

University of Delaware

*School of Education
Master of Arts (M.A.) and
Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) in
School Psychology*

Program Policy Statement

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Part I. Program History

A. Purpose Statement

The school psychology "program" at the University of Delaware actually consists of two separate, yet closely interrelated degrees: the Masters of Arts degree (M.A.) in school psychology, completed by students after their first 30 credits of coursework and an Educational Specialist degree (Ed.S.) in school psychology, completed by students after their second 30 credits of coursework in the program. The program is designed to be a three year program with students completing the M.A. after the first year and the Ed.S. at the end of the third year. The third year of the program includes a full-time, year-long internship.

The program is grounded in the scientist/practitioner model in psychology, and committed to the School of Education's emphasis on the roles of Scholar, Problem Solver, and Partner. Students are provided with a strong foundation in psychological theory and research and are trained to use a collaborative, data-based problem solving approach when applying this foundation to help solve social, emotional, and academic problems faced by children, schools, and families. In addition to gaining theoretical and empirical knowledge, students acquire competencies in multiple skill areas, a problem solving mindset, and sensitivity and respect for cultural and individual diversity. Consistent with the scientist/practitioner model and the role of Scholar, students are also expected to contribute to the knowledge base in psychology and education -- an expectation that is most clear in the doctoral program. The program's philosophy is reflected in the following goals:

1. Students will adhere to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct and will demonstrate respect for the dignity, worth, and individual differences of children of all cultures and backgrounds.
2. Students will use multiple methods of gathering reliable and valid data in the design and implementation of a variety of empirically-supported interventions for addressing problems faced by children, schools, and families.
3. Students will acquire an in-depth understanding of modern theories and research in the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development of children, including knowledge of family and school systems, and will apply such knowledge to the practice of school psychology.
4. Students will develop a strong knowledge base specific to the profession of school psychology including its history and foundations, the various roles and functions of school psychologists, and alternative models by which services are delivered.
5. Students will acquire and apply specific competencies in school psychology, especially in the areas of assessment, consultation, prevention, and direct interventions, while using an ecological, problem-solving approach in the delivery of psychological services in the schools.
6. Students will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to design and implement comprehensive mental health services, especially school-based services for promoting mental health and preventing social, emotional, and academic problems.
7. Students will work collaboratively and effectively with teachers, administrators, support staff, community agencies, children and their families, and others in the delivery of psychological services in the schools.
8. Students will apply a data-based, scientific problem solving approach to the delivery of all services, including assessment and intervention. Such services will be guided by current research and an appropriate assessment and analysis of multiple individual and ecological factors that influence learning and development. Evaluation data will be collected to demonstrate that services lead to positive

outcomes. Where appropriate, students will use technology effectively in the delivery of assessment and intervention services, including in the acquisition and communication of information.

9. Students will develop sufficient knowledge and skills in research, statistics, and evaluation and apply such knowledge and skills in the design and evaluation of programs and services in the schools. Technology will be used effectively in research, statistics, and evaluation.

B. Origin of the Program

The specialist-level program was first established in 1981, with the first class consisting of two students admitted in the fall of 1982. From 1981 to 1983, the program had two part-time faculty members in school psychology. At that time it was envisioned that the program would train school psychologists for the state of Delaware, and would eventually become nationally accredited. The program obtained permanent status from the University in 1984 and gained national approval from the National Association of School Psychologists in 1994. Currently, there are three faculty members assigned primarily to the school psychology program and an enrollment of 23 full-time students.

C. Administration and Faculty

The Committee on Graduate Studies in Education is the SOE-level committee that administers all the graduate programs, including the School Psychology Program. The committee is composed of five faculty members from the SOE, a graduate student member selected by the Education Graduate Association, and the Assistant Director of the SOE, who also serves as the SOE Graduate Coordinator.

The SOE is committed to the recruitment, support, and retention of full-time, tenure-line faculty members in the area of special education. Faculty members who teach graduate courses and advise graduate students in the SOE must have a doctorate or equivalent. In some instances, persons with a master's degree and special expertise in a relevant area of Education as a result of concentrated study, employment experience, or service may be recommended for graduate teaching. In such cases, the faculty member must have a record of successful teaching in the relevant area of Education, proven scholarly ability, and the endorsement of the School Psychology faculty and the SOE Director.

School Psychology faculty members review candidates for admission to the program in School Psychology, serve as advisors to candidates admitted to the program, teach courses in the program, and evaluate candidates' exhibits, practica, internships, and other performance products.

D. Degrees Offered

The degrees awarded to candidates who complete this program are an Master of Arts (M.A.) in School Psychology followed by an Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) in School Psychology.

Part II. Admission

A. University Policy on Admission

Admission to the graduate program is competitive. Those who meet stated minimum requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if they offer other appropriate strengths.

B. University Admission Procedures

Applicants must submit all of the following items to the Office of Graduate Studies before admission is considered:

Completed applications are due by February 1 for admission in the subsequent Fall semester. Admission application forms are available from the Office of Graduate Studies, from the departments, and online (<http://www.udel.edu/admissions/appinfo.html>).

A \$60 nonrefundable application fee must be submitted with the application. Checks must be made payable to the University of Delaware. Applications received without the application fee will not be processed. Foreign students may utilize either a check or an International Postal Money Order to remit payment in U.S. currency.

An official transcript of all previous college records must be sent directly from the institution to the Office of Graduate Studies. Students who have attended the University of Delaware need not supply a transcript from Delaware. Transcripts issued in a language other than English must be accompanied by an official translation into English. If the rank of the student is not displayed on the transcript or diploma, an official letter of explanation and ranking from the institution where the degree was earned is required.

Applicants must submit at least three letters of recommendation. The School Psychology faculty recommend that these letters be written by teaching supervisors and professors who know the applicant well.

If English is not their first language, international student applicants must demonstrate a satisfactory level of proficiency in the English language on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The TOEFL is offered by the Educational Testing Service in test centers throughout the world. TOEFL scores that are more than two years old are not acceptable. In order for a student visa to be issued, international students first must be offered admission to the University and provide evidence of adequate financial resources. The University has been authorized under federal law to enroll non-immigrant alien students. International students are required to purchase the University-sponsored insurance plan or its equivalent.

It is a Delaware State Board of Health Regulation and a University of Delaware mandate that all entering graduate students born after January 1, 1957 give proof of proper immunization for measles, mumps, and rubella. If immunization requirements are not met, the student will not be eligible to register. Specific information may be obtained from the Student Health Service at 302-831-2226.

C. Specific Requirements for Admission into the School Psychology Program

The School Psychology Program seeks candidates for admission with qualities that will enable them to become outstanding school psychologists. School psychologists must have the skills to analyze educational problems at all levels of the system; design, implement, and evaluate interventions to prevent or solve these problems; and collaborate with families, educators, and community members to promote healthy educational and psychological outcomes for all children. Therefore, we seek candidates who demonstrate the following dispositions:

- Approach new experiences with initiative, enthusiasm, flexibility, dedication, and willingness to learn
- Engage in thoughtful analysis of performance, seek feedback, and incorporate suggestions into work
- Are eager to learn, recognize that learning is never completed, and are committed to lifelong professional development
- Have excellent critical thinking and writing skills
- Enjoy working with children, parents, and educators

- View all children, families, and educators as having strengths and a capacity to learn and change; embrace diversity as a source of enrichment rather than deficit; treat others with respect and a desire to understand their points of view
- Are committed to ethical practices and to serving as agents of renewal and change within schools and communities
- Value working collaboratively with students, families, educators, and the wider community in the pursuit of common goals
- Understand that practice must be based in sound scholarship, viewing themselves as both producers and consumers of scholarly knowledge
- Are committed to the profession of school psychology and seek to make contributions to the field.

Applicants are judged individually. However, the following are required and guide the admission process:

- An undergraduate degree, preferably with a major in psychology or education, with at least three course in psychology (preferably in child development, educational psychology, statistics or abnormal psychology)
- A minimum grade point average of at least 3.0 in all undergraduate and graduate course work. (Note, however, that during the past 5 years, nearly all admitted students had a GPA above 3.2 and the average was 3.5)
- A grade point average of at least 3.0 in all graduate work completed
- Submission of GRE verbal and quantitative scores. A total of 1000 is required. (Note that the scores of students admitted to the program during the past few years have averaged about 1150)
- Submission of personal statement and goals (on application form)
- Submission of three letters of recommendation
- Evidence of proficiency in English. TOEFL scores are required for foreign students. A minimum score of 600 (paper-based test) or 250 (computer-based test) must be obtained.
- Evidence of the dispositions cited above in the applicant's written statements and interview

Courses designed to remediate deficiencies in an applicant's background may be required. Credit for these courses would not apply to the program's required credit hours.

The School of Education will accept as many as 9 graduate credits toward the Master's degree. Applicants should inquire about possible transfer credits early in the admissions process because certain courses may not be taken elsewhere.

- Deadline for application: February 1

Review of applications

- Students' applications are reviewed by at least two faculty members. Approximately 15 of the most promising candidates are selected for personal interviews. Candidates' grades, test scores, letters of recommendation, and personal statements are reviewed for evidence of the qualities and predispositions listed above.
- The interview process consists of three components. First, students participate in a small group orientation (usually about five students are included in a group). During this process, candidates introduce themselves to each other, listen to a presentation about the program from faculty, and ask questions about the program. Second, candidates participate in a series of 15-20 minute individual interviews with at least two faculty members. Third, candidates have the opportunity to talk with one or two current students in the program. The first two portions of the interview are evaluative; candidates' statements, questions, and interactional style are observed for evidence of the qualities and predispositions listed below. The third part of the interview is confidential. This conversation allows candidates to receive candid information about the program without concern for how their questions might be perceived by faculty.
- Following the interviews, candidates are 1) offered admission, 2) placed on the waiting list, or 3) not accepted. Each year's entering class consists of 6-10 students. There is no provisional acceptance.
- Please note that admission to the program is competitive. Those who meet stated requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if they offer other appropriate strengths.

D. Admission Status

Students admitted into any of the School Psychology degree programs are only admitted on a full-time basis with regular (non-provisional) status. Regular status is offered to students who meet all of the established entrance requirements and who have the ability, interest, and commitment necessary for successful study at the graduate level in a degree program.

Part III. Degree Requirements

A. Course Requirements for the M.A. and Ed.S. degrees in School Psychology

The Specialist program requires three years of full-time study. With special permission from the student's advisor and program coordinator, the equivalent of one year of coursework may be completed part-time. Upon completion of the first year of coursework (30 credits) and passing of a comprehensive exam, students are awarded a Master's of Arts in School Psychology. All students are expected to continue their studies to earn the Educational Specialist degree in School Psychology, which requires 30 additional credits including a 1,200-hour internship. It is only upon completion of the full 60-hour integrated program that a student is eligible for certification as a school psychologist in Delaware as well as most other states.

Specialist Curriculum

First Year (Master's Level)

Fall

EDUC 618	Special Services in the Schools
EDUC 663	Counseling Skills Laboratory
EDUC/PSY 817	Individual Intelligence Testing
EDUC 744	<i>Educational Measurement and Progress Monitoring</i>

Winter Session (or Summer)

EDUC 623 Applied Human Development in the Schools
EDUC 814 Psychological Assessment of Children

Spring

EDUC 671 Practicum in School Psychology
EDUC 679 Instructing Elementary/Middle Schoolers with Mild Disabilities
EDUC 691 Applied Statistics and Research Design
EDUC 830 Consultation and Intervention: School Discipline

Comprehensive Examination
Master of Arts (M.A.) Degree conferred

Second Year (Specialist level)

Fall

EDUC 831 Advanced Counseling Techniques
EDUC 671 Practicum in School Psychology
EDUC 813 Childhood Psychopathology
EDUC 870 Child Neuropsychology

Spring

EDUC 671 Practicum in School Psychology
EDUC 651 School-Based Family Issues and Interventions
EDUC 841 Consultation and Intervention: Mental Health
EDUC 842 Assessment of Special Populations

Third Year

EDUC 688 Internship in School Psychology (3 credits per semester)

Note: Students who choose to enroll for 3 credits of internship may not be considered "full-time students" for the purpose of deferring student loans. Students are responsible for determining their loan status.

Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) Degree conferred

B. Additional, Non-Course Requirements for the Specialist Program

Minimum GPA of 3.5

Students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.5 to be eligible for the Master's degree and Educational Specialist degree. Students also must obtain a grade of B- or higher in each practica in order to advance to the next level of the program. Additionally, a grade of B- or higher is required during each semester of the internship in order to complete the program and receive the Educational Specialist degree. Note that proficiency in oral and written expression in English is among the requirements for a grade of B- in practica and the internship.

Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination is usually administered to first-year students during the last week of the Spring semester. Alternate exam times are sometimes arranged for students who wish to participate in Winter or Summer graduation. The exam consists of several essay questions covering material from first-year courses. Successful completion of the exam and coursework results in the Master of Arts degree. The exam is graded by two or more members of the school psychology faculty. Student identities are masked for the purpose of exam grading. Students failing the exam are given the opportunity to take a second exam. At the discretion of the faculty, this second exam may cover all or part of the first year course material and may be written and/or oral. Students must pass the second administration in order to continue in the program.

Residency Requirement

All students must complete a full-time residency. Minimally, at the Specialist level students are required to spend one, continuous year (Fall semester, Spring semester) of full-time course work in the program. This does not include the internship. Full time work is defined as completing nine credit hours per semester. It is strongly recommended that both years of coursework be completed on a full-time basis.

E. Practica And Internship

Practica

Carefully constructed practica (3 courses for a total of 9 credits) are a part of every student's program. These practica are in addition to practicum experiences embedded within certain courses (i.e., assessment, counseling, consultation, and intervention courses). The first practicum orients students to the educational process and gives them the opportunity to practice diagnostic assessment skills *and consultation skills*. In the second and third practica, students refine their assessment *and consultation* skills and develop expertise in direct and indirect intervention (e.g., individual and group counseling, teacher, family *and systems level* consultation, design and implementation of *school needs assessment or crisis intervention* programs).

Practicum assignments are made by faculty to ensure that students gain experience with a variety of ages, cultures, and disabilities. Most practica are completed in regular school settings; however, one practicum may be completed in a more "specialized" setting, such as programs for children with physical and/or sensory impairments, alternative schools, schools for children with autism or other severe disabilities. Students interested in a particular area should discuss possible placements with the University practicum supervisor. Supervision is provided on-site by a certified school psychologist; students also attend weekly group supervision meetings with a University faculty member.

Proficiency in English expression, both oral and written, is required for all practica and internship placements (as well as for graduation).

Internship

For students in the Educational Specialist degree, an internship is completed in the third year of training. The objective of the internship is to insure competency and integration of knowledge and skills in all domains of school psychology and to broaden such knowledge and skills.

The internship requires full-time participation, five days per week for one academic year. Interns must log a minimum of 1,200 clock hours for the Educational Specialist degree. Under unusual circumstances, and with permission of the program faculty, the internship may be completed over a two year period. At least one-half of the clock hours must be completed in a school setting. Internship sites follow guidelines established by the National Association of School Psychologists, and a plan of objectives and activities that are delineated and evaluated on the *Field Experience Checklist and Evaluation Form*. As described in the

Internship Guidelines, a written contract between the university, internship site, and intern must be formalized prior to beginning an internship. Students typically handle a case load roughly half of that required for a certified school psychologist. They must participate in a minimum of 4 hours of weekly supervision from a certified school psychologist (or someone with other appropriate credentials for placements in non-school settings) and log at least 1,200 clock hours that document a full range of experiences and services with a diverse population of students.

Finding an appropriate internship site is the joint responsibility of the university supervisor and the student. While every effort is made to arrange for a paid internship, paid internships are not guaranteed. However, over the past ten years all interns have been offered paid internships (averaging about \$16,000). Students have completed their internships in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Virginia, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Florida, Iowa, Illinois, Texas, and Alaska.

Placements must be approved by the university supervisor. Although the supervisor attempts to place interns in locations that they most desire, the program's obligations to local school districts must be respected. As such, the University may require that an internship be completed in a local school district. Likewise, quality of the site is always considered to be more important than a high salary.

F. Portfolio Requirements Of Internship

Students are required to develop a portfolio of documents that demonstrate their competence as a reflective practitioner of school psychology. The portfolio will be used, in part, to establish the grade for the internship. The items selected for your portfolio are examples of their very best work and should clearly demonstrate mastery of the skills involved. The primary purpose of the portfolio is not to help students improve their skills, but for them to demonstrate the skills they have developed over the past 2 years as well as during the internship.

Professional Development Goals and Activities: Students develop a set of two to four goals for their professional development for the year and a sequence of activities designed to address those goals.

Report Writing: Students submit a completed psychoeducational evaluation report that demonstrates their ability to conduct a comprehensive assessment that is linked to intervention.

Counseling: Students submit a videotape of a counseling session with a student, along with progress notes on the session

Consultation: Students submit a videotape of a problem-solving consultation session with a teacher.

Comprehensive Assessment/Intervention Case Study: Students submit a complete case study demonstrating that you possess the knowledge and professional expertise to collaborate with teachers, families and other professionals in designing, implementing, and evaluating interventions that effectively respond to the educational and mental health needs of children and youth.

Special Project: This project involves an activity outside the "day-to-day" assessment/intervention work of most school psychologists. That is, it should be concerned with an issue at the school or district level (i.e., systems level). The content of the project is open, but it is highly recommended that the project reflect your contributions to prevention or intervention programs concerning social, emotional, or academic development. The focus might be the student's involvement in school policies, needs assessment, program design, program implementation, or program evaluation.

Passing score on the PRAXIS exam in school psychology. Students are required to achieve a passing score (660) on the National School Psychology Examination administered by the Educational Testing Service.

Part IV. General Information Relevant to M.A. and Ed.S. Degree Candidates

A. Financial Assistance

Over the past five years or so, more than 75% of students in the school psychology program have received either a Teaching Assistantship (TA) or a Research Assistantship (RA). During the past 3 years, all students have received either a TA or RA. TA and RA positions require 20 hours work per week. Students with TA and RA positions receive tuition remission during the regular semesters (but not during Winter Session or Summer sessions) and receive approximately \$14,000 in support per year. Although every effort is made to find assistantships for returning students, students receiving a TA or RA one year are not guaranteed support the next year.

The majority of students in good standing typically receive financial support from either the School of Education or from various research and teaching centers associated with CHEP and the School of Education. Centers that often award assistantships to school psychology students are the [Center for Disability Studies](#), the [Center for Educational Research and Development](#), and the [Delaware Center for Teacher Education](#).

a. **RA Positions.** Students work on faculty projects for 20 hours per week. An attempt is made to match faculty and student interests, but students should consider this opportunity to develop competencies in new areas. Assignments are made by the Director of the School of Education, subject to the approval of the faculty member(s) directing the research project.

b. **TA positions.** Students assist in teaching undergraduate and/or graduate courses. Students may prepare and grade examinations under the supervision of the instructor, handle routine class procedures, counsel and tutor students, and possibly conduct classes. In some cases, time is split between two or more courses, but the total workload will not exceed 20 hours per week.

For questions or concerns about assistantships and fellowships, please contact [Dr. Gail Rys](#), Assistant Director of the School of Education.

Students who do not receive an assistantship often work part-time, but no more than 20 hours per week. In the past, several school psychology students without assistantships have worked on-campus as resident hall directors and in other departments, such as admissions, student services, and financial aid. Interviews for Residence Hall assistantships usually begin in early April. Interested students should contact the Assistant Director for Residence Life at the Office of Housing and Residence Life (831-2491).

B. Application for Advanced Degree

To initiate the process for degree conferral, candidates must submit an "Application for Advanced Degree" to the Office of Graduate Studies. The application deadlines are February 15 for Spring candidates, May 15 for Summer candidates, and September 15 for Winter candidates. The application must be signed by the candidate's adviser and by the Director or the Assistant Director of the School of Education. There is an application fee of \$35 for master's degree candidates and a \$95 fee for doctoral degree candidates. Payment is required when the application is submitted.

C. Housing

An Off-Campus Housing Service is provided by the [Office of Housing and Residence Life](#), which is located at 5 Courtney Street (off of Academy Street; across the street from the Student Center Parking Lot exit). The service provides a list of rooms, apartments, and houses available for renting or sharing. Listings are updated on a weekly basis. Housing lists can be obtained through the mail or at the office.

On-campus graduate housing is available for married and single graduate students in the form of one- and two-bedroom apartments. For a brochure and application form contact <http://www.udel.edu/hcs/housing/rental>.

D. Graduate Grade Point Average

Students must have a minimum overall cumulative grade point average of 3.0 to be eligible for the degree. In addition, the grades in courses applied toward the degree program must equal at least 3.0. All graduate-numbered courses taken with graduate student classification at the University of Delaware are applied to the cumulative index. Credit hours and courses for which the grad is below “C-“ do not count toward the degree even though the grade is applied to the overall index. Candidates should see that their instructors have submitted all final grades.

E. Time Limits for the Completion of Degree Requirements

Time limits for the completion of degree requirements begin with the date of matriculation and are specifically expressed in the student’s letter of admission. The University policy for students entering a master’s degree program is ten consecutive semesters to complete the degree requirements. Students who change their degree plan and have transferred from one degree program to another degree program are given ten consecutive semesters from the beginning of the first year in the latest program.

F. Extension of the Time Limit

An extension of time limit may be granted for circumstances beyond the student’s control. Requests for time extensions must be made in writing and approved by the student’s adviser and the Director or Assistant Director of the School of Education. The Director/Assistant Director will forward the request to the Office of Graduate Studies. The Office of Graduate Studies will determine the student’s eligibility for a time extension and will notify the student in writing of its decision to grant an extension of time.

G. Transfer of Credit Earned as a Continuing Education Student at the University of Delaware

Students who complete graduate credits with the classification of CEND (Continuing Education Nondegree) at the University of Delaware may use a maximum of 9 graduate credits earned with this classification toward their graduate degree. The CEND credits, grades, and quality points become a part of the student's academic record and grade point average. CEND credit can be transferred provided that: (a) the course was at the 600 or 800 level, (b) the course was taken within the time limit appropriate for the degree, (c) the course was approved by the student's adviser and the Director/Assistant Director of the School of Education, and (d) the course was in accord with the requirements for the degree.

H. Transfer of Credit from Another Institution

Graduate credit earned at another institution will be evaluated at the written request of the student. Such a request should be submitted first to his or her advisor using a Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit form. A maximum of 9 credits required for the degree will be accepted provided that such credits: (a) were earned with a grade of no less than B-, (b) are approved by the student's adviser and the Director/Assistant Director of the School of Education, (c) are in accord with the requirements of the degree, (d) are not older than five years, and (e) were completed at an accredited college or university. The credits, but not the grades or quality points, are transferable to University of Delaware graduate records. Graduate courses counted toward a degree received elsewhere may not be used. Credits earned at another institution while the student was classified as a continuing education student at that institution are not eligible to be transferred to one's graduate degree at the University of Delaware. Credits from institutions outside of the United States are generally not transferable to the University of Delaware.

I. Transfer of Credit from the Undergraduate Division at the University of Delaware

Students who wish to transfer credits from their undergraduate record to their graduate record may transfer a limited number by arranging with the department to have these courses approved by their instructors before the courses are taken. These courses must be at the 600-level, and the student must perform at the graduate level. They must be in excess of the total required for the baccalaureate degree, must have grades of no less than B-, and must not be older than five years. The credits, grades, and quality points will transfer.