

Description of Directed Study (Psy.D.)

Goals and Objectives

The directed study is a milestone project of the PsyD program that is designed to be completed in the spring/summer prior to the student's fourth year of study. The primary objective of the directed study project is to provide the trainee with a supervised experience that involves gaining special expertise in a specific substantive area of clinical psychology. Although several formats are acceptable for accomplishing this objective, the overarching goal is consistent with the PsyD program mission of training professional practitioners to be informed by science. Consistent with the program's philosophy, directed study projects are intended to demonstrate the student's level of facility and sophistication in synthesizing an empirical knowledge base in a manner commensurate with doctoral-level training. Therefore, it is expected that completing the directed study will involve critically reviewing literature in the selected topic area.

Guidelines and Requirements

A scholarly paper, which is the product of the directed study, may be in one of several formats including: a) a literature review; b) an empirical study; c) a case study; d) a treatment manual; or e) some other format approved by the faculty advisor (e.g., designing a novel intervention with a literature basis). The directed study is an independent project conducted under the direction/supervision of a two-member faculty committee: the primary faculty advisor (chair of the committee); and a second faculty member who serves as an advisor to the project (committee member). A prospectus form signed by the student and relevant faculty members must be filed with the Academic Affairs office by September 1 of the academic year in which the directed study is conducted or the student's registration for directed study may be retracted. It is strongly recommended that the student consult closely with the faculty committee (especially with the chair) to develop and adhere to a structured timeline for completion.

The directed study document must be prepared in accordance with the most recently published APA style manual, and must be a minimum of 20 pages of text (excluding references). A recommended time line is presented on the prospectus form. Final documents are due no later than June 30. The committee may choose to adopt an alternate page minimum requirement or alternative deadlines for submission of the final document. Such requirements are to be specified on the prospectus form. Students must submit one hard copy of their document to each committee member. In the event that the two committee members do not agree on the final (pass/fail) grade, a third reader will be assigned by the Academic Affairs office to assist in grade determination.

In terms of completing the project by the due date, students are encouraged to begin discussing their areas of interest and potential topics with the primary faculty advisor (chair) not later than May or June in the summer following the completion of their second academic year of study. To assist students in structuring and developing their projects and to assist faculty in the evaluation process, several resource documents have been identified by project type. If the empirical study option is selected, a research report of publication quality is expected for the written product (see Bem, 1987 for guidelines on writing an empirical article). If the literature review option is chosen, it is expected that the review be comprehensive, including primary references (see Bem,

1995 for guidelines on writing a review article). A comprehensive literature review is contrasted with reviews that only include a limited cross-section of the literature (i.e., highlighting 2-3 exemplary studies) or focus exclusively on secondary texts. For the case study option, the project is expected to be prepared as a publication-quality report and/or include a comprehensive literature review to support the conceptual components of the case. The structure recommended to authors at the *Clinical Case Study* journal's website may be used as a framework from which to conceptualize some important elements of a formal written case study. Students can also consult the Reitman and Passeri (2007) article as an example of a published case study. If the treatment manual option is chosen, it is expected that the manual be of comparable quality to treatment manuals that are published and currently utilized in the field of clinical psychology (e.g., Craske & Barlow, 2007; Milrod, Busch, Cooper, & Shapiro, 1997). Students should also ask faculty committee members to identify other relevant resources by content area (e.g., a literature review published in the area of forensic psychology).

Resource Materials

Bem, D. J. (1987). Writing the empirical journal article. In M. P. Zanna & J. M. Darley (Eds.), *The complete academic: A practical guide for the beginning social scientist* (pp. 171-201). New York: Random House.

Bem, D. (1995). Writing a review article for *Psychological Bulletin*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 118(2), 172-177.

Exemplars of published literature reviews

Patterson, G. R., DeBaryshe, B. D., & Ramey, E. (1989). A developmental perspective on antisocial behavior. *American Psychologist*, 44, 329-335.

Richters, J., & Pellegrini, D. (1989). Depressed mothers' judgments about their children: An examination of the depression-distortion hypothesis. *Child Development*, 60(5), 1068-1075.

Craske, M. G. & Barlow, D.H. (2007). *Mastery of your anxiety and panic: Therapist guide* (4th ed.), New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Milrod, B.L., Busch, F.N., Cooper, A.M., & Shapiro, T. (1997). *Manual of Panic-Focused Psychodynamic Psychotherapy*. Washington: American Psychiatric Press.

Reitman, D., & Passeri, C. (2007). Use of stimulus fading and functional assessment to treat pill refusal with an 8-year-old boy diagnosed with ADHD. *Clinical Case Studies*, 7, 224-237.