

PROGRAM AIM

The aim of the doctor of psychology (Psy.D.) program in school psychology is to prepare health service psychologists to meet the educational, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of the individuals, families, and educational personnel they serve. The program focuses on addressing, assessing, and evaluating attainment of the Profession-Wide Competencies (PWC) and Discipline-Specific Knowledges (DSK) as outlined by the Standards of Accreditation (SoA) of the American Psychological Association (APA) through the lens of the practitioner-informed-by-science-training model.

Accordingly, the aim of the doctoral program in school psychology is to train health service psychologists who demonstrate the following knowledges and competencies:

Benchmark I. The breadth of scientific psychology through foundations in the Discipline-Specific Knowledge (DSK) areas, including:

- Category 1. History and Systems of Psychology;
- Category 2. Basic Content Areas in Scientific Psychology;
- Category 3. Integrative Knowledge in Scientific Psychology; and
- Category 4. Research Methods, Statistical Analysis, and Psychometrics

Benchmark II. The foundations of practice in health service psychology, within school psychology. This includes the following four indicators:

- 1) ethical and legal standards;
- 2) individual and cultural diversity;
- 3) professional values and attitudes; and
- 4) communication and interpersonal skills.

Benchmark III. Broad and general competencies necessary for effective work in practitioner-informed-by-science roles, including the following four indicators:

- 1) assessment,
- 2) intervention,
- 3) supervision, and
- 4) consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills

Benchmark IV. The ability to apply research and statistics to inform professional practice.

Consistent with doctor of psychology (Psy.D.) training, our program prepares graduates for entry-level practice as health service psychologists who will be lifelong consumers of research. Following degree conferral, our graduates are eligible for national certification as a school psychologist and licensure as a psychologist. They are well-prepared to practice in a wide-range of health service psychology settings, including schools, independent practice, community mental health agencies, and hospitals.

***Note:** The Minimum Level of Achievement (MLA) for all assessments of competency is 80%. The reader is referred to the Program Remediation Policy for information regarding support for and remediation of candidates who fail to attain the MLA.*

I. Profession-Wide Competencies

The Standards of Accreditation (SoA) of the American Psychological Association (APA) recognize nine **Profession-Wide Competencies**, which serve as the foundation of health service psychology.

1. Research: Substantive knowledge of scientific methods, procedures, and practices.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate competency as follows:

- Demonstrate the substantially independent ability to formulate research or other scholarly activities (e.g., critical literature reviews, dissertation, efficacy studies, clinical case studies, theoretical papers, program evaluation projects, program development projects) that are of sufficient quality and rigor to have the potential to contribute to the scientific, psychological, or professional knowledge base.
- Conduct research or other scholarly activities.
- Critically evaluate and disseminate research or other scholarly activity via professional publication and presentation at the local (including the host institution), regional, or national level.

2. Ethical and legal standards: Responds professionally in demonstrating ethical and legal standards in increasingly complex situations with a greater degree of independence across all levels of training.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate competency as follows:

- Be knowledgeable of and act in accordance with each of the following:
 - the current version of the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct;
 - relevant laws, regulations, rules, and policies governing health service psychology at the organizational, local, state, regional, and federal levels; and
 - relevant professional standards and guidelines.
- Recognize ethical dilemmas as they arise, and apply ethical decision-making processes in order to resolve the dilemmas.
- Conduct self in an ethical manner in all professional activities.

3. Individual and cultural diversity: Demonstrates knowledge, awareness, sensitivity, and skills when working with diverse individuals and communities who embody a variety of cultural and personal backgrounds and characteristics.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate competency as follows:

- Understand how their own personal/cultural history, attitudes, and biases may affect how they understand and interact with people different from themselves.
- Have knowledge regarding the current theoretical and empirical knowledge base as it relates to addressing diversity in all professional activities, including research, training, supervision/consultation, and service.
- Demonstrate competency in integrating awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural differences in the conduct of professional roles (e.g., research, services, and other professional activities). This includes the application of a framework for working

effectively with areas of individual and cultural diversity not previously encountered over the course of their careers. Also included is the ability to work effectively with individuals whose group membership, demographic characteristics, or worldviews create conflict with their own.

- Demonstrate the requisite knowledge base, ability to articulate an approach to working effectively with diverse individuals and groups, and application of this approach effectively in their professional work.

- 4. Professional values and attitudes:** Responds professionally in demonstrating professional values and attitudes in increasingly complex situations with a greater degree of independence across all levels of training.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate competency as follows:

- Behave in ways that reflect the values and attitudes of psychology, including integrity, deportment, professional identity, accountability, lifelong learning, and concern for the welfare of others.
- Engage in self-reflection regarding one's personal and professional functioning; engage in activities to maintain and to improve performance, well-being, and professional effectiveness.
- Actively seek and demonstrate openness and responsiveness to feedback and supervision.
- Respond professionally in increasingly complex situations with a greater degree of independence as they progress across levels of training.

- 5. Communication and interpersonal skills:** Responds professionally in demonstrating communication and interpersonal skills in increasingly complex situations with a greater degree of independence across all levels of training.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate competency as follows:

- Develop and maintain effective relationships with a wide range of individuals, including colleagues, communities, organizations, supervisors, supervisees, and those receiving professional services.
- Produce and comprehend oral, nonverbal, and written communications that are informative and well-integrated; demonstrate a thorough grasp of professional language and concepts.
- Demonstrate effective interpersonal skills and the ability to manage difficult communication well.

6. **Assessment:** Responds professionally in demonstrating competence in conducting evidence-based assessment consistent with the scope of health service psychology.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate competency as follows:

- Demonstrate current knowledge of diagnostic classification systems, functional and dysfunctional behaviors, including consideration of client strengths and psychopathology.
- Demonstrate understanding of human behavior within its context (e.g., family, social, societal, and cultural).
- Demonstrate the ability to apply the knowledge of functional and dysfunctional behaviors including context to the assessment and/or diagnostic process.
- Select and apply assessment methods that draw from the best available empirical literature and that reflect:
 - the science of measurement and psychometrics
 - collect relevant data using multiple sources and methods appropriate to the identified goals and questions of the assessment
 - relevant diversity characteristics of the service recipient
- Interpret assessment results:
 - following current research and professional standards and guidelines
 - to inform case conceptualization, classification, and recommendations
 - guarding against decision-making biases
 - distinguishing the aspects of assessment that are subjective from those that are objective
- Communicate orally and in written documents the findings and implications of the assessment in an accurate and effective manner sensitive to a range of audiences.

7. **Intervention:** Implements evidence-based interventions with a wide variety of theoretical orientations or approaches and directed at the individual, family, group, and system levels.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate competency as follows:

- Establish and maintain effective relationships with the recipients of psychological services.
- Develop evidence-based intervention plans specific to the service delivery goals.
- Implement interventions informed by the current scientific literature, assessment findings, diversity characteristics, and contextual variables.
- Demonstrate the ability to apply the relevant research literature to clinical decision-making.
- Modify and adapt evidence-based approaches effectively when a clear evidence-base is lacking.
- Evaluate intervention effectiveness, and adapt intervention goals and methods consistent with ongoing evaluation.

- 8. Supervision:** Supervision is grounded in science and integral to the activities of health service psychology.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate competency as follows:

- Demonstrate knowledge of supervision models and practices.

- 9. Consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills:** Consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills as integral to the activities of health service psychologists to collaboratively address a problem, seek or share knowledge, or promote effectiveness in professional activities.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate competency as follows:

- Demonstrate knowledge and respect for the roles and perspectives of other professions.
- Demonstrates knowledge of consultation models and practices.

II. Discipline-Specific Knowledge

The Standards of Accreditation (SoA) of the American Psychological Association (APA) recognizes four categories of **Discipline-Specific Knowledge** integral to the training of health service psychologists.

Note: A final grade of 80% or higher is needed in order to pass the course and establish that a student has met the required minimal level of achievement (MLA) for attainment of the Discipline-Specific Knowledge.

Category 1: History and Systems of Psychology

The first category of discipline-specific knowledge must result in substantial knowledge in:

- History and Systems of Psychology, including the origins and development of major ideas in the discipline of psychology.

Category 2: Basic Content Areas in Scientific Psychology

The second category of discipline-specific knowledge must result in substantial knowledge in:

- Affective Aspects of Behavior, including topics such as affect, mood, and emotion.
- Biological Aspects of Behavior, including multiple biological underpinnings of behavior, such as neural, physiological, anatomical, and genetic aspects of behavior.
- Cognitive Aspects of Behavior, including topics such as learning, memory, thought processes, and decision-making.
- Developmental Aspects of Behavior, including transitions, growth, and development across an individual's lifespan.
- Social Aspects of Behavior, including topics such as group processes, attributions, discrimination, and attitudes.

Category 3: Advanced Integrative Knowledge of Basic Discipline-Specific Content Areas

The third category of discipline-specific knowledge must result in substantial understanding and competence in the following areas:

- Advanced Integrative Knowledge of Basic Discipline-Specific Content Areas, including graduate-level scientific knowledge that entails integration of multiple basic discipline-specific content areas identified in Category 2 (i.e., integration of at least two of: affective, biological, cognitive, social, or developmental aspects of behavior).

Category 4: Research Methods, Statistical Analysis, and Psychometrics

The fourth category of discipline-specific knowledge must result in substantial understanding and competence in the following areas:

- Research Methods, including topics such as strengths, limitations, interpretation, and technical aspects of rigorous case study; correlational, descriptive, and experimental research designs; measurement techniques; sampling; replication; theory testing; qualitative methods; meta-analysis; and quasi-experimentation.
- Statistical Analysis, including topics such as quantitative, mathematical modeling and analysis of psychological data, statistical description and inference, univariate and multivariate analysis, null-hypothesis testing and its alternatives, power, and estimation.
- Psychometrics, including topics such as theory and techniques of psychological measurement, scale and inventory construction, reliability, validity, evaluation of measurement quality, classical and contemporary measurement theory, and standardization.

