared among all UCC staff one hour per week. Thus, fellows can expect to accrue approximately 900 hours of direct clinical service over the course of the year.

- Supervision

Individual Supervision (weekly x 2 hours)

Over the course of the training year, fellows will have two supervisors of individual therapy, with whom they will meet for a total of 2 hours weekly. This supervisor is known as the “Primary Supervisor” because this is the supervisor who has the most frequent and consistent contact with the fellow. All primary supervisors are licensed as psychologists with Health Service Provider designation in the State of Tennessee. Primary supervisors provide regular individual clinical supervision for individual psychotherapy, crisis intervention services, and consultation. Primary supervisors also provide training and oversight for case management, documentation, and other administrative activities. Supervision utilizes case discussion and review of video recordings, and supervisors provide fellows with ongoing, formative feedback and summative written evaluations of the fellow’s work and progress two times during the training year. The primary supervisor maintains professional responsibility for the fellow’s clinical cases and co-signs all individual therapy notes written by the fellow.

Group Supervision (weekly x 1 hour): supervision of individual therapy in a group format.

The postdoctoral fellows and doctoral interns meet weekly for group supervision of individual therapy supervised by two licensed mental health providers on staff at the UCC. During Group Supervision trainees rotate responsibility for presenting a clinical case, and the supervisor facilitates the discussion of the cases. Utilizing an informal case presentation format, trainees select cases to present and prepare diagnostic and treatment-related questions for their peers and supervisor. Presentation of video recordings of psychotherapy sessions may be used to enhance the clinical presentations. Licensed staff facilitators provide information about the fellow’s progress to the primary supervisor during regularly scheduled supervisor meetings or informally between meetings. Note that the primary doctoral-level licensed psychologist maintains responsibility for overall supervision, including oversight and integration of supervision provided by other professionals.

Urgent Care (varies)

Fellows are required to provide coverage for the urgent care of university students who walk-in or call the UCC indicating the need for immediate support. At the UCC, two members of the urgent care team and one leadership team member are on-call each day of the work week, from 10am to 4pm, to provide this level of care for students. As a result, fellows are supported by a secondary Urgent Care provider as well as a leadership team member. Fellows also have an opportunity to attend a weekly urgent

care consultation and supervision meeting that is co-facilitated by the Associate Director for Clinical Operations and the Associate Director for Administration and Clinical Services.

Supervision of Group Therapy (weekly x 30 minutes)

Fellows are required to co-facilitate at least one weekly psychotherapy group with or supervised by a licensed member of the UCC staff. Following each group therapy session, the fellow and the supervising co-facilitator meet for 30 minutes of face-to-face supervision to discuss the therapeutic group process within the session. The fellow is provided with feedback concerning the therapeutic process and their own participation and performance in the group. The supervisor of group therapy provides information about the fellow's progress to the primary supervisor during regularly scheduled supervisor meetings as well as informally between meetings. While the group supervisor co-signs all group therapy notes written by the fellow, the primary doctoral-level licensed psychologist maintains responsibility for overall supervision, including oversight and integration of supervision provided by other professionals.

- Outreach (varies)

Fellows participate in outreach programming with the larger university community throughout the year. Opportunities for outreach can be coordinated depending on expressed interest in potential work or partnership with various campus partners (e.g., the Center for LGBTQI Life, the Black Cultural Center, Residential Experience, Athletics). Fellows can also facilitate Drop-In Consultation, a service that offers informal, confidential consultations at various sites on campus.

- Advanced Assessment (optional)

Fellows in the generalist track may opt to provide psychological assessment services during the training year. Advanced training in psychological assessment includes test selection and administration, scoring of instruments and interpretation of results, writing a comprehensive assessment report, and providing a feedback to the client. Supervision of assessment is provided by a licensed psychologist with specific training in assessment.

- Fellowship Project (dedicated time provided)

Fellows are expected to contribute to the center through the completion of a scholarly project. Like the clinical training at the UCC, this project is considered to be flexible enough to allow the fellow to pursue particular areas of interest. The ideal project will be grounded in, or informed by, existing research/literature and will be undertaken with the aim of enhancing the clinical, administrative, and/or organizational goals of the center. Outreach program development, group therapy initiatives, organizational assessment, and clinical workshops are only some examples of possible scholarly projects.

Fellows and their supervisor will begin to discuss projects ideas at the beginning of the training year, followed by the creation of a more formal and comprehensive outline of the plan, which is ultimately reviewed by the supervisor and UCC Training Director before the project is initiated. There is no set timeline for project completion, but the postdoctoral training year will not be considered successfully completed until the project is brought to fruition. While the Training Director provides oversight of the project and the fellow's progress, other UCC clinical staff who possess expertise in the area associated with the fellow's project may assume a mentoring role.

- Postdoctoral Fellow Seminar (monthly x 1 hour)

Postdoctoral fellows participate in a didactic seminar with peers from the Vanderbilt University Medical Center Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Program in Professional Psychology with which the Vanderbilt UCC maintains a collaborative relationship. This collaborative didactic seminar is co-facilitated by UCC supervisors and psychologists who are faculty members in the Department of Psychiatry, giving fellows opportunities to learn from variety of supervisors who are engaged in clinical service delivery in a number of different clinical settings with a range of diverse clients (e.g., primary care, at-risk youth, first episode psychosis). The Postdoc Seminar includes a breadth of topics touching on the 9 profession-side competencies, including ethics, cultural diversity in practice, professional development and behavior, assessment, intervention, and supervision.

- UCC Clinical Teams (biweekly x 1 hour)

The UCC Clinical Teams are small, multidisciplinary group case consultation meetings that occur twice a month at the UCC and follow a format in which a UCC staff members present clinical cases that are complex in nature and may require integration of multiple services. This is a center-wide initiative where staff and trainees are separated into four multidisciplinary groups and offer case consultation to one another. This small case conference format provides an opportunity for staff to solicit clinical consultation from their peers who may represent different disciplines and have different areas of clinical expertise. Fellows participate in this biweekly case conference as general attendees and are also included in the schedule of presenters. Clinical Teams conference presentations are formatted specifically to address presenting concerns within a framework that considers individual and cultural identity and other relevant contextual variables, and typically focuses on treatment planning for brief intervention. Fellows present in Clinical Teams meetings throughout the training year. No specific rubric for the presentation is required.

- Affinity Group (monthly x 1 hour)

Once per month, staff and trainees attend a meeting of identity-based Affinity Groups that are intended to further social justice work and racial equity initiatives within the UCC. Staff and trainees self-select to attend the Black Affinity Group, Non-Black Staff of Color Affinity Group, or the White Accountability Group.

- Facilitation of Practicum Seminar (weekly x 1 hour)

During the second half of the postdoc year, fellows in the generalist track take over responsibility for facilitating the case presentation aspect of a weekly seminar held for practicum- level trainees at the UCC. In this role, fellows guide the discussion of cases, highlight issues to consider, and provide suggestions for managing aspects of the cases presented, allowing them to take on a consistent mentoring role for less advanced trainees and to gain experience enhancing and monitoring the professional functioning of others.

- Mentoring of Doctoral Interns (monthly x 1 hour)

Fellows in the generalist track also facilitate a monthly support space for UCC interns to discuss topics of interest and importance to interns, including but not limited to applying for postdoc positions, wellbeing and self-care during internship, managing difficult conversations, and matters of professional identity.

Opportunities for Participation on UCC Committees

Postdoctoral fellows are challenged to consider the full complexity of the clients they serve and identify not only their clinical needs but also appropriate resources within and outside of the center that will assist clients in achieving their goals. The diversity of UCC clientele represents an opportunity for fellows to pursue specific clinical interests. UCC clients present with a wide range of concerns, identities, and cultural backgrounds. As such, fellows can expect to develop rich caseloads that vary in terms of complexity and treatment duration.

The fellowship training program is typically able to offer fellows opportunities to focus at least part of their training on treatment of a particular presenting condition (e.g., trauma; outreach). Opportunities also are available to partner with campus identity centers to provide clinical and outreach services to specific student populations (i.e., international students, students identifying as LGBTQ+).

If they choose, fellows may join the Intersection Outreach Committee, which oversees the center's outreach initiatives including planning for UCC signature events and supporting calls to support students in the wake of global events/disasters. Fellows are may also participate in the UCC's Diversity Alliance, which steers the center's efforts to center social justice and anti-racism in all UCC clinical activities. Fellows are also invited to join the UCC Wellness Committee, which is tasked with promoting work/life balance, encouraging a sense of community, and injecting fun into the work environment.

Weekly Schedule

Below is an estimated weekly schedule, based on an approximate 40-hour work week for a fellow in the generalist track.

ACTIVITY	Hours per Week
Individual therapy	16-18
Group therapy	2-4
Assessment	Varies depending on track
Individual supervision	2
Group supervision	1
UCC Clinical Teams5
Practicum Group Supervision	1.5 hrs in spring, depending on track
Urgent Care	2-4
Outreach	2-4 hrs/mo
Fellowship Seminar	1 hr/mo
Support Space for Doctoral Interns	1 hr/mo, depending on track
UCC Staff Meeting	1.5
EPPP study time	5 May, June, July

MONITORING & EVALUATION OF TRAINEE PROGRESS

All fellows will be monitored and evaluated using a competency-based format that aligns with the stated training objectives and emphasizes acquisition of the profession wide competencies for health service psychology. Clear objective criteria will be applied for evaluation of achievements (e.g., number of patients seen, number of reports written, manuscript submissions).

A needs assessment will be completed with each trainee and their primary supervisor, within the first two weeks of training year. The plan will include an assessment of strengths and weaknesses across different areas, along with a plan for meeting training goals. Progress toward achieving these goals will be reviewed throughout the year. The primary supervisor and Training Director will regularly monitor the plan to ensure that each trainee is on the right path for success. If any trainee lags in meeting their development plan objectives, the primary supervisor and Training Director will identify barriers to success and adjust the mentorship plan accordingly (e.g., hold meetings with primary supervisor and trainee, recommend additional development activities). Details on the evaluation process are outlined below.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The fellows will be evaluated three times during the year: December, April, and August. All supervisors of a fellow’s work (i.e., of intervention, assessment, scholarly activities) contribute to the evaluation, which the primary supervisor formally reviews with the fellow. This evaluation is then sent to the Training Director. Each fellow will also complete a written evaluation of his/her supervisors to the Training Director at the same three intervals.

It is the responsibility of the training faculty to identify any serious problems or deficiencies as early as possible. Feedback should be given in a timely manner such that low ratings on the formal written evaluation are not the fellow’s first indication that they are not performing at the expected level. If the problem is of such severity as to call into question the fellow's successful completion of the program, the Training

Director will be informed, and a written plan will be developed and implemented, in collaboration with the trainee, to support and remedy the concerns.

Postdoctoral Training Leadership

Associate Director for Training

Ruth Howard, Ph.D., HSP

Dr. Ruth Howard is the UCC Training Director, with primary responsibility for oversight of all training programs at the UCC, including a clinical practicum program for graduate students representing various mental health disciplines (e.g., professional counseling, social work, and clinical/counseling psychology), an APA-accredited internship in health service psychology, and the UCC Postdoctoral Fellowship Program. Dr. Howard joined the University Counseling Center in 2020 and is a licensed psychologist in the State of Tennessee. She earned her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and completed a doctoral internship at the University of Illinois in Chicago.

Dr. Howard maintains primary responsibility for directing and organizing the postdoctoral fellowship training program, including monitoring and evaluating the training program's goals and maintaining all training records to support alumni of UCC training programs.

Assistant Director for Training

Nalini Conner, Ph.D., HSP

Dr. Conner is a primary intern supervisor and supports the Training Director in overseeing all the training programs at the UCC.

Assistant Athletic Director for Sport Psychology and Mental Performance

Julie Sutcliffe, PsyD, HSP, CMPC

Dr. Julie Sutcliffe is the Assistant Athletic Director for Sport Psychology and Mental Performance at Vanderbilt. She directs and oversees sport psychology, mental health and performance services for Vanderbilt Athletics. She meets with individual varsity student-athletes and with varsity teams to offer comprehensive and integrated performance enhancement and mental health consultation services. Additionally, she consults with Athletic Department staff to support student-athletes to promote mental health, wellbeing, and optimal performance.

Dr. Sutcliffe earned her PsyD in Clinical Psychology with a specialization in Sport and Performance Psychology from the University of Denver. She completed a pre-doctoral internship at the University of Denver Internship Consortium, DU Health and Counseling Center and a post-doctoral fellowship at Northwestern University Counseling and Psychological Services. She holds a Master of Science in Kinesiology, specializing in Sport and Exercise Psychology from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, and a Bachelors of Arts in Psychology and Education from Vassar College.

Dr. Sutcliffe is a licensed psychologist with specialization in sport and performance psychology and athlete mental health. She is also a Certified Mental Performance Consultant through the Association of Applied Sport Psychology.

COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM

Upon successful completion of the program, fellows will be awarded a certificate of completion. This certificate will validate that the trainee has successfully completed all the program requirements and has acquired expertise in the field of health service psychology. This certificate will be awarded after final evaluation by the Training Committee.

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW SELECTION CRITERIA

Fellows are selected on a competitive basis based upon previous clinical experience, recommendations from supervising professionals, and fit between applicants' experience and interests with the services provided by the University Counseling Center. Applications are reviewed by the Training Director and two additional UCC psychologists, who then select a smaller group of applicants to interview. Interviews are typically virtual. The Training Director is responsible for the selection of fellows and does so in consultation with the UCC psychologists involved in application reviews and applicant interviews.

Prior to the start of the fellowship, fellows must have completed all clinical psychology doctoral degree requirements from an APA/CPA- accredited graduate program, including an APA/CPA accredited doctoral internship.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND TO APPLY

For further information or for informal inquiries, please contact Ruth Howard, Ph.D., HSP at ruth.howard@vanderbilt.edu with any questions related to the postdoctoral fellowship position. To apply for the position, please send an application, including a CV, letter of interest, and two letters of recommendation (at least one from applicant's internship site) to ruth.howard@vanderbilt.edu.

The Vanderbilt University Counseling Center Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Program in Health Service Psychology is an APPIC member program and will follow APPIC guidelines for postdoctoral selection ([APPIC Postdoctoral-Selection-Guidelines](#)), including extending offers on APPIC's Uniform Notification Date (UND).

Number of Positions: 3 (2 Generalist Track, 1 Athletics Track)

2025-2026 Salary: \$61,008

Professional Development Funds: \$1500 (requests are due by May 15)