Appendices A and B are example of statement of purposes from applicants admitted to Clinical Psychology PhD Students. Footnotes are embedded to highlight key aspects of the statement to help provide readers of examples of how to create a strong statement.

Appendix A

Example of a Statement of Purpose from a Current Clinical Psychology PhD Student

I was originally introduced to psychology in my first undergraduate course at Southeastern University (SEU). I was not only captivated by the historical findings of the field but also by the passion of my professors. These mentors fostered my passion for clinical science as well as my long-term goals to pursue a career as a tenure track professor, where I could develop an independent research program while simultaneously mentoring junior scientists. Through my work as an undergraduate research assistant, where I worked with people in religious settings who exhibited immense anxiety, my interests narrowed to the assessment and treatment of clinical anxiety[1]. Additionally, my affinity for technology and its utility led me to become interested how I could integrate these tools to improve clinical assessment and treatment[2]. I therefore elected to pursue my master's degree in clinical rehabilitation and mental health counseling at the University of North Carolina (UNC) to gain more research experience and refine my research interests prior to pursuing a Ph.D.

At UNC, I explored my research interests, honed my clinical skills, and expanded my empirical knowledge of psychology. By completing several volunteer research assistant positions while enrolled in my master's program, I was able to further explore my interest in anxiety while learning critical scientific skills including data collection, professional communication, time management, and organization. While a Research Assistant (RA) at UNC's TEACCH autism program, I gained experience working with children with autism who often showed elevated anxiety. I then reached out to Dr. Jonathan Abramowitz, who invited me to join his lab as a volunteer RA. In Dr. Abramowitz's lab, I applied my interest in

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[1] Describes how their interest narrowed from the position.

[2] Applicant highlights their research area they are interested in.

leveraging technology to better assess anxiety within the context of a mobile application study for obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Later, I obtained an RA position working with my master's thesis advisor, Dr. Blaise Morrison, who mentored my research into how virtual reality could be used to help individuals with traumatic brain injuries adapt to their symptoms. I was thrilled to present these findings as the first author at the National Rehabilitation Education Conference in 2019.

Meanwhile, to gain more research experience, I also pursued an opportunity to work with Duke University's Pediatric Genetics department, where I obtained experience in data analysis and management for a longitudinal data of children with 22q11.2 deletion syndrome. While working with these data, my supervisors encouraged my interests in the effect of internalizing symptoms in this population and allowed me to conduct a secondary analysis of this study for my thesis. With my thesis, I investigated the presentation of internalizing symptoms such as anxiety, obsessions, compulsions, and withdrawal in a large sample of children with 22q. Through the process of completing my thesis, I learned how to conduct multilevel modeling using Mplus and communicate my findings in a scientific manuscript[3]. This research experience confirmed my interest in understanding how anxiety disorders present in various populations (e.g., individuals with autism, traumatic brain injury, and 22q11.2 deletion syndrome) and inspired me to learn how to target anxiety across different clinical populations[4].

While at UNC, I also gained invaluable clinical training through my practicum and internship placements. I improved my conceptual understanding of the mental health conditions I plan to study during doctoral training by conducting comprehensive neuropsychological assessments and providing cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) in the UNC Hospital's rehabilitation unit. In these clinical settings, I developed research questions around what else could be implemented to help these individuals, such as the use of ecological momentary assessment

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[3] Applicant describes what they learned from their experience, including that they developed skills in data analysis.
[4] Applicant highlights how this position influenced their interest in anxiety disorders and led to their next endeavor.

(EMA) to understand how anxiety plays a role at different stages of rehabilitation[5]. I then completed my semester-long internship at the Traumatic Stress and Health Research Lab at the Durham VA and Duke University. Under the mentorship of Drs. Jean Beckham, Pat Calhoun, and Nathan Kimbrel, I gained exceptional training in clinical interviewing, data collection, data analysis, providing CBT for smoking cessation, and manuscript preparation[6]. I primarily worked with military veterans who engaged in non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) and learned firsthand how to work with a diverse population presenting with various (often multiple co-occurring) psychological disorders. Through this experience, I incorporated my interest in anxiety by exploring the co-occurrence of anxiety and OCD in individuals with NSSI (Patel et al., resubmitted). The internship also afforded me the opportunity to explore my interests in implementing technology by using EMA[7] via a smart phone application to collect data on what factors precede and contribute to NSSI-related thoughts and urges[8]. Beyond its use in data collection, I was excited to learn how assessment, especially daily diary entries on a smart phone, can be therapeutic for some participants. This experience led to tremendous growth in my understanding of how research is conducted, and I would continue to build on these experiences after the lab hired me to serve as a full-time research coordinator for two studies (2019-present). Over the past two years, I have managed the many facets of coordinating a research study while gaining experience in recruiting and working with diverse groups of veterans (i.e., combat veterans with "moral injury" and justice-involved veterans with PTSD).

Though my professional training experiences have challenged me to explore my interests in different populations, settings, and methodologies, my underlying scientific interests have remained constant. How can I incorporate technology in the assessment and treatment of anxiety and obsessive-

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[5] Applicant highlights how this position influenced their interest in anxiety disorders and led to their next endeavor.

[6] Applicant succinctly summarizes several skills they gained through this position.

[7] Applicant highlights a methodology they are interested in (i.e., EMA)

[8] Applicant further highlights their interest in anxiety disorders in various populations and the use of technology (e.g., EMA).

compulsive disorder?[9] I believe that my research interests would align well with Dr. Jesse Cougle, given his expertise in investigating new methods of assessing and treating anxiety through the use of computerized treatments. Under Dr. Cougle's mentorship, I would enjoy exploring the pathology of anxiety disorders and the incorporation of technology into the assessment of anxiety disorders[10]. Simultaneously, I would be able to contribute to current research projects while extending investigations into using smartphone-based EMA to assess anxiety real-time[11].

My diverse experiences have exposed me to the many facets of what is necessary to succeed in graduate school. Earning a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology is the ideal pathway through which to reach my goal of becoming a tenure-track professor who conducts novel research while providing education and mentorship to future leaders in the field. The outstanding opportunities provided by Florida State University, such as the cross-area collaboration among faculty and the teaching training program, would uniquely prepare me to accomplish my career goals. In sum, my prior experiences and learning make me an exceptional fit for both Dr. Cougle's lab and the overall Clinical Psychology PhD Program at Florida State University. I would be thrilled to be invited to join the training program and appreciate your consideration.

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[9] Applicant proposes a broad research question they are interested in studying during graduate school and how this aligns with the proposed mentors.

[10] Applicant identifies the mentor they are interested in, the reasons for their interest, and what they are interested in studying.

[11] Applicant highlights what they can contribute and the area of research they continue to pursue.