

# **School Psychology Program**

## **Division of Counseling & Psychology in Education**

### **School of Education**

#### **The University of South Dakota**

### **School Psychology Program Requirements**

#### **Requirements for Residency**

For both doctoral and specialist-level programs, a full-time continuous residency is required for all students. This means students must carry a minimum of 9 graduate credit hours per semester in order to maintain full-time student status with the exception of their internship year.

#### **School Psychology Symposium**

The program offers continuing professional development opportunities for practicing school psychologists and other professionals in education and mental health fields. One example of these opportunities is the school psychology symposium, which is offered biannually, at which various current professional issues are presented and discussed. All students in the program are required to attend these symposiums.

#### **Student Program Progression Criteria**

Each year, student progress in the program and professional dispositions are carefully monitored and evaluated by the program faculty, using the **Student Progress Evaluation Form for Ed.S or Ph.D (Appendix A)** and **Professional Dispositions Assessment (PDA, Appendix B)**. The criteria for student retention and progression at each level in the program are as follows:

##### **Ed.S.**

1. Students must successfully complete a written preliminary examination and a preliminary interview during the first 12 graduate hours attempted in the program. Successful passage of the preliminary exam, demonstration of professional dispositions, and the maintenance of a grade point average of 3.0 or above allow the student to maintain full admission status and to become a candidate for degree. The preliminary interview with the School Psychology Committee, consisting of all program faculty, takes place at the beginning of the second semester of the first year. Failure to establish/maintain full admission status may result in 1) dismissal from the program or 2) continuation with a remediation plan (see Procedures for Remediation on page 10).
2. Students must maintain a grade of “B” or better in SPSY 761 Assessment of Intelligence, SPSY 795 School Psychology Practicum, SPSY 894S Internship/Field Experience, and COUN 786 Counseling Pre-Practicum in order to continue in the program. A student may repeat only one of these courses in which he/she obtained a “C” or below, and the failure to obtain a grade of “B” or better the second time will result in dismissal from the program (Students

may appeal the decision and make a request for exception with the School Psychology Committee).

3. Students who fail to maintain a minimum of a “B” average in all academic work completed during their first academic year or who earn a “C” or below in SPSY 761 Assessment of Intelligence will not be allowed to enter practicum (until the course is retaken and the grade improved to at least a “B”). Failure to meet the aforementioned criteria will result in review of their status in the Ed.S. program. Upon completion of the review, the School Psychology Committee may recommend 1) dismissal from the program or 2) continuation with a remediation plan.
4. Students who fail to maintain a minimum of a “B” average in all academic work completed during their second year of study, or who earn a “C” or below in SPSY 795 School Psychology Practicum, or who receive an overall rating of “unacceptable” (below 2) on PDA during practicum will not be allowed to enter internship. Failure to meet the aforementioned criteria will result in review of their status in the Ed.S. program. Upon completion of the review, the School Psychology Committee may recommend 1) dismissal from the program or 2) continuation with a remediation plan.
5. Students must consider themselves as practicing professionals at all times. Therefore, student professional dispositions are monitored in and out of class. If at any time, a student’s behavior breeches APA and NASP ethical and professional standards, the student is advised that s/he may be dismissed from the program through due process (see Professional Intervention and Due Process for Impaired School Psychology Students on page 22).

#### **Ph.D.**

1. Students must successfully complete a written preliminary examination and a preliminary interview during the first 12 graduate hours attempted in the program. Successful passage of the preliminary exam, demonstration of professional dispositions, and the maintenance of a grade point average of 3.5 or above allow the student to maintain full admission status. The preliminary interview with the School Psychology Committee, consisting of all program faculty, takes place at the beginning of the second semester of the first year. Failure to establish/maintain full admission status may result in 1) dismissal from the program or 2) continuation with a remediation plan (see Procedures for Remediation on page 10).
2. Students must maintain a grade of “B” or better in SPSY 761 Assessment of Intelligence, SPSY 795 School Psychology Practicum, SPSY 895 School Psychology Clinic Practicum, SPSY 894D Internship/Field Experience, COUN 786 Counseling Pre-Practicum, and COUN 795 Counseling Practicum in order to continue in the program. A student may repeat only one of these courses in which he/she obtained a “C” or below, and the failure to obtain a grade of “B” or better the second time will result in dismissal from the program (Students may appeal the decision and make a request for exception with the School Psychology Committee).

3. Students who fail to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.5 in all academic work completed during their first academic year or who earn a “C” or below in SPSY 761 Assessment of Intelligence will not be allowed to enter practicum (until the course is retaken and the grade improved to at least a “B”). Failure to meet the aforementioned criteria will result in review of their status in the Ph.D. program. Upon completion of the review, the School Psychology Committee may recommend 1) dismissal from the program or 2) continuation with a remediation plan.
4. Students who fail to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.5 in all academic work completed during their second year of study, or who earn a “C” or below in SPSY 795 School Psychology Practicum, or who receive an overall rating of “unacceptable” (below 2) on PDA during practicum will not be allowed to enter clinic practicum. Failure to meet the aforementioned criteria will result in review of their status in the Ph.D. program. Upon completion of the review, the School Psychology Committee may recommend 1) dismissal from the program or 2) continuation with a remediation plan.
5. Students who fail to maintain a GPA of 3.5 or above in all academic work completed during their first three academic years, or who earn a “C” or below in SPSY 895 Clinic Practicum, or who receive an overall rating of “unacceptable” (below 2) on PDA during clinic practicum will not be allowed to enter internship. Failure to meet the aforementioned criteria will result in review of their status in the Ph.D. program. Upon completion of the review, the School Psychology Committee may recommend 1) dismissal from the program or 2) continuation with a remediation plan.
6. Students must consider themselves as practicing professionals at all times. Therefore, student professional dispositions are monitored in and out of class. If at any time, their behavior breeches APA and NASP ethical and professional standards, students are advised that they may be dismissed from the program through due process (see Professional Intervention and Due Process for Impaired School Psychology Students on page 22).

## **Procedures for Remediation**

For those students who do not meet the criteria for progression and retention, the following procedures will be implemented with all steps documented in writing and communicated to the students during an annual conference with their advisor and/or other appropriate program faculty.

1. The student will be notified in writing of the specific problem areas by his/her advisor (e.g., Student Progress Evaluation Form, Appendix A).
2. A written plan to remediate the problem will be developed by the School Psychology Committee. The plan will specify problem areas, courses of action, and a date for re-evaluation. During the remedial period, the student will be on probation.
3. Upon completion of the re-evaluation, the committee will recommend one of the following options:

- Determine that remediation has been successful and the student is allowed to continue in the program.
- Continue remediation with an updated remedial plan and a new date set for re-evaluation.
- Dismissal from the program. The student may appeal the decision and make a request for exception with the School Psychology Committee.

## **Requirements for Graduation**

### **Ed.S.**

1. Students must obtain an overall GPA of 3.0 or above.
2. Students must obtain a grade of “B” or better in SPSY 761 Assessment of Intelligence, SPSY 795 School Psychology Practicum, SPSY 894S Internship/Field Experience, and COUN 786 Counseling Pre-Practicum.
3. Successful completion of the comprehensive exam. The comprehensive exam must be taken during the last semester prior to internship (SPSY 894S).
4. Students must take the Praxis II exam and obtain a passing score (165) prior to graduation. An official copy of the exam results must be submitted to their advisor.
5. Successful completion of all course requirements at the Ed.S. level.

### **Ph.D.**

1. Students must obtain an overall GPA of 3.5 or above.
2. Students must obtain a grade of “B” or better in SPSY 761 Assessment of Intelligence, SPSY 795 School Psychology Practicum, SPSY 895 School Psychology Clinic Practicum, SPSY 894D Internship/Field Experience, COUN 786 Counseling Pre-Practicum, and COUN 795 Counseling Practicum.
3. Successful completion of the comprehensive exam. The comprehensive exam must be taken during the last semester prior to internship (SPSY 894D).
4. Students must take the Praxis II exam and obtain a passing score (165) prior to graduation. An official copy of the exam results must be submitted to their advisor.
5. Successful completion of all course requirements at the Ph.D. level.
6. Successful oral defense of the dissertation.

## **Special Provisions**

### **Transfer of Intellectual Assessment Credits**

Students who have a Master's or Specialist degree in school psychology or related areas from other universities and who intend to transfer their previous course work in assessment of intelligence must submit a tape of an administration of the WISC-IV, its protocol, and a written psychological report of the test results. The tape, protocol, and report will be reviewed by the School Psychology Committee with respect to the skill competency of the student to determine if the requirement of SPSY 761 Assessment of Intelligence can be waived. If deemed necessary, the committee may request that the student take SPSY 761 to remedy his/her deficiencies in basic testing and interpretive skills.

### **Transfer of Internship Credits**

Students who have a Master's or Specialist degree in school psychology from other universities and who have completed a year internship as part of their degree requirements shall be allowed to transfer no more than a total of 750 clock hours toward their internship hours at the Ph.D. level. This provision also applies to those students who completed the specialist degree in school psychology at USD.

### **Transfer of Credits from Master's and Specialist Work from Other Universities**

Students who desire to transfer their graduate credits from other universities toward their Specialist degree or Doctoral degree in School Psychology at USD must submit to their program advisor a course syllabus and/or an official course description of each course that they intend to request for transfer to verify the equivalence of the course content. The grade for each course must be at least a B (3.0) and earned within the last ten years. The evidence of course equivalence will be forwarded to the School Psychology Committee for final decisions.

### **Registration for Dissertation Credits**

In line with the SOE policy, effective as of October 10, 2007, doctoral students in school psychology will not be allowed to take more than nine (9) dissertation hours until their proposals are approved by their committees. In addition, students will be required to take one hour of dissertation every semester up to a total of 20 credit hours if their dissertations are not completed within a minimum of 15 credit hours.

### **Doctoral Students Receiving Extensions Beyond Seven Years**

As per the graduate school handbook, a student has seven years to complete all of their program requirements including comprehensive exams and masters or doctoral theses. For doctoral students, the school psychology program will not honor a request for an extension if the student has not successfully defended their doctoral dissertation proposal.