FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)
WCU Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) Program in Clinical Psychology

(1) Are there graduate assistantships for your PsyD students?
Yes. We are pleased to offer all incoming PsyD students a graduate assistantship (GA) which will cover 50% of tuition during their first year (Fall, Spring, and Summer), with the potential to renew for up to 3 years total. Every effort will be made to ensure that the graduate assistantship is in the research lab of the student’s dissertation advisor. In addition to the 3-year GA, our program has competitive tuition rates when compared to other regional PsyD programs, making the WCU PsyD an attractive option.

(2) Is the PsyD program accredited?
No. Doctoral programs are not immediately eligible to apply for accreditation through the American Psychological Association (APA). Although our PsyD program is not currently accredited, we intend to initiate the accreditation process in Fall 2017, which is the earliest time that the APA allows, according to their new guidelines. Our first cohort of doctoral students entered the program in Fall 2016, and we aim to secure APA accreditation by the time our first cohort graduates. We believe that we will be well prepared for the doctoral program accreditation process, given that we have structured the program to be aligned with APA accreditation guidelines and we have developed the program in partnership with an external reviewer who is also an APA site visitor.

(3) How is the PsyD program preparing itself for ultimately obtaining accreditation?
According to APA (see http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/about/accreditation-process.aspx), the application for accreditation “begins when a program submits a self-study, a document that includes:

- Training goals, objectives and practices
- Student, faculty and financial resources
- Program policies and procedures
- Competencies students are expected to obtain
- Actual outcome data that demonstrates the achievement of these competencies”

We intend to submit our self-study to APA by the end of the Fall 2017 semester in order to include outcome data from our first two cohorts of PsyD students (students who matriculated in Fall 2016 and Fall 2017). We anticipate that, after reviewing our self-study, the APA Commission on Accreditation (CoA) will approve an on-site review of our doctoral program, also known as a site visit.

(4) How long will it take for the PsyD program to gain APA accreditation?
According to APA (see http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/about/accreditation-process.aspx), the “process of accreditation takes on average about 18 months from the time a program submits a self-
study until the CoA reaches a decision. **If accredited, the effective accreditation date is the date of the site visit,** which means that any student who is enrolled in our program at the time of the site visit preceding accreditation will be considered to have graduated from an accredited program. However, we do not know with certainty how long the process will take for our new PsyD program to gain accreditation. For this reason, we have begun the self-study process as early as possible, in order to apply for accreditation as early as possible.

**5** Since this program is not APA accredited yet, will I have difficulty obtaining a pre-doctoral internship or becoming licensed as a Psychologist in Pennsylvania after graduating from the program?

Doctoral program accreditation status can impact the likelihood of getting matched with a predoctoral internship (completing a 1-year predoctoral internship is a requirement for all Clinical Psychology PsyD and PhD students prior to earning their doctorate) and the process of getting licensed as a Psychologist in the state of Pennsylvania. In terms of the predoctoral internship, we anticipate having accreditation for our WCU Community Mental Health Clinic (opening in August 2017), which will serve as a pre-doctoral internship site in time for our first cohort of PsyD students to complete their internship in-house, if they are unable to or unwilling to seek an internship match elsewhere. In terms of licensure, the PA Board of Psychology requires that applicants for licensure have graduated from a program that has earned APA accreditation “within 1 year from the award of the doctoral degree” (see http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/049/chapter41/s41.31.html). This means that, **even if the PsyD program obtains accreditation up to 12 months after your graduation, you will still be eligible for PA licensure.**

**6** Since this program is not APA accredited yet, will I have difficulty finding a job after graduating?

We expect to have APA accreditation by the time the students in our first cohort graduate, which means that they (and all subsequent cohorts) will be able to say that they have graduated from an accredited program. If, for some reason, we do not earn accreditation by the time that you graduate, it is unlikely that the accreditation status will impact your job prospects. However, there are some federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which require Psychologists to have graduated from an accredited graduate program in order to obtain employment.

**7** Is it possible to continue to work full- or part-time while working on my PsyD?

Full-time employment will **not** be possible while enrolled in the PsyD program because, unlike our existing Psychology MA programs that offer evening classes, our PsyD classes will typically be offered during daytime hours. The PsyD program is a full-time, year-round program with required courses offered during the Fall and Spring semesters, as well as during Summer sessions. PsyD students will enroll in five courses (15 credits) in Fall-Year 1, Spring-Year 1, Fall-Year 2, and Spring-Year 2, along with Summer Session courses. In addition to the coursework, doctoral students will need to have schedules that are flexible enough to accommodate their clinical practicum training and any relevant research lab activities. Part-time employment may be possible while pursuing the PsyD; however, it would be to your advantage to engage in part-time employment that is relevant to the clinical psychology field. We strongly advise that students in the PsyD program minimize or completely eliminate any work commitments that are not related to their doctoral studies and training.

**8** Is it possible to transfer directly from the General Psychology MA program into the Clinical Psychology PsyD program?

No. A direct transfer from any MA program is not possible. You must apply for admission to the PsyD program and be considered along with the larger pool of applicants seeking admission for the Fall semester.