

Christine Purdon

Professor



BA(Hon) University of Western Ontario

MA University of New Brunswick

PhD University of New Brunswick

[Contact information](#)

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Dr. Purdon will be accepting one new student for the Fall 2023 year

Research Interests

I am interested in the persistence of anxiety and its cognitive manifestations, such as obsessions, worry, rumination, doubt, and behavioural manifestations, such as compulsions and escape/avoidance behaviours. I am also interested in how anxiety influences attentional and memory processes. I am extremely grateful to people from the community with and without anxiety difficulties who have assisted us with our research through the [Anxiety Studies Division of the Centre for Mental Health Research and Treatment](#).

My lab has a portable eye tracker and a lab kitchen with a working stove and sink, equipped with video feed.

If you are interested in applying to our program please see the Frequently Asked Questions section below, as well as our [program information website!](#)

Teaching

I am the Director of Clinical Training, so oversee our PhD program. I also teach our graduate course in Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy.

Clinical Interests and Practice

I am a Registered Psychologist with the College of Psychologists of Ontario and have expertise in the assessment and treatment of mood and anxiety disorders in adults. I have practiced and taught cognitive-behaviour therapy (CBT) for over 20 years and am certified by the Canadian Association of [Cognitive and Behavioural Therapies](#) (CABCT).

I provide psychological services through the UW Centre for Mental Health Research and Treatment Unsubsidized Psychological Services stream. For inquiries contact me by email (christine.purdon@uwaterloo.ca) or phone, 519-888-4567, x43912.



Publications (student co-authors in bold)

Selected Books

Clark, D. A., & Purdon, C. (2005). *Overcoming obsessional thoughts*. Oakland, CA: *New Harbinger*. (<https://www.newharbinger.com/overcoming-obsessive-thoughts> Over 30 000 copies sold!

Selected book chapters

1. **Merrit, O.**, & Purdon, C. (in press). Assessing comorbidity, insight, family, and functioning in OCD. Invited chapter for D. Tolin (Ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders* (2nd Edition). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
2. Purdon, C. (2021). Cognitive restructuring. Chapter in A. Wenzel (Ed.), *Handbook of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Volume 1* (pp. 207-234). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
3. Purdon, C. (2021). Obsessive compulsive disorder. Chapter in A. Wenzel (Ed.), *Handbook of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Volume 2* (pp. 67-98). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
4. Purdon, C. (2017). Pathological responsibility, thought-action fusion, and thought control in OCD. In C. Pittenger (Ed.), *Obsessive-compulsive Disorder: Phenomenology, Pathophysiology, and Treatment* (pp. 179-188). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
5. Purdon, C., & **Chiang, B.** (2016). Treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder. In A. Carr and M. McNulty (Eds.), *The Handbook of Adult Clinical Psychology: An Evidence Based Practice Approach* (2nd Ed.) (pp. 492-514). Oxford: Routledge.

Selected peer-reviewed publications

1. **Chiang, B.**, & Purdon, C. (in press). A study of doubt in obsessive-compulsive disorder. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*.

2. **Merritt, O. A.**, & Purdon, C. (in press). Attention to threat during a stove checking task. *Journal of Obsessive Compulsive and Related Disorders*.
3. **Merritt, O.A.**, Rowa, K., & Purdon, C. (in press). Context matters: Criticism and accommodation by close others associated with treatment attitudes in those with anxiety. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy*.
4. Purdon, C. (in press) Dr. Jack Rachman's contributions to our understanding and treatment of OCD. *Journal of Behaviour Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*.
5. **Merritt, O.**, Purdon, C., & Rowa, K. (2022). How do close others to those with anxiety feel about treatment? Development and validation of the treatment concerns questionnaire–Close Others. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10608-022-10318-9>.
6. **McNeil, A.**, & Purdon, C. (2022). Anxiety disorders, COVID-19 fear, and vaccine hesitancy. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 102598
7. **Nelson, A.**, Quigley, L., Carriere, J., Kalles, E., Smilek, D., & Purdon, C. (2022). Attentional biases to threat in generalized anxiety disorder (GAD): evidence that state-anxiety delays disengagement and GAD increases avoidance of mild threat images. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 88, 102577.
8. **Merritt, O. A.**, & Purdon, C. (2021). Fear of compassion is associated with treatment ambivalence and negative expectations for treatment in people with anxiety, *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 60, 546-555.
9. **Dean, J.**, & Purdon, C. (2021). An in vivo study of compulsions. *Journal of Obsessive Compulsive and Related Disorders*, 30, 100648. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jocrd.2021.100648>
10. **Dean, J.** & Purdon, C. (2021). An experimental investigation of hand washing in people with high and normative contamination fears. *Journal of Obsessive Compulsive and Related Disorders*, 28, 100618. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jocrd.2020.100616>
11. **Xu, M., Rowe, K.**, & Purdon (2020). To approach or to avoid: The role of ambivalent motivation in attentional biases to threat and spider fear. *Cognitive Therapy and Research* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10608-020-10193-2>
12. Wahl, K., Lieb, R., Kollarit, M., & Purdon, C. (2021). The appropriateness of using a counter app in experimental studies assessing unwanted intrusive thoughts. *Journal of Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders*, 26, 100550. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jocrd.2020.100550>
13. **Merritt, O. A.**, & Purdon, C. (2020). Scared of compassion: Fear of compassion in anxiety, mood, and non-clinical groups. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 59, 354-368. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjc.12250>
14. **Xu, M., Rowe, K.**, & Purdon, C. (2020). Examining the impact of a single session of mountain meditation on attentional scope. *Journal of Cognitive Enhancement*, 4, 155-166. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.concog.2017.03.009>
15. Bouvard, M., Fournet, N., Denis, A., Achachi, O., & Purdon, C. (2020). A study of the Repeated Actions Diary in patients suffering from obsessive compulsive disorder. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 27, 228-238. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.2422>
16. Purdon, C. (2020). Thought suppression. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Psychology*. Oxford University Press.
17. **Chiang, B.**, & Purdon, C. (2019). Have I done enough to avoid blame? Fear of guilt evokes OCD-like indecisiveness. *Journal of Obsessive Compulsive and Related Disorders*, 20, 13-20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jocrd.2018.02.001>

18. Purdon, C. (2018). There is a lot more to compulsions than meets the eye. *Journal of Clinical Neuropsychiatry*, 15, 291-298.
19. Moritz, S., Purdon, C., Jelinek, L., & **Chiang, B.** (2017). If it is absurd then why do you do it? The richer the obsessional experience, the more compelling the compulsion. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 25, 210-216. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1002/cpp.2155>
20. **Fallis, E.**, Rehman, U., & Purdon, C. (2014). Perceptions of partner sexual satisfaction in committed relationships. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 43, 541-550. <http://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs10508-013-0177-y.pdf>
21. Clark, D. A., & Purdon, C. (2016). Still cognitive after all these years? Perspectives for a cognitive behavioural theory of obsessions and where we are 30 years later: A commentary. Invited commentary for the *Australian Psychologist*, 51, 14-17. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/ap.12200>
22. **Bucarelli, B.**, & Purdon, C. (2016). Stove checking behaviour in OCD vs. anxious controls. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 53, 17-24. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbtep.2015.01.001>
23. **Chiang, B.**, Purdon, C., & Radomsky, A. (2016). Development and initial validation of the Fear of Guilt Scale for obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). *Journal of Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders*, 11, 63-73. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jocrd.2016.08.006>
24. Taylor, J., & Purdon, C. (2016). Responsibility and hand washing. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 51, 43-50. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbtep.2015.12.005>
25. **Collaton, J.**, & Purdon, C. (2015). Verbalizations during compulsions in OCD. *Journal of Obsessive Compulsive and Related Disorders*, 7, 49-53. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jocrd.2015.10.004>
26. **Bucarelli, B.**, & Purdon, C. (2015). A diary study of the phenomenology and persistence of compulsions. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 49, 209-215. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbtep.2015.01.001>
27. Moscovitch, D.A., **Shaughnessy, K.**, Waechter, S., **Xu, M.**, **Collaton, J.**, **Nelson, A.L.**, **Barber, K.C.**, **Dean, J.**, **Chiang, B.**, & Purdon, C. (2015). A model for recruiting clinical research participants in the absence of service provision: Visions, challenges, and norms within a Canadian context. *Journal of Mental and Nervous Disease*, 203, 943-957. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/NMD.0000000000000400>
28. **Nelson, A.**, Purdon, C., **Quigley, L.**, Carriere, J., & Smilek, D. (2015). Distinguishing the roles of trait and state anxiety on the nature of anxiety-related attentional biases to threat using a free viewing eye movement paradigm. *Cognition and Emotion*, 29, 504-526. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2014.922460>
29. Rowa, K., Gifford, S., McCabe, R., Milosevic, I., Antony, M. M., & Purdon, C. (2014). Treatment fears in anxiety disorders: Development and validation of the Treatment Ambivalence Questionnaire. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 70, 979-993. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22096>

Frequently asked questions

1. Are you taking a student next year?

Yes, I plan to take one new student next year.

2. Should I contact faculty in the Clinical Area to ask whether or not they are taking a student, or to alert them to my application?

No, this is not at all necessary. Our website indicates which faculty are taking students. Out of fairness we do not evaluate or “ earmark ” applicants outside of our admissions process, which begins after the application deadline.

3. What do we look for in a student?

We look for students who are intellectually curious, who enjoy discovery and who love sharing their discoveries with the world.

4. How can I make my application more competitive?

- We receive about 150 applications per year for 4-6 positions in our program. Our first cut is based on your marks in Psychology courses and on GRE scores, so, keep working hard!
- Avoid using a generic statement. Instead, use your statement to explain how your research interests are a good match for the person at UW in whom you are interested in working. If you present a generic statement it is a lot harder for us to tell whether you are a good fit for our program and for the lab you are interested in joining.
- Tell us about your honours thesis research in your statement. Don't just tell us what you did, but let us know what question piqued your curiosity, how you studied it, and how your findings will help us better understand the phenomenon you studied.
- Apply for external funding at the same time you are applying to graduate school. This will help you better identify and articulate your research interests, both for yourself and for us. If you receive funding it removes the burden of having to apply for external funding in your first weeks of a very challenging program.

5. What if the research I outline in my application for external funding doesn't seem to fit directly into the work that you (or others at UW) are doing?

All research is informed by general underlying questions (e.g., why do unwanted thoughts persist?) even if the research questions themselves are quite specific (e.g., what is the effect of a mood manipulation on perceived self-worth?). As long as the general questions that interest you fit with the work of your potential supervisor you will be in good shape to work together.

What is it like to work with me?

This is what my current and recent students have to say!

“I am profoundly appreciative of the time I have spent working with Dr. Purdon; it has been a supportive, productive, enriching, and rewarding growing experience, rife with opportunities (papers, book chapters, conference presentations, etc.) and support when I have been in need. I feel assured that we will collaborate and remain in touch beyond the scope of my graduate training; to you, Christine, my heartfelt thanks!”

-Brenda, Residency year

“Christine provides her students with a great balance of support and independence. She expresses a genuine interest in the wellbeing of her students and her research and clinical expertise are a phenomenal resource.”

-Jasmine, Pre-Residency year

“Christine is always available whether you want to chat about research, clinical work, or navigating through graduate school! She enables her students to build a personalized program of research!”

-Mengran Xu, Residency year (PhD defended)

"Christine cares about the needs of her students, and our lab space is unique and ideal for studying OCD".

-Olivia, First year PhD

