

# Doctor of Psychology in Psychodynamic Psychology (PsyD) - RDPsyD

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Offered By: Psychology Department

Program Director: Jens Schmidt, PhD

College of Health Professions

College Dean: Cassandra Peel, PhD

## **Program Overview**

The College of Health Professions offers the Reiss-Davis Doctor of Psychology in Psychodynamic Psychology (PsyD) degree, a 69-credit professional doctoral program consisting of lecture and lab instruction, as well as a Doctoral Project. Students are expected to enroll full time for 10 consecutive terms, including summer. Most courses are offered in a blended format that includes an online interactive and an on-ground in-person learning component. Classes are generally held weekly online, and one weekend per month on-campus at the LA-metro location in California.

The PsyD is designed for working mental health professionals, at all stages of their careers and from varied disciplines, who desire to earn a doctoral degree in psychology, to help them acquire a sound theoretical foundation in psychodynamic psychology, the skills to consume and apply research in their work, and hands-on practice with psychotherapy tools consistent with their mental health licensure to enrich their expertise and career opportunities as working professionals.

The PsyD is intended for professionals who are licensed or license-eligible by an appropriate state agency or board to provide mental health care services. Graduates are prepared for professional advancement and leadership; to become advocates for the mental health concerns of infants, children, adolescents, adults, and their families from all communities; and to operate from a position of cultural awareness and humility.

The program includes a 6-credit Doctoral Project that is part of the 69-total program credits.

The program meets the requirements for those who seek to pursue California Psychology licensure (that is, this PsyD fulfills the doctoral degree requirement to sit for the California Board of Psychology's Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology, or EPPP). There are additional requirements beyond the doctoral transcript, and individuals interested in psychology licensure or the EPPP examination should contact the California Board of Psychology.

*Program namesake: SCU's Reiss-Davis Doctor of Psychology program, launched in 2026, is named in honor of the former Reiss-Davis Graduate School, which had a nearly 50-year history providing training in psychodynamic treatment for children, youth, and their families. Use of the "Reiss-Davis" name is in acknowledgement of the spirit and contributions of the Reiss-Davis Graduate School, and with their blessing.*

### **Program Delivery Model**

This program is a hybrid delivery program with most courses providing a combination of online instruction and on-ground classes, which will require in-person attendance. On-ground course components are held at the Whittier-LA Metro campus. See Clinical Experiences in the University Catalog. See State Authorization information in the University Catalog.

### **Practicum or Internship not Required**

SCU's PsyD does not require a practicum or internship for degree completion as students may apply the study material in their concurrent work as licensed or license-eligible mental health professionals.

Independent of the program, students who seek licensure as psychologists in California must complete a total of 3,000 hours of supervised professional experience as required by the California Board of Psychology, among other requirements. The state has guidance on when applicants must fulfil these hours relative to when they are enrolled in a doctoral program (such as this PsyD). Currently, students who have reached candidacy in their doctoral program may elect to complete 1,500 hours of qualifying predoctoral supervised

professional experience while concurrently enrolled in the Doctor of Psychology program. This is not the only pathway to completion of these hours. Interested students should contact the California Board of Psychology with questions.

### **Psychodynamic Theory and Techniques**

The psychodynamic orientation encompasses a range of theories unified by their emphasis on the unconscious as central to mental life. Contemporary approaches focus on the development of the self within relational contexts—across individuals, families, groups, and societies. Psychodynamic psychotherapy works with unconscious processes and uses the therapeutic relationship as the primary vehicle for change. A developmental lens attends to the impact of early experience, attachment, family and relational patterns, trauma, and culture on thoughts, emotions, and behavior. Grounded in multicultural awareness and cultural humility, graduates are prepared to foster deep, dynamic therapeutic relationships that support transformation, healing, and growth.

### **Program Mission**

The Reiss-Davis Doctor of Psychology program offers educational programs to mental health-care providers at different stages of their professional development. The program integrates psychodynamic, neurobiological, trauma-informed, and whole health perspectives, and equips adult learners with the most current theories and techniques to serve the mental health needs of children, adolescents, adults, families, and their diverse communities. Our program is grounded in contemporary psychodynamic psychology and a commitment to approach everyone served from a position of cultural awareness and humility, while striving for equity and inclusion.

### **Program Learning Outcomes**

1. **Theoretical Knowledge:** Graduates will integrate foundational theories from psychodynamic, neurobiological, whole-health, and trauma-informed perspectives into their knowledge of infant, child, adolescent, and adult development and their mental health.
2. **Scientific Inquiry:** Graduates will evaluate scientific literature and conduct scientific inquiry in the context of psychodynamic, neurobiological, whole-health, and trauma-informed perspectives, psychodynamic child psychology, and psychotherapy in the service of infants, children, adolescents, adults, and their families.
3. **Psychotherapy Application:** Graduates will integrate psychodynamic, neurobiological, whole-health, and trauma-informed perspectives and scientific inquiry into their

conceptualization of assessment and treatment of infants, children, adolescents, adults, and their families.

4. Professional Identity Development: Graduates will integrate their professional and personal identity as mental health professionals and embrace cultural humility, inclusion, and equity as guiding principles in their interpersonal functioning, thinking, values, and commitments.

### **Application Requirements**

Applicants for the PsyD degree must submit the following:

- **Completed application.**
- **Official transcripts for the highest degree earned** from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or an equivalent foreign agency.
  - Applicants whose highest degree is from a foreign college or university must have their credentials evaluated to demonstrate that the courses or degree earned meet the admissions standards. The University will accept evaluations by an agency listed on the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) website. Canadian students are not required to have their credentials evaluated by NACES if their high school, college, or university provides transcripts in English and are sent directly to SCU.
- **Proof of Licensure in a mental health-related field.**
  - Potential applicants are encouraged to contact the Admissions Office to verify the appropriateness of their particular license.
  - License-eligible applicants who are not currently licensed will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- In some circumstances, applicants may be asked to submit a 300-500 word personal statement explaining reasons for pursuing the Doctor of Psychology in Psychodynamic Psychology Degree.
- In some circumstances, applicants may be asked to submit 1-2 professional or academic letter(s) of recommendation (i.e., employer, teacher, practicing medical professional).

### **Admission Standards**

Applicants for the PsyD degree must meet the following admissions standards. Exceptions are made on an individual basis.

- **A completed master's degree in a mental health field** from an accredited institution (accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or an equivalent foreign agency) that can lead towards licensure.
  - Students enrolled in the PsyD typically hold one of the following degrees: MA, MS, or MSc in Psychology, School Psychology, Educational Psychology, Clinical Counseling, or Marriage and Family Therapy; MEd; or MSW.
  - Some institutions offer relevant degrees with different titles or abbreviations. Potential applicants are encouraged to contact the Admissions Office to verify the appropriateness of a particular master's degree.
- **Meet the physical and technical requirements to successfully complete the program**, with or without reasonable accommodations.
- **Licensure** in a mental health-related field.
- **3.0 GPA** or greater on a 4.0 scale.

### **Degree Completion Requirements**

The Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) degree may be conferred upon those who have fulfilled the following requirements:

- Completed 69 credits of required coursework, including 6 credits for the Doctoral Project.
- Successfully passed the Comprehensive Exam.
- Successfully completed the Doctoral Project.
- Maintained a cumulative grade point average of 3.0
- Completed all degree requirements within 5 years of matriculation.
- Submitted a Petition to Graduate.

### **Professional Licensure Requirements**

The PsyD program meets the academic standards for a doctoral degree in psychology as required by the California Board of Psychology. Graduates who, after successful completion of their doctoral degree program, intend to use the title of “psychologist” or “clinical psychologist” can only do so in California after becoming licensed by the

California Board of Psychology which has additional requirements for licensure. For more information about the path to licensure in California upon graduation from the PsyD, including coursework in specific topic areas, continuing professional education, and supervised experience hours, visit the website of the California Board of Psychology.

While enrolled in the doctoral program, students who have reached candidacy in their doctoral program may choose to concurrently begin to accumulate hours of supervised professional experience toward psychology licensure. Interested students must contact the California Board of Psychology with questions. SCU's Registrar will provide any requested documentation to support the application and registration with the Board of Psychology as a Psychological Associate. This allows the applicant to provide evidence that their hours of supervised professional experience were accrued while they were concurrently and appropriately enrolled in a qualifying doctoral program.

**SCU has not made a determination that the PsyD curriculum meets the educational requirements for licensure or certification as a “psychologist” or “clinical psychologist” for any state other than California.**

### **Program Sequence**

#### **1. Term 1**

1. *PSYD 610 Doctoral Foundations*
  2. *PSYD 612 Psychodynamic Theory I*
  3. *PSYD 614 Cultural Humility*
  4. *PSYD 616 Infant and Early Childhood Development and Mental Health*
- Total Term 1: 7 Credits*

#### **2. Term 2**

1. *PSYD 620 Scholarly Writing Seminar*
  2. *PSYD 622 Psychodynamic Theory II*
  3. *PSYD 625 Qualitative and Quantitative Research Design Methods*
  4. *PSYD 628 Dyadic Child-Caregiver Psychotherapy*
- Total Term 2: 7 Credits*

#### **3. Term 3**

1. *PSYD 632 Psychodynamic Theory III*

2. *PSYD 634 Latency Development and Mental Health*
  3. *PSYD 636 Neurobiology and Affect Regulation*
  4. *PSYD 638 Foundations of Psychodynamic Play Therapy*
- Total Term 3: 7 Credits*

**4. Term 4**

1. *PSYD 640 Adolescent Development and Mental Health*
  2. *PSYD 641 Psychodynamic and Neurobiological Understanding of Attachment*
  3. *PSYD 645 Evaluating Psychodynamic Effectiveness*
  4. *PSYD 656 Applications of Psychodynamic Play Therapy*
- Total Term 4: 7 Credits*

**5. Term 5**

1. *PSYD 650 Maternal Mental Health*
  2. *PSYD 652 Psychodynamic Psychotherapy with Adolescents*
  3. *PSYD 654 Integration of Neurobiology into Psychodynamic Treatment*
  4. *PSYD 648 Case Conference (1)*
- Total Term 5: 7 Credits*

**6. Term 6**

1. *PSYD 660 Paternal Mental Health*
  2. *PSYD 662 Child and Adolescent Diagnostic Profile*
  3. *PSYD 664 Psychodynamic Supervision*
  4. *PSYD 700 Comprehensive Examination Preparatory Course*
- Total Term 6: 7 Credits*

**7. Term 7**

1. *PSYD 672 Evaluation and Analysis of Psychological Assessment I*
2. *PSYD 674 Jungian Theory and Therapy for Children and Adults*
3. *PSYD 676 Case Conference (2)*

4. PSYD 710 Doctoral Project Development (1)  
Total Term 7: 7 Credits

**8. Term 8**

1. PSYD 682 Evaluation and Analysis of Psychological Assessment II
2. PSYD 684 Case Conference (3)
3. PSYD 686 Jungian Sandplay for Children and Adults
4. PSYD 720 Doctoral Project Development (2)  
Total Term 8: 7 Credits

**9. Term 9**

1. PSYD 690 Case Conference (4)
2. PSYD 692 Dream Work with Children and Adults
3. PSYD 694 Psychodynamic Family Therapy
4. PSYD 730 Doctoral Project Development (3)  
Total Term 9: 7 Credits

**10. Term 10**

1. PSYD 740 Doctoral Project Completion  
Total Term 10: 6 Credits

**TOTAL DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY IN PSYCHODYNAMIC PSYCHOLOGY (PSYD): 69 CREDITS**

**Course Schedule and Delivery Model**

PsyD courses are typically offered in the following in the following manner.

Blended courses are offered weekly throughout the program. On-campus learning occurs one weekend per month (Saturday and Sunday).

<b>Year</b>	<b>Courses per Year</b>	<b>Residentials per Course/Term</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	4, 15-week courses per term, 3 terms, 21 credits	3 residential weekends per course

<b>Year 2</b>	4, 15-week courses, 3 terms, 21 credits	3 residential weekends per course
<b>Year 3</b>	4, 15-week courses, 3 terms, 21 credits	3 residential weekends per course
<b>Year 4</b>	1, 6 credit course, Doctoral Project Completion	No residential weekends

### **Transfer Credit Eligibility**

The PsyD program follows the University Transfer Credit policy.

### **Residency Requirement**

The Doctor of Psychology in Psychodynamic Psychology requires that students complete at least 25% of credits at Southern California University of Health Sciences to qualify for degree completion

### **Doctoral Project**

The PsyD Doctoral Project is a culminating scholarly experience in the Doctor of Psychology in Psychodynamic Psychology program. Students engage in a mentored project that contributes to the field of Psychodynamic Psychology and aligns with their professional goals. The project may take various forms: *scholarly inquiry, case study, treatment module development, implementation study, translational science, policy development or analysis, or quality improvement initiatives, or advocacy efforts*. This 15-week course focuses on finalizing the written report and preparing an oral or poster presentation for a research symposium. *By addressing real-world challenges within the student's chosen focus area, students contribute to the broader field of psychology.*

### **Curriculum**

#### **1. Foundational**

1. PSYD 614 Cultural Humility
2. PSYD 616 Infant and Early Childhood Development and Mental Health
3. PSYD 634 Latency Development and Mental Health
4. PSYD 636 Neurobiology and Affect Regulation
5. PSYD 638 Foundations of Psychodynamic Play Therapy
6. PSYD 640 Adolescent Development and Mental Health
7. PSYD 650 Maternal Mental Health

8. PSYD 660 Paternal Mental Health  
Total Foundational: 14 Credits

## **2. Psychodynamic Theory**

1. PSYD 612 Psychodynamic Theory I
2. PSYD 622 Psychodynamic Theory II
3. PSYD 632 Psychodynamic Theory III
4. PSYD 641 Psychodynamic and Neurobiological Understanding of Attachment
5. PSYD 674 Jungian Theory and Therapy for Children and Adults  
Total Psychodynamic Theory: 9 Credits

## **3. Clinical Skills Application**

1. PSYD 628 Dyadic Child-Caregiver Psychotherapy
2. PSYD 650 Maternal Mental Health
3. PSYD 652 Psychodynamic Psychotherapy with Adolescents
4. PSYD 654 Integration of Neurobiology into Psychodynamic Treatment
5. PSYD 656 Applications of Psychodynamic Play Therapy
6. PSYD 660 Paternal Mental Health
7. PSYD 664 Psychodynamic Supervision
8. PSYD 686 Jungian Sandplay for Children and Adults
9. PSYD 692 Dream Work with Children and Adults
10. PSYD 694 Psychodynamic Family Therapy  
Clinical Skills Application: 16 Credits

## **4. Case Conferences**

1. PSYD 648 Case Conference (1)
2. PSYD 676 Case Conference (2)
3. PSYD 684 Case Conference (3)
4. PSYD 690 Case Conference (4)  
Total Case Conferences: 8 Credits

## **5. Doctoral Project Completion**

1. PSYD 610 Doctoral Foundations
  2. PSYD 620 Scholarly Writing Seminar
  3. PSYD 625 Qualitative and Quantitative Research Design Methods
  4. PSYD 710 Doctoral Project Development (1)
  5. PSYD 720 Doctoral Project Development (2)
  6. PSYD 730 Doctoral Project Development (3)
  7. PSYD 740 Doctoral Project Completion
- Total Doctoral Project Completion: 13 Credits

## **6. Assessment**

1. PSYD 645 Evaluating Psychodynamic Effectiveness
  2. PSYD 662 Child and Adolescent Diagnostic Profile
  3. PSYD 672 Evaluation and Analysis of Psychological Assessment I
  4. PSYD 682 Evaluation and Analysis of Psychological Assessment II
  5. PSYD 700 Comprehensive Examination Preparatory Course
- Total Assessment: 9 Credits

**TOTAL DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY IN PSYCHODYNAMIC PSYCHOLOGY (PSYD): 69 CREDITS**