

## Resources

# The Clinical Sociology Honours Programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in South Africa

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### Abstract

Clinical sociology is limited in South Africa and the global South; therefore, a postgraduate degree focused on applying interdisciplinary perspectives in diverse social contexts was initiated. This approach addresses social problems and policies and enhances community well-being through direct intervention, research, and advocacy. Graduates gain competencies in healthcare settings, community organisations, government agencies, and educational institutions, contributing to societal change and development. The Clinical Sociology Honours Programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal produces change agents by designing and implementing clinical and applied models and interventions. Postgraduates augment critical skills, proficiencies and dexterities by combining research academic interests and societal needs. The aim of the programme typically involves applying theories and methods to analyse and intervene in social issues and problems at the individual, community, and societal levels. The programme focuses on understanding human behaviour in a social context, diagnosing social problems, and developing strategies for social change. It prepares students for roles in policy development, social research, community work, and advocacy, aiming to promote social justice and improve the quality of life. The Clinical Sociology Honours Programme is open to students in possession of an undergraduate sociology qualification or a cognate discipline. A qualification in clinical sociology facilitates initiatives

that seek to mitigate and reduce pervasive social problems in the interest of women, children, migrants, families and society.

**Keywords:** Clinical sociology, honours programme, South Africa, University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)

## Introduction

The introduction of the field of clinical sociology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), South Africa, is the stepping stone for sister institutions to open new learning and career pathways for the youth in Africa and the global South. The youth's social experiences are stubbornly stalled due to profound structural challenges, including an uneven democratic dividend favouring a small elite and a few quiet success stories. This persistent trend has entrenched the majority of youth in poverty, economic underdevelopment and joblessness. Additionally, since youth from different social backgrounds are locked into thick cohorts in their respective communities, the alternative routes are crime, corruption, substance abuse, and violence.

The South African higher education sector has not been able to untangle youth from these systemically dysfunctional social traps. The participation rate of youth in South African universities is low with only 5% in the age group 15-19 years in a total population of 64 million that gain access to tertiary education (Spaull, 2008). Yet the share of government spending on education is more favourable than Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) trends (Jin & Chen, 2018). Nevertheless, research confirms that in South Africa, there is no causal relationship between higher education and the labour market, even after three decades of undergoing state-driven political and economic transformation (Kruss, 2004; Van Broekhuizen, 2009). Given this indictment of higher education, South African universities are now earnestly committed to refocusing academic qualifications and curricula in response to the economic needs and demands of the globalising labour market.

The current development status in South Africa has brought a new focus on clinical and applied social science disciplines, where candidates favour the multidisciplinary nature and application of the Clinical Sociology Honours Programme. Postgraduate students

realise the potential of professional opportunities and certification as innovative career and academic pathways. Candidates realise the advantages of acquiring new intellectual insights combined with specialised skills acquisition, critical literacies, and practical competencies. The key is an educational approach that links the personal with societal transformation. There is always a better chance that once the candidate is immersed in the social issues of local communities, they are able to construct and apply empathetic interventions that are bound to be socially useful.

Hence, the idea of socially-useful labour<sup>1</sup>, makes a lasting and developmental mark on the wider society. From this initial process, society's wider social issues are addressed, including social justice, racism, poverty and unemployment, among others. The opportunity for the pervasive practice of clinical and applied sociology is at the doorstep of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, which promises both unimagined benefits and yet unknown perils. The 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution necessitates the integration of digital technologies, technological automation, artificial intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things to forge complex intricacies in society. In this context, clinical and applied sociology is critical in understanding and addressing the social implications of technological advancements. Irrespective of how the debate on the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution evolves across educational and societal institutions, the potential for investigations, analyses and applications of clinical and applied sociology is even clearer and immense.

## 1. About the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)

Established on the first day of January 2004, the UKZN is a result of two merged institutions, the University of Durban Westville and the University of Natal. The historically Indian University of Durban-Westville, established in the 1960s, was a site under protest against apartheid. In 1984, the sovereign University of Durban-Westville opened its doors to all races. The University of Natal can be traced to 1910 when the requirements for a university were obtained in 1949.

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1 A Keynesian public provision of useful forms of jobs.

The apartheid state supported the institution in 1946, facilitating the establishment of the faculty of Agriculture and a blacks-only medical school in 1947. The UKZN historical trajectory is deeply rooted in inequality, colonialism and apartheid, dating back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The merged institutions (Universities of Westville and Natal) were a post-apartheid restructuring directive of South African higher education.

We at the UKZN wish to share with our clinical and applied sociology community this motivation and establishment of the Clinical Sociology Honours Programme, and as our first step, we present the offering of a critical programme, which continues to grow with the support of colleagues at higher education institutions across the country and the globe. The growing interest and academic advancement are evident at four of South Africa's nine provinces: the University of Johannesburg in Gauteng, the University of Stellenbosch in the Western Cape, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in the Eastern Cape and Northwest University in the Northwest Province. Given the participation of academics in the International Sociology Association (ISA), Association for Clinical and Applied Sociology (AACS), South African Sociological Association (SASA) and The Commission on the Accreditation of Programmes in Applied and Clinical Sociology (CAPACS), it is possible to conceptualise and work towards an African perspective of clinical and applied sociology. Accordingly, we hope that our moderate efforts for now explain our approach, open comparative thinking, and build the foundation for the future translocation of the clinical and applied sociology discipline. Below are the respective representations of clinical and applied sociology that guide The Clinical Sociology Honours Programme at the UKZN.

## 2. Sociological Roots in South Africa

The history of sociology in South Africa is closely intertwined with the country's complex social, political, and economic history (Seidman, 1999). The development of sociology in South Africa dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. European scholars and missionaries, who were often the first to engage in systematic social analysis, played a role in shaping

**Table 1.** Clinical and Applied Interventions

<b>Focus Areas</b>	<b>Clinical approach</b>	<b>Applied approach</b>
Overview	Interventions and transformation of individuals, groups in communities.	Utilises sociological theories and research methods to address practical social problems.
Outcome	Offer socio-therapy, professional support and alternatives.	Social choice, citizen science model, policy change, and organisational renewal.
Academic Approach	Interactive clinical and applied therapeutic interventions, models and programmes.	Research-based data-driven perspectives and transformative actions.
Research Methodology	Consultation, counselling, socio-therapy, representative and advocacy programme development with direct group engagement.	Focus groups, interviews, surveys, participant observation, ambiguity management, case study, conversational analysis, feminist epistemology, group dynamics, mixed methods,
Application and Intervention	Education, mental health, social crisis, natural disaster, healthcare, food security, literacy, addiction services, community cohesion,	Public policy, corporate social partnerships, non-profits, local government compliance, criminality, child abuse, gender-based violence, gangsterism,
Intervention Measures	Trauma counselling, social change, individual and community healing, improved quality of life, adaptation/accommodation/acceptance	Policy application, community advocacy, community stress, risk mitigation, class antagonism, racial conflict, migration shifts,

Source: Adapted from Omega Graduate School, (Reichard 2024)

early sociological thought in the region. The apartheid system, which lasted from 1948 to the early 1990s, had a profound impact on the development of sociology in South Africa (William Beinart, 2001). Sociology was taught alongside social work, aimed at practically addressing the so-called 'poor white problem' (Ally et al., 2003). The success of the practical workings of these disciplines shows to this day where developmental skewness favours the minority white population as compared to the majority black population and where there exist two contrasting economies.

The history of sociology cannot be appreciated without framing it against the South African Sociological Association (SASA). The association provided an open forum for sociologists of all races, whose backgrounds represented a wide array of theoretical perspectives, analytical approaches and methodologies. Black Consciousness was represented among sociologists such as Professor Fatima Meer, who provided the analytical and conceptual tools for realising a non-racial, democratic and non-sexist society. Beyond our own national boundaries, the international sociological lens of the International Sociological Association (ISA) provided new inspirations, hopes and opportunities for South African sociologists. Enamoured by international collegial support, South African sociologists played a crucial role in documenting and analysing resistance movements against apartheid (Robins, 2008; Runciman, 2011). They studied the dynamics of protests, the role of civil society, and the impact of resistance on social change. Sociologists actively participated in anti-apartheid activism, contributing to the broader struggle for social justice. With the end of apartheid in the early 1990s and the establishment of a democratic South Africa, the focus of sociology shifted to the challenges of nation-building, reconciliation, and redressing the legacy of apartheid. Sociologists have now shifted in the direction of studying the social, economic, and political transformations taking place in the post-apartheid era. They explored truth and reconciliation, social cohesion, and the persistence of inequality. In the post-apartheid period, an increased emphasis on recognising and studying the diversity of South African society, considering factors such as race, class and gender intersections. Sociologists have worked to understand the complexities of identity

and social relations in the country. Sociologists also responded to global trends, such as the impact of globalisation, urbanisation and migration. They have studied how these processes shape social dynamics, economic structures, and cultural practices within and outside the country.

The history of sociology in South Africa has deeply influenced the growth and development of the Department of Sociology at the UKZN. Alongside the critical disciplines of social work, sociology and economics, the Department has initiated the teaching and development of clinical and applied sociologies. The emphasis is on responding to pervasive social issues such as migration, xenophobia, race, class, gender, labour, food insecurity, access, and social, political and economic incongruences. These form part of broader emerging social issues which are framed under the fresh lens of clinical and applied sociology at the UKZN.

### **3. Promoting Excellence: Professor Fatima Meer Book Prize**

Professor Fatima Meer is globally acknowledged as a human rights and gender advocate. Coupled with her history of banning by apartheid security police and imprisonment, Professor Meer remains a stalwart of the struggle against apartheid. Fatima Meer read for her Masters in Sociology at the then all-white University of Natal (UND), leading to her appointment as the first black woman academic in 1956. Meer was the only known anti-apartheid activist authorised to teach at the whites-only university, whose lectures were monitored by the apartheid security wing.

UND, now part of the merged UKZN and the broader academic community, was tasked with memorialising the life and work of Professor Fatima Meer, recognising her role as an early southern sociologist, human rights and gender activist, community organiser, as well as an apartheid prisoner. The apartheid prison was meant to dehumanise and de-conscientise Professor Fatima Meer; however, she responded to apartheid's brutality with reconciliation and love for country. Meer expressed her love for life by repeated references to '*bluer than the blue sea*' and '*bluer than the blue sky*' (Meer, 1987).

Our university celebrates Professor Fatima Meer's intellectual contribution to clinical sociology. In 2022, we began, in small part, by righting her thorny past and inaugurating the first in-person *Professor Fatima Meer Clinical Sociology Book Prize*. The Clinical Sociology Honours Programme conferred the prestigious accolade on a postgraduate Laureate, extolling exceptional theoretical, clinical and applied, micro and macro multidisciplinary knowledge that underscores change. The Laureate must be seen to subscribe to the professional and ethical values advanced by Professor Meer.

#### **4. Honours Degrees as part of the Academic offering in South Africa**

In the South African higher education system, an honours programme is a one-year postgraduate degree that follows the completion of a three-year bachelor's degree (equivalent to an associate degree). Honours programmes (similar to the British system) allow postgraduates to deepen their knowledge and expertise in a specific field of study. It is a common pathway for candidates to further academic studies, research, or professional development. A key feature of honours programmes at South African universities is its twelve-month duration. Entry into an honours programme requires a bachelor's degree with an exceptional academic record as a prerequisite. The curriculum of an honours programme is structured vis-à-vis specialised coursework, accompanied by a research project, thereby deepening understanding of advancing concepts in a designated discipline. The research project of 15,000 words constitutes the mini-dissertation under the guidance of an advisor. Honours programme specialisations prepare postgraduates for master's and doctoral studies. Proficiencies and skills enhance graduates' employment possibilities.

#### **5. The Clinical Sociology Honours Programme**

The postgraduate programme was developed in 2022 and designed by Professor Mariam Seedat Khan, a Certified Clinical Sociologist (CCS). Postgraduates who undertook this one-year graduate degree are an essential part of innovation and change in the academy at the



University of KwaZulu Natal, in society and within the global South. The Department of Sociology at the UKZN provides specialisations for postgraduate candidates, with opportunities to develop clinical and applied skills. Postgraduates with master's degree qualifications are proficient at confronting pervasive social problems. The Clinical Sociology Programme's focus is on qualitative and quantitative research methods, multidisciplinary and sociological theory, public and social policy, and content analysis to develop clinical interventions. The Honours Programme in Clinical Sociology delivers experiential exposure through field visits at designated clinical research sites in vulnerable community settings to experience the authenticity and relevance of sociology outside the traditional classroom. Exposure to diverse research areas prepares postgraduates for clinical and applied research. Academic proficiencies facilitate sociological engagement via clinical models to confront and mitigate the risks associated with social problems in our immediate communities and societies.

*The inter-related objectives of the Clinical Sociology Honours Programme are to*

1. Advance critical and reflective abilities that enable the decoding of normalising and deviational tendencies in society.
2. Enhance understandings of complexity, multi-dimensionality and intersectionality relating to community behaviour and interaction beyond an otherwise narrow view.
3. Understand and intervene in divergent social contexts by applying sociological knowledge and professional skills.
4. Improve ways in which postgraduates confront unequal, social, gender, race and class structures, reproduction, socialisation, education, health, politics, economics and religion without essentialising and blind tolerance.
5. Develop normative practice expected of professional agents who acknowledge multidisciplinary theoretical, methodological constructs and Clinical and Applied practice.

*The objectives of the Programme are achievable vis-à-vis the coursework requirements*

Postgraduates (those who have received an undergraduate degree) must successfully complete a total of four discipline-specific courses to be awarded the Clinical Sociology specialisation.

**Table 2.** The Clinical Sociology Honours Programme

Course	Semester	Credits
SOCY702 <i>Clinical Sociology: Contemporary Theory</i>	One	32
SOCY720 <i>Clinical Sociology: Methods and Applications</i>	One	32
SOCY721 <i>Clinical Sociology: Interventions and Perspectives</i>	One	32
SOCY7RC <i>Clinical Sociology: Research Project</i>	Two	32

The Clinical Sociology Honours Programme encourages the postgraduate to first, view scientific knowledge systematically, logically and through reasoned observation of phenomena in a social context. Secondly, an understanding of diverse theoretical approaches that support specific clinical and applied methods must be grasped to propose meaningful interventions for transformation on the ground. Achieving transformation includes the competency to work with multiple units of analysis, i.e. individuals, small groups, organisations, communities, societies, and global level. The Programme requires postgraduates to attend full-time classes over twelve months, beginning in January and concluding in December. Part-time postgraduates are encouraged to register and must fulfil the Programme requirements over a period of 24 months. The Clinical Sociology Honours Programme requires all candidates to fulfil specified Senate-approved requirements. In semester one (January–June) postgraduates must register for three credit-bearing courses. In semester two, postgraduates must register for the research project course. Below is a description of the four courses to be taken by postgraduates.

## *SOCY702 Clinical Sociology: Contemporary Theory*

This course introduces postgraduates to selected contemporary theorists, theoretical approaches and theoretical contestations and debates. Contemporary theory explains social world functionality and how people experience such a world. The seminar approach encourages extended insights into such topics as the nexus of sociological theory and philosophical underpinnings of such theory. The course establishes conceptual links with mainstream sociological theory, as well as clinical and applied sociology methods and interventions. Importantly, sociological theory is sensitised to both deep and subtle differences between clinical and applied foci, goals, applications, and practical transformations.

### *Outcomes of the Contemporary Theory course:*

1. Demonstrate critical theoretical engagement;
2. Identify and motivate theoretical models for appropriate research designs and
3. Contribute to and integrate theoretical frameworks in response to specific social phenomena.
4. Integrate theory into the conceptual understanding of the study.

## *SOCY720 Clinical Sociology: Methods and Applications*

The course aims to prepare the clinical researcher to interpret and utilise the sociological imagination and to complement and express the epistemological, theoretical, methodological, and ethical aspects of clinical and applied research methods. The key areas of competencies include effective engagement, active listening, interviewing, assessment and documentation. The course is compulsory for clinical sociology postgraduates and those wanting to progress to the proposed master's level in clinical sociology<sup>2</sup> and related master's levels.

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2 A submission for a master's degree (full research) has been submitted for approval by the requisite authorities and structures of the UKZN. The qualification was adapted from an existing, fully accredited master's degree template. The application consisted of a change of name of the Master's degree to Masters of Social Sciences

### *Outcomes of the Methods and Applications course:*

1. Select and justify an appropriate clinical and applied research method(s) to design a clinical sociology research study;
2. Integrate pure sociological theory with clinical and applied research methods towards constructing the conceptual understanding of the study and
3. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of clinical and applied research methods, thereby contributing to adaptive and new methods.

### *SOCY721 Clinical Sociology: Interventions and Perspectives*

The course establishes multidisciplinary methodological and theoretical frameworks to identify social phenomena that require clinical intervention and higher-order thinking. The course aims to build the capacity of postgraduates to engage in a clinical analysis, assessing beliefs, policies and practices of individuals and communities. The two most common spheres of intervention are the political and social spheres. Accordingly, interventions may be required at organisational, administrative, political and operational levels. In this sphere of intervention, the policy process and associated policy mechanisms serve the public interest. Interventions in social settings require context-specific models, programmes, projects and human agency. This course provides theoretical, analytical and interventional progress to the master's level in Clinical Sociology and related programmes. This more advanced stream would require higher competencies to intervene at the meta-level, including inter and extra-societal inequality, development, disasters, pandemics, and migration, among others.

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(in Clinical Sociology). The degree will be a full-research degree in Clinical and Applied Sociology and a comprehensive descriptor of an international perspective on Clinical and Applied Sociology at the masters level was proposed for both quality and accreditation purposes. The Masters in Social Science (in Clinical Sociology) will be available in 2025. Three further qualifications are being developed for approval and accreditation in 2026. These are the modular Masters in Clinical Sociology; Doctor of Philosophy (full research doctoral degree in Clinical Sociology); and a modular Doctor of Philosophy (in Clinical Sociology). Optimistically, all three qualifications will be available in 2027.

### *Outcomes of Interventions and Perspectives:*

1. Perform the role of a change agent for transformation;
2. Value-orientation towards humanism, holism and multi-disciplinarity;
3. Clinical models that promote self-determination, human value and human dignity; and
4. Practice orientation

### *SOCY7RC Clinical Sociology: Research Project*

In the second semester (July–December), postgraduates take the SOCY7RC, a research course that requires a practical design and research process, culminating in a project report comprising 15000 words. The submitted research report is assessed by the supervisor and moderated by an external (another South African university) examiner. Any differential between the supervisor and moderator is consolidated, and a final percentage mark is awarded. The project report constitutes the next step towards developing a clinical model, programme or policy intervention. Multi-level models may be aimed at the individual, organisation and community. Clinical and applied models form the basis for a sociological intervention, which includes social policy programmes, institutional renewal, expert inputs, and community development. The performance in this course, as well as the performance at the overall programme, have a bearing on entrance to the proposed master's degree in clinical sociology or any other qualification at a master's level.

### *Outcomes of the research project:*

1. Undertake a substantial research project;
2. Contribute to original knowledge;
3. Demonstrate scholastic writing skills and
4. Link outcomes of research towards developing appropriate clinical and applied interventions.

## 6. The Programme

The structure and curricula of the Clinical Sociology Honours degree meet all requirements of the UKZN and those of the National Ministry of Education of the South African government, and its agencies, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), and the Council on Higher Education (CHE). South African higher education qualifications are internationally comparable (Wolhuter et al., 2011).

### *Optional Adjunct Clinical and Applied Learning*

(Credit-bearing towards the proposed master's programme in clinical sociology) Postgraduates may choose **one** of the following adjunct learning opportunities offered during the second semester of the Clinical Sociology Honours Programme. Participation in any one of the three options will earn credits/exemptions towards the Practical Course in the Masters in Clinical Sociology degree only.

## 7. Service-Learning Fieldwork

Originating in anthropology and sociology, service-learning work and fieldwork are highly valued instrumentalist and instructive methods in clinical sociology. Service-learning work is an educational approach where a postgraduate learns theories in the classroom and simultaneously volunteers with an agency (non-profit or social service group) and engages in reflection activities to deepen their understanding of what is being taught. Fieldwork involves immersion into a natural setting, i.e. understanding people in their everyday contextual setting.

Formal fieldwork is undertaken methodologically, i.e. through ethnography, participant observation and case study. The service-learning work/fieldwork shall be contractually negotiated with governmental and community agencies and the UKZN. The service-learning work/fieldwork engenders value-add to both institutional and integrated learning. Advisedly, the agency benefits through various direct and indirect processes, such as volunteerism, mutuality and knowledge exchanges. Service-learning work/fieldwork as a

component in the Clinical Sociology Honours Programme is viewed by the UKZN as community engagement.

The credits/exemption obtainable for service-learning work/fieldwork is 50% of the Practical course in the proposed Masters of Clinical Sociology degree and shall be co-supervised by an academic from the Clinical Sociology Programme and the partnering institution. The Clinical Sociology Honours Programme has negotiated thus far with the Verulam Day and Frail Care Centre, the Gift of the Givers Foundation, and the KwaZulu-Natal Network on Violence Against Women. The agencies will receive postgraduates during the second semester, preferably suited to their programmes and serve in this capacity for 12 hours a week for two months. The inclusion of intervention, service learning, and internships in the Programme curriculum not only enhances the educational experience but also prepares students to be effective agents of social change. These components provide practical experience, foster community engagement, and develop essential skills, setting the degree apart from other academic disciplines and equipping graduates to make a meaningful impact in the world. Interventions in clinical sociology are designed to address social problems and improve individual and community well-being through the application of sociological principles, theories, and research. These interventions are diverse and multifaceted, reflecting the broad range of issues that clinical sociologists encounter.

Postgraduates are required to secure an internship of 12 hours a week over a period of two months in the second semester at an institution partnering with the UKZN. Postgraduates will either recommend an institution of choice, or academics in the proposed master's programme will mutually match a postgraduate to an institution. The internship shall be of both generalised and specialised instructive in character, allowing students to gain practical experience to formulate clinical interventions. The postgraduate, with permission and approval, may observe and participate in the place of internship operations. The aim of the internship is to advance key aspects of clinical and applied practice during the internship process. The postgraduate will be dual-supervised, i.e.

by an academic of the Clinical Sociology Honours Programme and a professional staff member of the receiving internship institution. The framework of the supervision and assessment framework shall be negotiated likewise.

Over and above the supervisory assessment, the postgraduate will be required to produce a scientific paper at the end of the internship, serving 50% of the total credits for the practical course in the proposed Masters in Clinical Sociology degree. In the context of clinical sociology, intervention is a fundamental aspect that distinguishes the discipline from other fields and degrees. Clinical sociology focuses on employing sociological theories, research, and interventions to improve human well-being and attend to social issues. An overview of a) clinical sociology interventions, b) service learning, and c) internships contribute to the clinical sociology curriculum includes the following:

### *Clinical Sociology Interventions*

Applied focus emphasises theoretical understanding and prioritises the application of sociological knowledge to solve real-world problems. Working directly with individuals, groups, communities, and organisations brings about positive change. Problem-solving orientation occurs when Clinical Sociologists are trained to identify social problems, develop intervention strategies, and implement solutions. This includes counselling, conflict resolution, organisational development, community development, and policy advocacy. The collaborative approach requires collaboration with other professionals, i.e. social workers, psychologists, and public health officials. This interdisciplinary approach enhances the effectiveness of interventions and broadens the impact of Clinical interventions.

### *Service Learning*

Experiential education integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection. This pedagogical approach helps students apply academic skills to real-life situations, fostering a deeper understanding of sociological concepts and their practical



applications. Community engagement allows students to engage with communities, gaining firsthand experience with social issues and developing a sense of civic responsibility. This engagement helps students to connect theory with practice and to see the direct impact of their work. Skill Development helps students develop critical skills such as problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and cultural competence. These skills are essential for effective intervention in Clinical Sociology.

### *Internships*

Professional experience provides students with practical experience in professional settings, such as non-profit organisations, healthcare facilities, community centres, and governmental agencies. This hands-on experience is invaluable for understanding the complexities of social issues and the dynamics of intervention. Networking opportunities allow students to build professional networks, which can be crucial for career development. These connections can lead to job opportunities and collaborations in the future. Application of knowledge enable students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts, bridging the gap between academia and practice. This application reinforces learning and prepares students for professional roles in clinical sociology.

### *Clinical Interventions, Objectives, and Implementation*

There are a number of interventions appropriate for different levels, including:

**Individual-level interventions.** Clinical sociologists may provide counselling and therapeutic services to individuals facing social, emotional, or psychological issues. This can include working with victims of abuse, individuals experiencing trauma, or those coping with significant life changes. Programmes designed to teach essential life skills, such as financial literacy, job readiness, and interpersonal communication, helping individuals improve their socioeconomic status and quality of life.

**Group-level interventions** facilitate support groups for individuals with shared experiences or challenges, such as addiction recovery groups, grief support groups, or groups for single parents. Conducting educational workshops on conflict resolution, stress management, and parenting skills to equip group members with the tools to handle common social issues.

**Community-level interventions** engage in initiatives that aim to improve the physical, social, and economic conditions of communities. This includes efforts to enhance public spaces, develop community centres, or create job training programs. Designing and implementing campaigns to raise awareness about health issues, promote healthy behaviours, and improve access to healthcare services.

**Organisational-level interventions** assist organisations in improving their structures, processes, and cultures to enhance efficiency, employee satisfaction, and overall performance. This involves conflict mediation, team-building activities, and leadership training. Working with organisations to advocate for policy changes at local, state, or national levels. This includes conducting research, developing policy recommendations, and engaging in lobbying efforts.

*The primary goals of the interventions are to:*

1. Enhance the well-being of individuals and communities by addressing social determinants of health and providing necessary support and resources.
2. Empower individuals and groups to take control of their lives and improve their circumstances through education, skill-building, and supportive networks.
3. Promote systemic change by addressing structural inequalities and advocating for policies that support social justice and equity.
4. Prevent social problems before they escalate by addressing root causes and promoting proactive measures.
5. Conduct thorough assessments to understand the specific needs and challenges faced by individuals, groups, or communities.

This involves collecting and analysing data to identify patterns and root causes of social issues.

6. Develop intervention plans tailored to the specific needs identified during the assessment. This includes setting clear objectives, outlining strategies, and determining the resources required.
7. Work with other professionals, organisations, and community members to leverage collective expertise and resources. Collaboration enhances the reach and impact of interventions.
8. Implement the planned interventions through direct actions, such as counselling sessions, workshops, community projects, or advocacy campaigns.
9. Continuous monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions to ensure they meet their objectives.
10. Feedback is used to make necessary adjustments and improve future interventions.

*Examples of interventions include:*

1. Domestic violence prevention programmes provide support and resources to victims of domestic violence, including emergency shelter, counselling, legal assistance, and advocacy. They also work on community education and prevention efforts to reduce the incidence of domestic violence.
2. Youth mentorship programmes aimed at at-risk youth, providing guidance, support, and positive role models to help them navigate challenges and achieve their potential.
3. Community health initiatives focus on improving public health outcomes, such as vaccination drives, mental health awareness campaigns, and efforts to address food insecurity.
4. Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) within organisations that offer counselling, support services, and resources to employees dealing with personal or work-related issues.

Interventions in clinical sociology are vital for addressing a wide range of social issues and improving the quality of life for individuals and communities. By applying sociological knowledge in practical,

actionable ways, clinical sociologists play a crucial role in fostering social change, promoting well-being, and advocating for a more just and equitable society. These interventions are characterised by their diversity, adaptability, and emphasis on collaboration, making clinical sociology a uniquely impactful discipline.

### *International Perspectives*

Gaining an international perspective on clinical sociology may be a highly enriching learning experience for the young person in training. The postgraduate gets to appreciate the complexity and multi-dimensionality of social issues affecting masses of people, as well as divergent groups of people worldwide. These issues originate from wide-ranging sources, including international politics, colonisation, historical heritage, religion, scarcity, criminality, modern slavery, migration, climate, and many other social afflictions. Institutions addressing these social issues are equally wide-ranging, including multi-lateral international bodies, international non-governmental organisations, aid agencies, lobbying groups, social networks, protest movements, and so on. The international perspective permits the postgraduate two options: (1) engage in service-learning work/fieldwork or internship with an international agency; or (2) produce a scientific paper on international clinical and applied sociology in the second semester of the Clinical Sociology Honours Programme. Assessments and credits/exemptions count similarly for the service-learning work/fieldwork and internship.

## **8. CAPACS Accreditation**

The Commission on the Accreditation of Programs in Applied and Clinical Sociology (CAPACS) has extended an invitation to the UKZN's Honours Programme in Clinical Sociology to apply for programme accreditation. With CAPACS accreditation, the UKZN programme will be one of two internationally accredited programmes in Africa.

## Conclusion

The history of sociology in South Africa reflects the discipline's engagement with the unique social challenges and transformations experienced in the country. It has been a tool for understanding, critiquing, and contributing to social change, particularly during political upheaval and transition periods. Sociology departments in universities and research institutions have played a pivotal role in shaping sociological thought in South Africa. These institutions have been centres for research, academic debate, and the training of sociologists. The opportunity to share our early experience of introducing clinical and applied sociology at the UKZN serves not only a wider audience but also a reflexive exercise. Our experience was both enriching and instructive. It was enriching in respect of building from our history, where the discipline of sociology has had a greater influence on society than any of the other social science disciplines, especially economics.

It was instructive in as much as we follow similar aspirations and intentions for clinical and applied sociology to influence a new direction for South Africa's future. Clinical sociology's focus on intervention, service learning, and internships provides a holistic approach to understanding and addressing social issues. This sets it apart from other disciplines that may focus more on theoretical or empirical research without direct application. The curriculum in the Clinical Sociology Honours Programme often incorporates elements from psychology, social work, public health, and other fields. This interdisciplinary integration equips students with a diverse set of tools and perspectives for intervention. The emphasis on practical impact through service learning and internships highlights the goal of clinical sociology to create tangible improvements in society. This practical focus distinguishes the degree from others that may prioritise theoretical or abstract understanding.

The emergence of the knowledge society and the development of knowledge-intensive employment must also focus on the situation of humanities graduates in the national labour market. The employment for humanities graduates has received attention from two sources: (a) governmental initiatives (Viedge 2016); and (2) the

attempts by South African universities to professionalise curricula (Pooe 2010, Walker and McLean 2013, Walker and Fongwa 2017). The evidence indicates that humanities graduates are prejudiced due to a lack of practical experience in a profession (Mouchipku 2019). Given the focused theoretical and practical contents of the clinical and applied sociological qualifications highlighted above, there is ample room for optimism for the qualification, profession as well as demand in the future. Further, given the qualification's Pan-African appeal, the UKZN has the potential to be the hub of clinical and applied sociology.

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