

Abilene Christian University

Graduate Program in  
**School Psychology**

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**Graduate  
Student  
Handbook**

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**School Psychology Program Committee**

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# Program Resources

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# I. Program Overview

## A. Goals and Objectives

The Master of Science program in School Psychology at Abilene Christian University is dedicated to producing ethical, responsible and competent school psychologists who employ a scientific knowledge base in both psychology and education and demonstrate effective professional methods of problem solving. There is a program focus on the child and adolescent as a valued, interactive member of a family, school, and community system. The implementation of this philosophy produces practitioners who demonstrate:

1. Sensitivity and skills in recognizing the uniqueness, dignity, culture, and worth of each person;
2. Advocacy in facilitating policies and practices that provide comprehensive, effective services to children;
3. High standards of ethical, professional conduct;
4. Competency in data-based problem solving applied to assessment, intervention, consultation, research and program evaluation; and
5. Collaborative, empirically-based decision-making.

These goals are key themes throughout the program and are implemented across three dimensions:

1. A **didactic education dimension** yields generalizable knowledge and skills. This dimension provides a foundation in the knowledge base for psychology and education. It includes course work in scientific methodology and research, psychological, educational, and professional practice foundations (biological bases, cultural diversity, development, exceptionalities, learning, social bases, individual differences, organization and operation of the schools, history & systems of psychology, instructional design, legal & ethical issues, professional standards, roles, function & issues, assessment, individual and systems consultation, direct and indirect intervention, counseling, and research).
2. An **applied professional practice** dimension focuses on the application and demonstration of specific professional knowledge and skills. This dimension includes extensive supervised field experience in a data-based approach to problems related to schooling and research. From the student's first semester in the program, didactic course work is linked with practica in professional skills (including assessment, individual and systems consultation, direct and indirect intervention, counseling, and research).
3. A **problem-solving dimension** integrates scientific and professional principles and practices. Whether the student is solving research or referral questions, this practitioner-scientist model of problem-solving is applicable and implemented.

The School Psychology program produces school psychologists with foundations in psychology and education, who integrate the principles of scientific inquiry into service-

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delivery functions with respect for cultural and individual differences. This model assumes that the functions of a school psychologist involve primarily problem solving, whether service or research oriented, and that problem solving will be most effective when approached from a data-based framework.

In keeping with the above goals, the program in School Psychology demonstrates a commitment to a practitioner-scientist model through an integrated curriculum that emphasizes problem solving in all its variations, and through mentoring and modeling provided by faculty. Students integrate and apply psychological and educational foundations to empirically-based prevention and intervention strategies, and collaborate with teachers, parents and other professionals within the educational environment. The practitioner-scientist model integrates empirical problem solving into practice and informs practice through applied research and problem solving.

A goal of the school psychology program is to foster life-long habits of psychological investigation, assessment and intervention that respect the dignity of the individual. In the constantly evolving field of psychology, it is important to maintain an openness to investigate new ideas, to extend the boundaries of our knowledge base, to differentiate fact from opinion, to question old assumptions and to be sensitive to multicultural and individual differences. Training places an emphasis on psychological theory and research as a basis for formulating questions and answers, a pursuit of new skills and an expanded knowledge base, the acceptance and integration of technology, the encouragement of creativeness, innovation, and divergent thinking, the valuation and respect for individual differences, systematic evaluation by faculty and students, and high expectations for student performance. These tenets represent the ACU practitioner-scientist model and are modeled by the psychology faculty at ACU who also serve as mentors to the students.

The **M.S. program** incorporates the state requirements for licensure as a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP) and the national training standards for certification as a National Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) as set forth by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). The Master's School Psychology program is equivalent to a specialist level since it includes 60 semester hours and an internship among its requirements for graduation.

The School Psychology Program Committee (SPPC) is the governing body of the School Psychology Programs. It is chaired by the director of the program and meets regularly. All decisions regarding school psychology student admission, evaluation, retention, and instructional/curricular issues are made by consensus by the SPPC.

## B. Student Demographics

The School Psychology M.S. program admits, on the average, 3-5 new students per year from a typical pool of 5-8 applicants. Attrition rates for students matriculated in School Psychology graduate programs has been approximately 7-9%. Minority enrollment is

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approximately 10% of the total graduate enrollment in school psychology. About 75% of the students are female. The age distribution of graduate students in psychology ranges from ages 22-45.

## C. Minimum Completion Requirements

The graduate training program in School Psychology includes formal course work, practica and internship experiences, a series of case studies, comprehensive evaluation and optional thesis research. Master's students are required to take a minimum of 60 semester hours, including the full-time academic year internship. Average time for completion of the Master's degree is three years. All students are expected to complete a minimum of 18 semester hours per calendar year. All students must register for at least 2 of the 4 terms each year.

## D. Faculty

School psychology faculty are either state licensed and/or nationally certified as psychologists or school psychologists. A minimum of two faculty members hold the doctorate with specialization in school psychology and are actively engaged in the practice of school psychology. Graduate training in school psychology is complemented by the expertise and resources provided by the clinical and counseling psychology faculty in the psychology department. Core psychological foundations, counseling theories, systems assessment, group processes and family consultation are some of the areas in which counseling psychology faculty support the school psychology program. This interdisciplinary approach affords the student a broader "holistic" perspective of the field of psychology. Below is a list and description of the psychology faculty with core program faculty indicated by an asterisk \*.

**Steve Allison, Ph.D.**, 1984, associate professor, Robert & Mary Ann Hall Chair of Psychology & Intercultural Studies; B.S., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1980; Ph.D., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1982. Research interests include the integration of psychology and Christianity, development problems among adolescents and young adults, practicum and training issues, and assessment and psychological testing.

**Richard Beck, Ph.D.**, 1998, associate professor; B.S., Abilene Christian University, 1989; M.S., Abilene Christian University, 1992; Ph.D., Southern Methodist University, 1997. Research interests include cognition, emotions, and anger treatment.

\***Edwin B. Headrick, Ph.D., L.S.S.P.**, 1971, professor; B.A., Lipscomb University, 1955; M.Ed., Mississippi State University, 1968; Ph.D., Mississippi State University, 1971. Research interests include behavioral disorders in children.

**Billy Van Jones, Ph.D.**, 1974, professor; B.S., Abilene Christian University, 1970; M.S., Abilene Christian University, 1992; Ph.D., University of Houston, 1974. Research interests include attitude-behavior consistency, determinant of moral decision making, teacher evaluations, and societal aggression.

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**Robert McKelvain, Ph.D.**, 1989, professor and chair; B.A., Abilene Christian University, 1971; M.A., Texas A&M University, 1974; Ph.D., Texas A&M University, 1980. Research interests include the psychology of sports, assessment and intervention with criminal offenders, and negotiation and mediation.

**Larry Norsworthy, Ph.D.**, 1999, associate chair and professor of psychology; B.A. Abilene Christian University, 1972; M.S., Abilene Christian University, 1976; Ph.D., Walden University, 1991. Research interests include the phenomenology and treatment of chronic pain and clinical aspects of psychotherapy.

**\*T. Scott Perkins, Ph.D.**, 1988, assistant professor, director of graduate studies; B.S., Harding University, 1980; M.S., Pennsylvania State University, 1984; Ph. D., Pennsylvania State University, 1988. Research interests include neuropsychology, child and adolescent psychopathology, outcome research, and clinical assessment.

**R. Jeffrey Reese, Ph.D.**, 2000, assistant professor, Director of Career Counseling and Student Retention; B.S. Abilene Christian University, 1993; M.S., Abilene Christian University, 1995; Ph.D., Texas A&M University, 2000. Research interests include therapy effectiveness and test validation.

**\*Jennifer W. Shewmaker, Ph.D.**, 1996, assistant professor, B.A. Abilene Christian University, 1992; Ph.D., Texas Woman's University, 1996. Research interests include cross-cultural adjustment, psychoeducational assessment, educational programming for exceptional learners, and grief and loss issues in children.

**Samuel D. Brinkman, Ph.D.**, from The University of Houston in Neuropsychology (1980). Has private practice in neuropsychology and behavioral medicine. Research interests include aging and dementia, mild traumatic brain injury, and cognitive rehabilitation of neuropsychological deficits. Current projects are focused on the incidence, severity, and recovery from mild traumatic brain injury in sports.

**\*Jeffrey N. Wherry, Ph.D.**, 2004, associate professor; B.S. & B.S.Ed., Abilene Christian University, 1977; M.S., University of Texas at Tyler, 1979; Ph.D., University of Southern Mississippi, 1982. Research interests include child sexual abuse, dissociation in children, diagnosis and assessment of sexual abused children.

## E. Professional Standards

The School Psychology program is firmly based on professionally recognized core areas of psychology, education, and professional practice as recommended by the American Psychological Association and the National Association of School Psychologists. The faculty of the Department of Psychology at ACU prides itself in the practice of offering its students individualized guidance and supervision as well as opportunities for continuous personal interaction between students and professors. Ethical practice is modeled, expected and enforced. Ethics and professional practice standards are discussed across several classes and applied in prepractica, practica and internship.

## F. Financial Support

**1. Professional Activities.** Students, who participate in professional activities, e.g. attending or presenting papers at state or national conventions, are eligible to apply

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for reimbursement of travel expenses by the ACU Graduate Student Association. Multiple copies of the application are required.

- 2. Psychology Department Scholarships.** Limited funds are available for Scholarships for Psychology Department students. Interested students should complete an application form available in the Psychology Department office. A faculty committee rank orders students based on need and academic standing. Both undergraduate and graduate students apply for these funds.
- 3. Graduate Teaching Assistantships.** The University provides a limited number of teaching and research assistantships for qualified graduate students. Work load and assignments vary according to expertise and educational level of the applicant. Applications for assistantships may be secured from the chairperson of the Psychology Department. Application and supporting documents, including official transcripts, verification of graduate status, and letters of reference, must be filed with the chairperson for review and recommendation. All applications and recommendations from the head of the academic component should be on file with the Dean of the Graduate School no later than June 1 for the succeeding academic year and no later than April 1 for the succeeding summer session. A graduate student on scholastic probation may not hold a graduate assistantship. A person who holds a full-time position may not hold a graduate teaching assistantship. A person who holds a full-time position may hold a graduate research assistantship.

The minimum course load for a graduate assistant is 6 semester hours. A reduction in this minimum load requires special permission by the Dean of the Graduate School. Graduate students who are enrolled for thesis will be permitted to register for the minimum load so long as clear evidence of progress on the thesis can be demonstrated.

A student who holds a graduate assistantship at the Abilene Christian University may not hold a graduate assistantship at any other college or university concurrently.

A graduate teaching assistant who is working toward the master's degree may be assigned to work in undergraduate courses only. This arrangement must be reviewed and approved in advance by the Dean of the Graduate School. An exception may be made in the case of graduate assistants who have demonstrated unusual expertise or experience.

Various types of media equipment are available to teaching assistants for instructional purposes. All equipment must be requested at least 24 hours in advance before being obtained from the Psychology Office (Chambers 210).

In addition, tests can be made in the department for those students who are graduate assistants. Tests must be turned in to the department secretary at least one week in advance.

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## G. Licensure and Certification

The School Psychology program at ACU prepares students for licensure by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP) as a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology. The School Psychology program also prepares students to apply for certification as a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP).

**Licensure** requires meeting the requirements of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists. In addition to the degree in School Psychology, students must pass a national exam for licensure: the National School Psychology Examination (ETS/NTE #40) for licensure as a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) as well as the passing of a state jurisprudence exam, which focuses on state laws of practice.

TSBEP rules and regulations change frequently. It is the responsibility of the professional to remain informed of these changes. TSBEP has set rigid deadlines and guidelines, and students should request their information packet, review it carefully in order to be well prepared for the licensure process. The licensure process is an expensive process. Candidates should be prepared to spend as much as \$1000 to obtain licensure. The TSBEP address follows:

Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists  
333 Guadalupe, Suite 2-450  
Austin, TX  
512-305-7700

**Certification** - NASP offers the Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) credential. All graduates of ACU are expected to apply for and receive the NCSP. *Beginning fall, 2002, all students are required to take and pass the NCSP examination at the completion of their studies (during internship is recommended).* To obtain certification as an NCSP, you must have your credentials reviewed by the NCSP Board (administered by the National Association of School Psychologists). Successful completion of the NCSP examination will then earn you the NCSP certification. NCSP certification requires ongoing continuing professional development with 75 documented clock hours of inservice education every three years in order to keep the NCSP certificate. An application packet for the NCSP may be obtained from:

National Association of School Psychologists  
4340 East West Highway, Suite 402  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
301-657-0270

## II. Degree Requirements

### A. Residency and Registration and Annual Review

Full-time residency (nine hours per semester) is required for first year students to meet the program residency requirement. Continuous registration is required for all graduate students in School Psychology. If a student is not registered for at least one course for 2 out of every 4 semesters in a calendar year, he/she will be automatically withdrawn from the active program roll and placed on the inactive roll. Such withdrawal will necessitate re-application to SPPC to be reinstated on the active roll. A student may petition the SPPC to be placed on "leave of absence" status. Students are expected to complete a minimum of 18 semester hours over one calendar year.

The SPPC conducts an annual review of students during the spring semester. Students should meet with their program advisor prior to this announced review to assess their progress and update their official file. Students will be informed of their status following this review. The SPPC may request that students attend an SPPC meeting in order to discuss concerns about their academic progress. Students are encouraged to request an opportunity to discuss their progress in the program, or any other concerns, with the SPPC at any time.

### B. Grade Standards

#### Master's Degree Program

Grade Requirements are specified by both the graduate school (see page current Graduate Catalog) and the Department of Psychology (see current Graduate Catalog). Grades in courses offered for the certification program or the master's degree must average 3.0 grade point average or above on a 4.0 scale. Grades of "C" may count towards Master's degree plans, as long as there are sufficient "A"s to maintain the 3.0 GPA requirement. In no case may a course with a grade below "C" apply towards certification or towards the Master's degree. Consistent failure to maintain a 3.0 average on all graduate work results in dismissal from the Graduate School. When a student's cumulative grade average on graduate-level work falls below "B" or when a student receives a grade of "D" or "F" during any one semester or full summer semester of twelve weeks, the student is automatically on academic probation and notified of this status. Failure to restore the cumulative average to 3.0 or above during the next enrollment in a long semester or full summer session results in dismissal from the Graduate School. If a grade of "C" or lower is earned in a course, the student will be required to meet with the SPPC program committee. The program committee and the student shall determine appropriate steps for remediation. If a second "C" or lower grade is earned in any course, the student will again be required to meet with the SPPC program committee provided that he/she has not already been dismissed from the graduate school for failure to maintain a B average. If a third "C" or lower grade is earned, the student will be dismissed from the program. At

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any point during the program, if the student receives a grade of "C" or lower in nine or more credit hours, whether or not any original "C" has been retaken, this will result in dismissal from the program.

Professors may assign a grade of "I" (Incomplete) or "IP" (In-Progress) only when illness or some significant reasons prevents the student from completing a course by the end of the semester. An "IP" must be removed during the next 16-week semester following the one for which it was assigned or it will be automatically converted to an "I." Also, an "I" must be removed during the subsequent 16-week semester or it turns into an "F." As long as an "I" grade remains on a student's record, it is counted as an "F" in computing the GPA. Incomplete work cannot be submitted for a grade after one year from the end of the semester in which the student was enrolled in the course. Exceptions are selected practica, internships, thesis, and thesis projects where grades of "IP" remain.

### C. Advisors

Upon acceptance into the school psychology program, new students are assigned a graduate advisor by the School Psychology Program Committee. The SPPC and the course advisor assist in the planning of the student's program of studies at ACU. It is recommended that the student contact her or his advisor prior to the first semester of classes in order to become acquainted and begin preparing for the semesters ahead.

The SPPC is the governing body of the program. Members of the SPPC are assigned as student advisors and are the graduate faculty most closely associated with the School Psychology program through their education, experience and research interests. Students work with their individual advisor to get questions answered, get enrollment information and codes for registering for classes and get advice and counsel about the program. However, all decisions relevant to a student's progress in the program, degree plans and satisfactory completion of graduation requirements are the function of the SPPC. Students are encouraged to attend SPPC meetings and to come to the SPPC with their questions and concerns. No one-faculty member may make a unilateral decision regarding a student's status in the program. The SPPC has the authority of the Advisory Committee as explained in the *Graduate Catalog* and the *Graduate Student Handbook*.

### D. Program Sequence

Prior to registering for the first semester of coursework, a schedule of classes should be obtained from the Office of Admissions and Registrar. Courses to be offered are identified and registration procedures are outlined. In addition, a degree program list can also help with course sequencing and planning. After completing a sample schedule, the student must consult with her or his academic advisor to obtain telephone registration codes. The degree sequences in the degree plan are based on a full-time course load of 12 hours per semester and 6 hours per summer semester (in the first year). Part-time students will take longer to complete the degree. Students should consult the

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departmental course calendar for information on when to expect courses to be scheduled. Some courses are offered on a rotating basis; others are offered every other year. It is important to plan ahead. Some courses (e.g., Cognitive Assessment) have limited enrollment due to limitations of testing materials. Signing up for one of these courses implies that the student will be taking the course.

### E. Registration

Consult your *Schedule of Classes* each semester. These can be obtained several months prior to the beginning of the semester from the Registrar's Office. An updated list of changes will be available in the Psychology Office.

Some courses require pre-registration and are usually listed with a special note in the Schedule of Classes. Other questions can be addressed to your advisor. A comprehensive description outlining registration procedures also can be found in the *Schedule of Classes*.

After selecting your courses, a meeting with your advisor is next. Classes do fill up. Early registration is advised. Instructions and additional work sheets can be secured at the Office of the Registrar.

A student is assessed a fee for each class dropped or added during Late Registration. A student must pay this fee to the Cashier before adding or dropping a class in the Registrar's Office. A student will not be assessed a fee if a class has been canceled requiring a schedule change or if an adjustment in class size or section is required.

### F. Degree Plan

Before completing 9 hours of required graduate work in School Psychology, the student must meet with her or his advisor to file a degree plan. This degree plan is submitted by the student and advisor to the School Psychology Program Committee (SPPC), which reviews the contents, and approves or suggests changes. If approved, the degree plan is sent to the Graduate Dean with a copy placed in the student's file in the department. Please see a copy of the degree plan for the M.S. in School Psychology in Appendix.

### G. Time Limitation

The time begins with the earliest course taken that applies to the degree program. After a student has enrolled for graduate credit, all work for the master's degree must be completed within eight years. This regulation applies to work being transferred from another institution as well as work done at ACU.

## II. Degree Requirements

### H. Transfer of Credits

Students may transfer up to 12 semester hours of graduate credit from an accredited institution provided that the course is not older than six years at the time of completion of the Master's degree.

There is no automatic transfer of graduate credit, but the SPPC has the prerogative to recommend to the Dean for Graduate Studies the acceptance of transferable credits. A student may apply for consideration of transfer of credits after satisfactorily completing a minimum of 9 (nine) hours of graduate credit at ACU and upon filing the degree program.

The SPPC does not allow course credit for experiences such as workshops, seminars, remedial study, or other such types of learning experiences. While the SPPC encourages the student to participate in these types of activities, the practicum experience is designed to meet specific program goals. The SPPC and the Graduate School do not award graduate credit for undergraduate coursework.

To apply for transfer credit to substitute for a required course, first, meet with the faculty member who teaches the course in question. If possible, bring the graduate catalogue description of the course you want to transfer, the course syllabus, a transcript, the name of textbooks used, and copies of the texts. Obtain written permission from the professor on the Course Waiver form (may be obtained from the Departmental secretary), and include the waivers with the degree plan submitted to the SPPC.

Assessment courses are not automatically waived due to prior course work. With an interest in keeping the assessment requirement of the SPPC current and consistent with accreditation standards, the following policy is established: Students entering the graduate programs with prior course work and job related experiences in cognitive or personality assessment, or assessment of adaptive behavior may choose to petition the instructor of the respective courses to consider work completed in lieu of taking the course. When the student's degree plan is submitted, documentation must accompany it supporting the waiver of these courses.

#### 1. Approved Options

A. Audit the course; demonstrate proficiency on a comprehensive final exam; and provide evidence of test administration, scoring, and test interpretation skills through preparation of a video-tape and an accompanying psychological report.

## II. Degree Requirements

- B. Register for course credit, test out of the required test administrations through review of a video tape and report, and show proficiency on a comprehensive final exam.
- C. Take the proficiency examination achieving 80% accuracy, and receive a satisfactory rating in test administration, scoring and interpretation procedures through review of a videotape and report. If a student were unable to meet criteria, enrollment in the appropriate course would be required.
- D. Receive credit for previous courses through approval of the instructor (after meeting one of the above options) and the SPPC. These courses would then be indicated as transfer courses on the degree plan. Note that the time rule also applies to these transfer credits.

### I. Pre-Practicum Field Experiences

Students participate in pre-practicum experiences as early as the first full semester of coursework. Three courses (Introduction to School Psychology, Cognitive Assessment, Child and Adolescent Assessment) have pre-practicum field experiences as requirements. All pre-practicum field experiences are supervised by the course instructor.

These field experiences gradually acquaint the student with the roles and functions of the school psychologist, school and community resources, and support staff that they will encounter in the field. These experiences start with pre-practicum courses designed to gradually introduce and develop component skills in interviewing, assessment, and intervention. Each pre-practicum is carefully designed to teach needed skills. After such pre-practicum experiences, students participate in an integrated practicum that has as its goal the implementation of a coordinated set of school psychological services.

### J. Practicum and Internship

#### 1. Practicum

Students are required to complete six semester credit hours (300 clock hours) of practicum. The first practicum (PSYC 690) focuses on developing counseling and behavioral analysis and intervention skills while the second practicum (PSYC 694) focuses on providing the student with an opportunity to provide a full range of psychological services within a school setting under close supervision.

Licensed faculty on the SPPC supervise the practicum each semester. The student and the field agency supervisor are each provided with a copy of the *Practicum and Internship Handbook* which includes all the necessary forms and information regarding the required field experiences. In each setting the university supervisor contacts the receiving field agency several times during the semester. Practicum students also meet weekly with the university supervisor for group supervision. At

## II. Degree Requirements

mid-term and at the end of each semester written evaluations are collected from the field agency. These evaluations are discussed with the student and the facility supervisor. This information is used by the coordinator and practicum supervisors in a variety of ways to enhance the working relationships between the university and the field agency. NASP Standards guide the practicum requirements.

### **2. Internship**

Students are required to complete 1200 clock hours of internship. The internship provides the intern with a full time school psychologist position which is closely supervised and comprehensive in scope. Licensed faculty on the SPPC supervise the practicum each semester. The student and the field agency supervisor are each provided with a copy of the *Practicum and Internship Handbook* which includes all the necessary forms and information regarding the required field experiences. In each setting the university supervisor contacts the receiving field agency several times during the year. Interns also meet weekly with the field supervisor for individual supervision. At mid-term and at the end of each semester written evaluations are collected from the field agency. These evaluations are discussed with the student and the facility supervisor. This information is used by the coordinator and practicum supervisors in a variety of ways to enhance the working relationships between the university and the field agency. NASP Standards guide the internship requirements.

## **K. Dismissal from the Program**

A student may be expelled by the SPPC from the school psychology master's program for any of the following reasons:

- a. ethical or legal violations
- b. academic failure (previously defined under grade requirements)
- c. professional incompetence or negligence.

## III. Making Changes

### A. Due Process

The *ACU Student Handbook* details appeals procedures for academic matters and policies regarding academic probation and suspension, student rights and responsibilities, and university policies governing student and faculty conduct. A copy of the *ACU Student Handbook* is available from the Student Services office. This publication also details student services and facilities available to students. The SPPC follows the policies and procedures described in the *ACU Student Handbook*. Students are strongly encouraged to obtain a copy and read it. It is important to be fully aware of all student rights and responsibilities.

Any student who disagrees with a decision relating to an academic matter should first contact the faculty member responsible for the decision and ask for further consideration of the issue. If not satisfied with the faculty member's action, the student should ask the chair of the academic department involved to review the matter and to intervene on behalf of the student. The chair of the Psychology Department and/or the student may contact the SPPC for assistance in resolving the issue as well. If further redress is needed, the student may appeal in writing to the Dean of the school or college, then to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and finally to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Any written appeals should describe the nature of the petition, reasons for the request, and prior steps taken to resolve the matter. The student is encouraged to come to the SPPC to discuss and resolve matters of concern about any aspect of the school psychology program.

### B. Changing the Degree Plan

Circumstances occasionally require changes in the degree plan that was filed with the SPPC and the Dean of the Graduate School. For example, additional courses may have been taken or scheduled courses may not have made due to low enrollment and a substitution was approved. A "Change in Degree Program" form, should be filed with the SPPC with an accompanying explanation of the need for the change. After approval by the SPPC and department chairperson, the Change in Degree Program form is forwarded to the Graduate School for approval.

When the student files for graduation, the Graduate Dean checks the student's transcript with the official degree plan in order to certify the student for graduation. Therefore, it is important to update the official records if any changes are made.

## IV. Evaluation

### A. Performance-Based Program Assessment

Formative evaluation occurs throughout the program as students demonstrate competencies through successful completion of coursework, practica and internship. Formal performance-based evaluation occurs through a series of three case studies. These case studies are used not only to evaluate the individual student's performance, but also to inform program evaluation.

#### a. Definition

Case studies assess the application of knowledge and professional skill development and serve to evaluate reasoning, in-depth understanding, and integration of the didactic education, applied professional practice, and problem-solving dimensions of the program.

#### b. Composition

Students are required to write up and present the case studies. In each case study, students are required to integrate skills across the areas of assessment, consultation, intervention design, and evaluation. The written description is in APA format of a client and problem from the student's caseload. The areas covered in the written and oral presentation are background and context of the problem, description and analysis of the problem, linking of the data with the goals, specific description of intervention, description of collaborative efforts, and discussion of outcome data and results.

#### c. Administration

The case studies are conducted and presented as course requirements in Practicum I, Practicum III, and Internship.

#### c. Grading Criteria

Case studies are evaluated on a rubric measuring each of the six areas to be addressed, along with clarity, grammar, organization and critical and creative thinking. Each component is worth a total of 20 points. Students will receive a rating of 0-20 points on each of the seven areas rated. Each of the seven components of the rubric is made up of four specific skills that are graded on a 0-5 point scale. It is expected that students will receive a score-indicating competency (15 points) in the majority of the 7 areas rated. In the case that the student achieves a score below competency (15 points) on more than 3 of the areas rated, the student will be considered to have failed the case study and a remediation plan will be put into effect. In addition, students are required to use information technology in a professional manner to present their data. They are judged as demonstrating competency or not demonstrating competency in this area.

# IV. Evaluation

## CASE STUDY: GRADING CRITERIA

Reviewer's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student SS# \_\_\_\_\_

### GRADING SHEET

Put a NUMBER grade in the blank on the far left for each overall area. Grade each overall area with a score from 0 to 20 after adding up the scores for the components contained within the overall area in question. Each component is worth 5 points. Grade each component with a score from 0-5, using the semantic anchors to aid in making your grading choice. Overall area scores may be regarded on the following scale:

18-20 = High pass – outstanding, excellent

15-17 = Good pass – competent, solid answers with basic information

12-14 = Marginal pass – weak or low in quality, but meets minimum standards

0-11 = Unsatisfactory – would require repeat examination and/or remediation

Circle a number on each of the anchored scales to indicate your evaluation on these items. Do not put narrative comments anywhere else on the rating sheet.

#### \_\_\_\_\_1. Background and context (20 points)

Clearly describes the presenting problem or referral question

[--1-----2-----3-----4-----5--]  
Not at all Adequately Completely

Describes the problem in observable, measurable terms

[--1-----2-----3-----4-----5--]  
Not at all Adequately Completely

Clearly describes the current level of performance and the expected level after putting interventions into place.

[--1-----2-----3-----4-----5--]  
Not at all Adequately Completely

Provides baseline data that is directly related to the identified problem.

[--1-----2-----3-----4-----5--]  
Not at all Adequately Completely

#### \_\_\_\_\_2. Description and Analysis (20 points)

Summarizes the assessment methods used.

[--1-----2-----3-----4-----5--]  
Not at all adequately completely







## IV. Evaluation

### B. Master's Comprehensive Evaluation Process

Formative evaluation occurs throughout the program as students demonstrate competencies through successful completion of coursework, practica and internship. Formal evaluation occurs after completion of all coursework and before internship.

#### a. Definition

The Comprehensive Evaluation consists of both a written and oral component over the program course work and must be completed before internship placement is approved. These components assess the synthesis and integration of the knowledge areas within the didactic education, applied professional practice, and problem-solving dimensions of the program.

#### b. Composition

Written comprehensives are composed of integrated questions in the areas of Diagnosis and Fact Finding, Prevention and Intervention Applied Psychological Foundations, Applied Educational Foundations, and Ethical and Legal Considerations. One question per category is required.

The questions are provided to the student on the appointed date and the student is provided with an exam room in which to answer the questions. The exam is scheduled over a maximum of three days with a total of six hours provided for answering the questions.

#### c. Administration

Phase I comprehensives are administered once each fall and once each spring semester, according to schedule agreed to by students and program directors.

#### d. Grading Criteria

The committee is made up of three members, including the chair of the committee. Students will receive feedback regarding the written evaluation in preparation for orals. In general, randomly selected 50% of the faculty read and grade comprehensive exams in the fall; the other 50% in the spring. The committee reaches consensus on a Pass/Fail basis for each student, and feedback regarding strengths and weaknesses in the oral performance are given at the time of the defense. Grades are based on the areas of scope, integration, clarity, and critical and creative thinking. Evaluation of Comprehensive Examinations

## IV. Evaluation

Subject Area	Pass	Fail	Remediate w/Pass
Diagnosis and Fact Finding			
Prevention and Intervention			
Applied Psychological Foundations			
Applied Educational Foundations			
Ethical and Legal Considerations			

### CONTINUATION of EXAMINATION

If the faculty evaluators agree that a student's written examination work is not entirely acceptable for a passing grade and yet shows a higher quality of work than should receive a failing grade, it is their option to choose to have the examination process continued. In this case, the oral examination is postponed and the student is given an opportunity to remediate skills or knowledge bases that are judged to be lacking. The oral examination is then re-scheduled at the discretion of the chair but before approval for internship placement.

## IV. Evaluation

### APPEAL of FAILURE of WRITTEN EXAM

If a student wishes to appeal a failing grade on the Phase I written comprehensive exam, the following procedure must be followed:

1. The student must notify the comprehensive exam coordinator within one week of receiving their grade to request an appeal. The request must be in writing.
2. The comprehensive exam coordinator will make every attempt to schedule a meeting with all the faculty members who read and evaluated the student's exam and with the student within two weeks of receipt of the request for appeal. If schedules cannot accommodate the two week interval, the meeting will be scheduled as soon as possible following this two-week period.
3. At the scheduled meeting, the student will have up to 15 minutes to present her/his perspective to the pertinent faculty. Following this, the faculty will deliberate and come to consensus regarding a re-evaluation of the exam. The group will be responsible to complete one grading sheet that will stand as the grade for the appeal.
4. Students should be aware that their entire exam will be open for re-evaluation, not just an isolated topic, area, or section.
5. Results will be reported to the comprehensive exam coordinator, who will then compose a memo summarizing the proceedings. A copy of the memo and the grading sheet will be placed in the student's permanent file.

### ORALS:

Students receive feedback from the faculty readers on their written comps within 1 week of the time that they are returned by the graders to the Comps Coordinator. This leaves approximately 1-3 weeks for Orals preparation depending on the schedule agreed to between the student and committee chair.

Oral exams are conducted by the student's comprehensive examination committee. Faculty have copies of all feedback available for the oral.

Oral exams are typically scheduled approximately 1 week after the written feedback is available. Each student receives an appointed, two-hour time slot that is NON-NEGOTIABLE. Students are expected to make arrangements (e.g. work, practicum, childcare) in order to attend.

The oral exam covers any areas of weakness in the written exam, plus any related questions or topics that are generated by faculty. Criteria for successful oral exams are as follows:

## IV. Evaluation

### ORAL COMPREHENSIVES – CRITERIA

The following guidelines were developed to help you prepare for your oral exam.

- Be prepared to address the weaknesses in your paper. You have been given written feedback about the areas of concern to assist in this process.
- Demonstrate an ability to discuss issues in a collegial, calm, and composed manner, bringing good judgment, rationality, and factual information to bear on a question.
- Demonstrate the ability to take a personal position on an issue: develop it, formalize, support, and articulate your position; be convincing (i.e. “I agree or disagree with “X” and this is WHY”). Be able to discuss the implications of the positions you take.
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of core content areas. For example, if you were asked to elaborate on how you would design and assess a program, you could talk about research design and statistics appropriate to that design/chosen instrument. If you were asked to apply concepts from learning theory or social psychology (etc.), you would be able to talk intelligently on those topics. If the orals committee came up with a question about ethical concerns or multicultural issues, you could “field” such inquiries. This does not mean you have to have everything you ever learned memorized. It means you can effectively use your current knowledge base.

The orals teams reach consensus on a Pass/Fail basis for each student, and feedback regarding strengths and weaknesses in the oral performance are given at the time of the defense.

## V. Research

### A. Master's Thesis Committee

The master's thesis is optional. A graduate student's responsibility includes recommending the membership of the committee to the SPPC. Before first registration for thesis, the student should choose a director of his/her paper and gain permission of each faculty member to serve on the committee. Three members are needed for thesis.

### B. Changes in Committee Appointments

If necessary, changes in committee membership can be made. A request for a change in committee membership can be made by the student or the faculty or the committee. The request is submitted to the committee chair and the change would be reflected on the proposal page if the change was made prior to the proposal or on the dissertation at the defense.

### C. Filing Prospectus

When the student's research committee believes the student has made a satisfactory beginning in the investigation of the thesis problem, the student should file with the research committee, the Dean of the College, and the Dean for Graduate Studies and Research a prospectus concerning the proposed thesis. The Graduate Dean expects a 10 page or less summary of the prospectus. Guidelines are contained in the graduate school publication.

### D. Grading for Thesis

The grade of "IP" will be assigned to indicate progress. A student writing a thesis for six hours credit will be given credit for the first enrollment "IP" (In-Progress) for all subsequent enrollments until the last, for which credit will be given again. While only 6 hours of thesis are required, the student must be enrolled in thesis hours until the work is completed in order for the faculty supervisor to receive workload credit for the supervision. Do not expect the faculty member to supervise the thesis or dissertation work without appropriate workload credit. For thesis work done over the summer terms, students are required to register for credit for both summer terms.

## VI. Internship

### A. Guidelines and Rules

A full-time academic year internship of 1200 hours is to be completed in not less than 10 consecutive months in a school district or more than 24 months in an agency. A minimum of 600 hours must be in direct service in a school setting. This requirement for school psychology cannot be obtained in more than two placements. The student is responsible for making arrangements with an internship agency for obtaining the requisite training. However, the agency must be approved by the SPPC before the student formally accepts the internship. The master's student may begin internship only after successfully completing all required courses and comprehensive exams. A contract outlining working conditions, training experiences, and reimbursement, and a job description agreement must be approved by the SPPC before the internship may begin.

Internships are an invaluable culminating experience for the school psychologist providing opportunities to work with a variety of handicapping conditions in both regular and special education. The purpose of the experience is to provide students an opportunity to combine all of their previously learned skills and knowledge in a professional service delivery system. The University is very concerned with locating and maintaining internship sites that meet National and State professional and ethical guidelines. Sites that do not meet these guidelines will not be considered as appropriate. This policy is established to protect both the student and academic program interests. University supervision is secondary to site supervision. In the main, the University coordinator's role is to monitor the fulfillment of the internship contract between student, agency, and University. Evaluations come from site supervisors. Strategies to change or improve the students' experiences are joint decisions between the University coordinator and site supervisor.

### B. Securing a Site

Internships are jointly secured through University and student effort. All internships are approved on an individual basis by the SPPC. However, the agency must be approved by the SPPC before the student formally accepts the internship.

The intern, seeking certification as a school psychologist, should have internship experiences in a public school setting, though other settings may be incorporated into the internship experience. The public school setting must constitute a minimum of 600 clock hours of the time designated for the internship. Where other settings are employed, a rationale specifies its appropriate relationship to the practice of school psychology.

NOTE: Practicum and Internship Handbooks are available in the Psychology Department Office.

## VII. Graduation

### A. Diploma and Graduation Fees

A candidate for graduation must pay a diploma fee and a cap and gown fee in the Cashier's Office and show the receipt to personnel in the Registrar's Office. The University will make every effort to keep these fees at a minimum cost, but they may vary from time to time. Information may be obtained from the University Registrar.

# Appendix A – Degree Plan

## MS in School Psychology

This is a 60-hour program that includes a one-year internship. Either a Thesis or Comprehensive Exams must be completed 5 weeks prior to graduation. Completing a thesis does make this a 66-hour program.

First Year, Fall Semester (12 hours)

PSYC 608 - Introduction to School Psychology (3)	PSYC 668 - Advanced Behavioral Science/Human Learning & Cognition (courses alternate every other Fall semester) (3)
PSYC 642 - Cognitive Assessment (3)	PSYC 644 - Child & Adolescent Therapy (3)

First Year, Spring Semester (12 hours)

PSYC 649 - Direct Behavior Interventions (3)	PSYC 645 - Child & Adolescent Assessment (3)
PSYC 683 - School Consultation (3)	PSYC 690 - Practicum I (3)

First Year, Summer I (6 hours)

SPED 577 - Teaching Students with Mild Disabilities (3)	PSYC 647 – Child & Adolescent Psychopathology (3)
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Second Year, Fall Semester (12 hours)

PSYC 612 - Clinical Research Methods (3)	PSYC 640 - Advanced Behavioral Science/Human Learning & Cognition (courses alternate every other Fall semester) (3)
PSYC 646 - Child & Adolescent Development (3)	SPED 685 - Issues in Education of Exceptional Children OR PSYC 699 - Master's Thesis

Second Year, Spring Semester (12 hours)

PSYC 624 - Social Cultural Foundations of Behavior (3)	PSYC 640 -Special Topics in School Psychology OR Master's Thesis (3)
PSYC 657 - Intermediate Statistics (3)	PSYC 694 - Practicum in School Psychology (3)

Third Year, Fall Semester (3 hours)

PSYC 695 - Internship in School Psychology (3)
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Third Year, Spring Semester (3 hours)

PSYC 695 - Internship in School Psychology (3)
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I understand that the course load as described above is required in order to complete the MS degree in three academic years. I further understand that choosing to take fewer hours in any of these semesters will delay my degree completion and graduation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix B

<b>NASP Domains of School Psychology Training and Practice</b>	<b>ACU School Psychology Program Goals and Objectives</b>	<b>Courses</b>
2.1 Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sensitivity and skills in recognizing the uniqueness, dignity, culture, and worth of each person</li> <li>3. High standards of ethical, professional conduct</li> <li>4. Competency in data-based problem-solving applied to assessment, intervention, consultation, research, and program evaluation</li> <li>5. Collaborative, empirically-based decision-making</li> </ol>	PSYC 608-Introduction to School Psychology PSYC 649 – Behavioral Interventions in the Schools PSYC 642-Cognitive Assessment PSYC 644-Child and Adolescent Therapy PSYC 645-Child and Adolescent Assessment PSYC 690-Practicum I PSYC 694-Practicum III
2.2 Consultation and Collaboration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sensitivity and skills in recognizing the uniqueness, dignity, culture, and worth of each person</li> <li>4. Competency in data-based problem-solving applied to assessment, intervention, consultation, research, and program evaluation</li> <li>5. Collaborative, empirically-based decision-making</li> </ol>	SPED 683-School Consultation PSYC 690-Practicum I PSYC 694-Practicum III
2.3 Effective Instruction and Development of Cognitive/Academic Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sensitivity and skills in recognizing the uniqueness, dignity, culture, and worth of each person</li> </ol>	PSYC 669-Human Learning and Cognition SPED 577-Teaching Students with Mild Disabilities

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Advocacy in facilitating policies and practices that provide comprehensive, effective services to children</li> <li>4. Competency in data-based problem-solving applied to assessment, intervention, consultation, research, and program evaluation</li> </ol>	<p>SPED 683-School Consultation            PSYC 690-Practicum I            PSYC 694-Practicum III            PSYC 695-Internship</p>
<p>2.4 Socialization and Development of Life Skills</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Sensitivity and skills in recognizing the uniqueness, dignity, culture, and worth of each person</li> <li>2.Advocacy in facilitating policies and practices that provide comprehensive, effective services to children</li> <li>4.Competency in data-based problem-solving applied to assessment, intervention, consultation, research, and program evaluation</li> </ol>	<p>PSYC 649- Direct Behavioral Interventions            PSYC 624-Social-Cultural Foundations of Behavior            PSYC 644-Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy            PSYC 645-Child and Adolescent Assessment            PSYC 646-Child and Adolescent Development            SPED 683- School Consultation            PSYC 690-Practicum I            PSYC 694-Practicum III</p>
<p>2.5 Student Diversity in Development and Learning</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Sensitivity and skills in recognizing the uniqueness, dignity, culture, and worth of each person</li> <li>2. Advocacy in facilitating policies and practices that provide comprehensive, effective services to children</li> <li>3.High standards of</li> </ol>	<p>PSYC 624-Social-Cultural Foundations of Behavior            PSYC 645-Child and Adolescent Assessment            PSYC 647-Child and Adolescent Psychopathology            PSYC 669-Human Learning and Cognition            PSYC 668Advanced Behavioral Neuroscience</p>

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	<p>ethical, professional conduct</p> <p>4. Competency in data-based problem-solving applied to assessment, intervention, consultation, research, and program evaluation</p>	<p>PSYC 690-Practicum I PSYC 694-Practicum III</p>
<p>2.6 School and Systems Organization, Policy Development, and Climate</p>	<p>1. Sensitivity and skills in recognizing the uniqueness, dignity, culture, and worth of each person</p> <p>2. Advocacy in facilitating policies and practices that provide comprehensive, effective services to children</p> <p>3. High standards of ethical, professional conduct</p> <p>4. Competency in data-based problem-solving applied to assessment, intervention, consultation, research, and program evaluation</p> <p>5. Collaborative, empirically-based decision-making</p>	<p>PSYC 608-Introduction to School Psychology SPED 577-Teaching Students with Mild Disabilities SPED 683-School Consultation PSYC 690-Practicum I PSYC 694-Practicum III</p>
<p>2.7 Prevention, Crisis Intervention, and Mental Health</p>	<p>1. Sensitivity and skills in recognizing the uniqueness, dignity, culture, and worth of each person</p> <p>2. Advocacy in facilitating policies and practices that provide comprehensive, effective services to children</p> <p>3. High standards of ethical, professional</p>	<p>PSYC 649- Direct Behavioral Interventions PSYC 624-Social-Cultural Foundations of Behavior PSYC 644-Child and Adolescent Therapy PSYC 646-Child and Adolescent Development PSYC 647-Child and Adolescent Psychopathology PSYC 640-Prevention,</p>

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	<p>conduct</p> <p>4.Competency in data-based problem-solving applied to assessment, intervention, consultation, research, and program evaluation</p> <p>5.Collaborative, empirically-based decision-making</p>	<p>Intervention, and Advocacy in School Psychology</p>
<p>2.8 Home/School/Community Collaboration</p>	<p>2. Advocacy in facilitating policies and practices that provide comprehensive, effective services to children</p> <p>4.Competency in data-based problem-solving applied to assessment, intervention, consultation, research, and program evaluation</p> <p>5.Collaborative, empirically-based decision-making</p>	<p>SPED 683-School Consultation</p> <p>PSYC 608-Introduction to School Psychology</p> <p>PSYC 624-Social Cultural Foundations of Behavior</p> <p>PSYC 644-Child and Adolescent Therapy</p> <p>PSYC 645-Child and Adolescent Assessment</p> <p>PSYC 646-Child and Adolescent Development</p> <p>PSYC 690-Practicum I</p> <p>PSYC 694-Practicum III</p>
<p>2.9 Research and Program Evaluation</p>	<p>4.Competency in data-based problem-solving applied to assessment, intervention, consultation, research, and program evaluation</p> <p>5.Collaborative, empirically-based decision-making</p>	<p>PSYC 612-Clinical Research Methods</p> <p>PSYC 657-Intermediate Statistics</p>
<p>2.10 School Psychology Practice and Development</p>	<p>2. Advocacy in facilitating policies and practices that provide comprehensive, effective services to children</p> <p>3.High standards of ethical, professional</p>	<p>PSYC 608-Introduction to School Psychology</p> <p>PSYC 642-Cognitive Assessment</p> <p>PSYC 645-Child and Adolescent Assessment</p> <p>PSYC 649- Direct Behavioral Interventions</p>

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	<p>conduct</p> <p>4.Competency in data-based problem-solving applied to assessment, intervention, consultation, research, and program evaluation</p>	<p>PSYC 690-Practicum I</p> <p>PSYC 694- Practicum III</p>
<p>2.11 Information Technology</p>	<p>2.Advocacy in facilitating policies and practices that provide comprehensive, effective services to children</p> <p>4.Competency in data-based problem-solving applied to assessment, intervention, consultation, research, and program evaluation</p>	<p>PSYC 649- Direct Behavioral Interventions</p> <p>PSYC 608-Introduction to School Psychology</p> <p>PSYC 624-Social-Cultural Foundations of Behavior</p> <p>PSYC 612-Clinical Research Methods</p> <p>PSYC 657-Intermediate Statistics</p> <p>PSYC 646-Child and Adolescent Development</p> <p>PSYC 668-Advanced Behavioral Neuroscience</p> <p>PSYC 669-Human Learning and Cognition</p> <p>SPED 683-School Consultation</p> <p>PSYC 640-Prevention, Intervention, and Advocacy in School Psychology</p> <p>PSYC 644-Child and Adolescent Therapy</p>