



The University of Texas  
Rio Grande Valley

.....  
College of Education  
& P-16 Integration

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & SCHOOL SERVICES

# School Psychology Master of Arts Program Handbook



Updated August 2020



## UTRGV

Department of Human Development & School Services

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School Psychology Program Website:

<https://www.utrgv.edu/hdss/degrees-programs/graduate-programs/traditional-programs/master-of-arts-in-school-psychology/index.htm>

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## **Introduction and Overview**

The purpose of this Handbook is to describe the content, requirements, expectations, policies, and procedures of the Master of Arts in School Psychology (MA) program at UTRGV. Students are expected to read this Handbook carefully, as they will be responsible for knowing the content herein. Further, students should refer to this Handbook when they have questions about the program, and faculty should refer to this Handbook in order to facilitate student advising.

Please note: In addition to the policies and procedures outlined in this Handbook, students (and prospective students) are expected to abide by the policies and procedures described in the UTRGV Graduate Catalog.

## **Organizational Structure**

The School Psychology program at UTRGV is located in the Department of Human Development and School Services, which is one of five departments housed in the College of Education and P-16 Integration (CEP). The other departments are Bilingual and Literacy Studies; Counseling; Organization and School Leadership; and Teaching and Learning.

The main office of the Department of Human Development and School Services is located on the Edinburg Campus in the Education Building, Office 1.302. Dr. John Lowdermilk currently serves as the Department Chair and Dr. Nancy Peña Razo, currently serves as the Graduate Advisor of Record and School Psychology Program Coordinator.

## **The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Mission Statement**

To transform the Rio Grande Valley, the Americas, and the world through an innovative and accessible educational environment that promotes student success, research, creative works, health and well-being, community engagement sustainable development and commercialization of university discoveries.

## **The College of Education and P-16 Integration Mission Statement**

The College of Education and P-16 Integration's mission is to

- provide rigorous programs of study founded on the belief that scholarship and life experience are strengthened when integrated, that diversity in all its manifestations is a fundamental component of excellence in education, and that partnerships that foster authentic social and community engagement is vital;
- engage in continuous improvement through curricular and technological innovation in order to remain responsive to the changing educational and global reality;
- develop highly qualified, multi-culturally responsive and sustaining, innovative scholars, learning leaders, and education professionals who challenge the status quo and serve as change agents who make a difference by promoting social justice,

embracing diversity in its broadest definition, inspiring thought leadership, and pursuing lifelong learning; and

- lead through evidence-based decision making and data literacy in order to share our story with the academic and broader research communities, as well as our public-school partners, families, and policy makers.

## **Department of Human Development and School Services Mission Statement**

In the Human Development and School Services Department (HDSS), you will have a chance to learn how to develop a healthy knowledge across cultures and lifespans, and how you will be able to apply them in schools and other educational related settings. HDSS Students acquire the practical knowledge, skill set, and flexible way of thinking. They also receive the understanding of working with people, students with their development in social and school environments.

## **The School Psychology Program at UTRGV**

The School Psychology program is designed to provide the academic and practical training necessary to become licensed as a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists. In the state of Texas, the license that is required to provide school psychological services in Texas public schools is the LSSP. Graduates also are eligible to apply for certification as a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP), which is a nationally-recognized professional certification granted by the National Association of School Psychologists. The program includes coursework and field-based experiences related to psychological assessment, intervention, development, psychopathology, research, statistics, and professional issues. Students also complete a full-time internship in a school setting. Due to the clinical nature of this program and number of hours required, the degree does not have a Thesis option

The UTRGV School Psychology program focuses on preparing students to work with children, adolescents, and families from diverse socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds. School Psychologists help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. They collaborate with educators, parents, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community for all students.

## **Program Admission Requirements**

Prospective students must meet the UTRGV Graduate School admission requirements. In addition to the UTRGV Graduate School requirements, applicants must be admitted to the School Psychology Program. See applications procedures below.

1. Applicants must submit an application through the [UTRGV Graduate College website: https://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/](https://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/)
2. The application must include the following:

- a. Completed application forms.
- b. Bachelor's or Master's degree in a related field preferred.
- c. Undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- d. Graduate Record Examination (GRE)-scores are valid for 5 years.
- e. Official transcripts from each institution attended (must be submitted directly to UTRGV).
- f. Letter of intent detailing professional goals and reasons for pursuing the graduate degree.
- g. Three letters of recommendation from individuals in a position to judge the professional and academic potential of the applicant. At least one should be from a university professor in the applicant's major area of study (if applicant is a recent graduate).
- h. Cleared Criminal Background Check

\*\*The application is not complete until all materials have been received. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

## Application Deadlines

All application materials for the School Psychology Program are reviewed once a year under the Office of Graduate Studies deadlines for fall. Once the application is complete the School Psychology Program Coordinator and faculty will review the files and make admission decisions. Prospective students will be informed of the admission decisions as soon as possible after the application deadline has passed.

For additional information regarding the application *process*, please go to the following website for the [UTRGV School Psychology Program](http://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/for-future-students/graduate-programs/program-requirements/school-psychology-ma/index.htm)  
<http://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/for-future-students/graduate-programs/program-requirements/school-psychology-ma/index.htm>

## Criminal Background Check

School districts require a criminal history review/criminal background check before allowing university students to complete field-based experiences on their campuses. If a student is unable to obtain a field-based placement (e.g., practicum or internship placement) due to results of a criminal history review/criminal background check, that student will not be able to meet the School Psychology's program requirements. If a student cannot complete course-required fieldwork because of their criminal history, the student will be required to withdraw from the course. The student may retake the course if and when the criminal history changes, allowing them to be cleared by the school district. If the offense is one that will preclude any further fieldwork, the student will be dismissed from the School Psychology Program for failure to be fit to practice. Please refer to Fitness to Practice Policy.

In addition, students need to be aware of the provisions in Occupational License HB 1508. As a point of information required by the Texas Occupations Code, Section 1, Chapter 53, Sections 53.151 – 53.152, as amended in 2017 by HB 1508, if you are applying for admission to or currently

enrolled in an educational program that may prepare an individual for an initial occupational license as defined under Texas Occupations Code Section 58.001 and/or if you later decide to change to an educational program that prepares you for an initial occupational license as defined under Texas Occupations Code Section 58.001, in accordance with state law, please be advised of the following:

1. An individual who has been convicted of an offense may be ineligible for issuance of an occupational license upon completion of the educational program.
2. Each licensing authority that may issue an occupational license to an individual who completes an educational program must establish guidelines that state the reasons a particular crime is considered to relate to a particular license and any other criterion that affects the decisions of the licensing authority.
3. Local or county licensing authorities may issue additional guidelines related to criminal history. Applicants should contact their respective local or county licensing authority for more details.
4. A person may request a criminal history evaluation letter regarding the personal eligibility for a license issued by a licensing authority under Texas Occupations Code Section 53.102.

Applicants are encouraged to review all applicable eligibility requirements related to the respective occupational license. Questions related to eligibility requirements should be directed to the applicable licensing authority.

The School Psychology Program leads to licensure as a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) issued by the [Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists](#).

## **School Psychology Program Philosophy and Model**

The purpose of the School Psychology Master of Arts degree program is to prepare school psychologists to work with children, adolescents, and families from diverse socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The UTRGV School Psychology program is in accordance with the scientist-practitioner model of training, which emphasizes school psychologists to use empirical research in practice. The program training includes preparation in mental health and educational interventions, child development, learning, behavior, motivation, curriculum and instruction, assessment, consultation, collaboration, school law, and school systems. The program uses a developmental approach in which this foundational knowledge must be demonstrated before learning how to translate this knowledge into applied skills (e.g., psychoeducational assessment and intervention).

The goal of the School Psychology program is to produce graduates with the necessary skills to improve educational and psychological outcomes of children in the Rio Grande Valley, the state of Texas, and beyond. Graduates must be able to facilitate the academic, social, behavioral, and emotional development of children and adolescents through multiple modalities, including assessment, individual and group counseling, consultation, systems-level intervention, and program evaluation. Paramount to these activities will be the ability to apply knowledge of both psychological and educational principles in a way that leads to informed decision making.

Within this larger context, the curriculum is designed to capture the *Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists* (NASP, 2020). Students will demonstrate knowledge and skills in the following areas:

#### Domain 1: Data-Based Decision Making

- a. School psychologists understand and utilize assessment methods for identifying strengths and needs; developing effective interventions, services, and programs; and measuring progress and outcomes within a multitiered system of supports.
- b. School psychologists use a problem-solving framework as the basis for all professional activities.
- c. School psychologists systematically collect data from multiple sources as a foundation for decision-making at the individual, group, and systems levels, and they consider ecological factors (e.g., classroom, family, and community characteristics) as a context for assessment and intervention.

#### Domain 2: Consultation and Collaboration

- a. School psychologists understand varied models and strategies of consultation and collaboration applicable to individuals, families, groups, and systems, as well as methods to promote effective implementation of services.
- b. As part of a systematic and comprehensive process of effective decision making and problem solving that permeates all aspects of service delivery, school psychologists demonstrate skills to consult, collaborate, and communicate effectively with others.

#### Domain 3: Academic Interventions and Instructional Supports

- a. School psychologists understand the biological, cultural, and social influences on academic skills; human learning, cognitive, and developmental processes; and evidence-based curricula and instructional strategies.
- b. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, use assessment and data collection methods to implement and evaluate services that support academic skill development in children.

#### Domain 4: Mental and Behavioral Health Services and Interventions

- a. School psychologists understand the biological, cultural, developmental, and social influences on mental and behavioral health, behavioral and emotional impacts on learning, and evidence-based strategies to promote social–emotional functioning.
- b. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, design, implement, and evaluate services that promote resilience and positive behavior, support socialization and adaptive skills, and enhance mental and behavioral health.

#### Domain 5: School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning

- a. School psychologists understand systems structures, organization, and theory; general and special education programming; implementation science; and evidence-based, school-wide practices that promote learning, positive behavior, and mental health.
- b. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, develop and implement practices and strategies to create and maintain safe, effective, and supportive learning environments for students and school staff.



#### Domain 6: Services to Promote Safe and Supportive Schools

- a. School psychologists understand principles and research related to social–emotional well-being, resilience and risk factors in learning, mental and behavioral health, services in schools and communities to support multitiered prevention and health promotion, and evidence-based strategies for creating safe and supportive schools.
- b. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, promote preventive and responsive services that enhance learning, mental and behavioral health, and psychological and physical safety and implement effective crisis prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.

#### Domain 7: Family, School, and Community Collaboration

- a. School psychologists understand principles and research related to family systems, strengths, needs, and cultures; evidence-based strategies to support positive family influences on children’s learning and mental health; and strategies to develop collaboration between families and schools.
- b. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, design, implement, and evaluate services that respond to culture and context. They facilitate family and school partnerships and interactions with community agencies to enhance academic and social–behavioral outcomes for children.

#### Domain 8: Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations

- a. School psychologists have knowledge of individual differences, abilities, disabilities, and other diverse characteristics and the impact they have on development and learning. They also understand principles and research related to diversity in children, families, schools, and communities, including factors related to child development, religion, culture and cultural identity, race, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, and other variables.
- b. School psychologists implement evidence-based strategies to enhance services in both general and special education and address potential influences related to diversity.
- c. School psychologists demonstrate skills to provide professional services that promote effective functioning for individuals, families, and schools with diverse characteristics, cultures, and backgrounds through an ecological lens across multiple contexts.
- d. School psychologists recognize that equitable practices for diverse student populations, respect for diversity in development and learning, and advocacy for social justice are foundational to effective service delivery. While equality ensures that all children have the same access to general and special educational opportunities, equity ensures that each student receives what they need to benefit from these opportunities.

#### Domain 9: Research and Evidence-Based Practice

- a. School psychologists have knowledge of research design, statistics, measurement, and varied data collection and analysis techniques sufficient for understanding research, interpreting data, and evaluating programs in applied settings.
- b. As scientist practitioners, school psychologists evaluate and apply research as a foundation for service delivery and, in collaboration with others, use various techniques and

technology resources for data collection, measurement, and analysis to support effective practices at the individual, group, and/or systems levels.

#### Domain 10: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice

- a. School psychologists have knowledge of the history and foundations of school psychology; multiple service models and methods; ethical, legal, and professional standards; and other factors related to professional identity and effective practice as school psychologists.
- b. School psychologists provide services consistent with ethical, legal, and professional standards; engage in responsive ethical and professional decision-making; collaborate with other professionals; and apply professional work characteristics needed for effective practice as school psychologists, including effective interpersonal skills, responsibility, adaptability, initiative, dependability, technological competence, advocacy skills, respect for human diversity, and a commitment to social justice and equity.

#### Additional (non-NASP) Domain: Information Technology:

- a. School psychologists have knowledge of information sources and technology relevant to their work.
- b. School psychologists access, evaluate, and utilize information sources and technology in ways that safeguard or enhance the quality of services.

## **Curriculum**

The National Association of School Psychologists and the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists both require master's-level programs in School Psychology to include at least 60 hours of coursework, including practicum and internship. These entities also provide very specific domains of competence that must be reflected in the curriculum. The School Psychology degree requirements and curriculum reflect these standards, not only to ensure breadth of training, but also to facilitate the licensure of program graduates.

The curriculum is designed such that courses and prerequisites are deliberately placed to reflect increasing complexity, cumulative building of knowledge and skills, and the development from student to professional. All requirements must be completed within one seven-year period. Course work or other program requirements older than seven years will not meet graduation requirements. A degree plan should be completed and signed by the student the first semester the student enrolls.

The following 69 semester credit hours of coursework are required for all student in the School Psychology program:

- EPSY 6301: Child and Adolescent Psychopathology
- EPSY 6310: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues in School Psychology
- EPSY 6314: Academic Assessment and Intervention
- EPSY 6315: Behavior Assessment and Intervention
- EPSY 6320: Consultation and Collaboration in Inclusive Settings
- EPSY 6340: Mental Health Services in the Schools

- EPSY 6350: Introduction to Statistics
- EPSY 6358: Introduction to Research
- EPSY 6370: Psychological Measurement
- EPSY 6380: Introduction to Cognitive and Academic Assessment
- EPSY 6381: Advanced Cognitive and Academic Assessment
- EPSY 6382: Bilingual and Multicultural Psychoeducational Assessment
- EPSY 6383: Personality and Behavior Assessment of Children and Adolescents
- EPSY 7340: Practicum in School Psychology
- PSYC 6320: Neuropsychology
- PSYC 6325: Conditioning and Learning
- PSYC 6330: Developmental Psychology
- COUN 6327: Theories/Methods/Techniques I
- COUN 6328: Theories/Methods/Techniques II
- EDUL 6305: Socio-Cultural Contexts of Education
- EDUL 6325: Instructional Leadership  
OR EDUL 6330: Instructional Leadership for Diverse Learners
- EPSY 7350: Internship in School Psychology I
- EPSY 7351: Internship in School Psychology II

**Courses with Prerequisites:**

EPSY 6380 - Intro Cog/Aca Assessment (Fall) Prereq: EPSY 6370

EPSY 6381 - Advance Cog/Aca Assessmt (Spring) Prereq: EPSY 6370, 6380

EPSY 6382 - Billing Multicult Assess (Fall) Prereq: EPSY 6370, 6380, 6381

EPSY 6383 - Personality Assmt Child (Spring) Prereq: EPSY 6370, 6380, 6381, 6301

EPSY 6340 – Mental Health Services in Schools (Summer) Prereq: EPSY 6301, EPSY 6310

EPSY 7340 – Practicum in School Psychology (Spring) Prereq: Permission

COUN 6328 – Theories/Methods/Techniques II (Spring) Prereq: COUN 6327

All Coursework must be completed prior to enrolling in the following:

**EPSY 7350** – School Psychology Internship I

**EPSY 7351** – School Psychology Internship II

Multicultural and diversity issues are addressed explicitly in EPSY 6382 (Bilingual and Multicultural Psychoeducational Assessment), but also are discussed in each course as they relate to developmental and learning theories, assessment, and counseling. For example, courses in development and learning theories address the applicability or variability of theories with different cultural groups; assessment courses examine issues of bias and differential performance patterns among different groups; and counseling courses examine issues of communication, acculturation, and cultural beliefs as they pertain to building therapeutic relationships and conceptualizing pathology. Further, practicum and internship experiences provide additional opportunities to understand diversity by providing students opportunities to work with children and families from a range of socioeconomic, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds.

## Practicum and Internship

Practicum and internship are culminating, field-based experiences in which knowledge and skills acquired in coursework are applied in professional settings, and in which the student's professional identity is developed.

### Practicum

The Practicum is the spring semester of the last year of coursework. Practicum sites are typically assigned by university faculty. The Practicum course will meet regularly in order to discuss professional and ethical issues that arise in Practicum settings, present case studies, and learn new assessment and intervention methods. Students must keep a detailed log of their activities during Practicum.

### Internship

The Internship is taken across two semesters (for a total of 6 hours). The Internship can be taken only when all other required coursework has been completed. Students are responsible for securing Internship sites, with assistance from university faculty. The Internship must consist of at least 1200 clock hours of experience (600 clock hours per semester over the course of two semesters), at least 600 of which must occur in a public-school setting. For many students, it is likely that all 1200 hours will occur in a public-school setting. Consistent with the Rules and Regulations of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists, all Internship hours must be gained in no more than two settings (a school district counts as one setting), and the Internship must be completed in no less than one academic year, or more than two academic years. All Internship hours occurring in a public-school setting must be supervised by a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (or equivalent, if the Internship occurs in a state other than Texas) who has a minimum of three years of unsupervised experience providing psychological services in the schools. All Internship hours occurring in a non-school setting (e.g., hospital, community agency) must be supervised by a Licensed Psychologist. All interns must be clearly designated as such, in order to make transparent their status as students in training. For more information, please consult the Rules and Regulations of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists.

The Internship is a full-time commitment and Internship sites must be approved by program faculty. Supervision is provided by field-based supervisors, and this supervision must include a minimum of two hours of face-to-face contact per week. This requirement is meant to ensure that the supervision is direct, deliberate, and systematic. Faculty will closely monitor the Internship experience to ensure that interns are gaining desired competencies. Interns will be evaluated by site supervisors using an objective evaluation form. Students must keep a detailed log of their activities during Internship; these activities must include assessment, intervention, behavior management, and consultation with children across different age groups and representing diverse populations.

## **School Psychology Program Policies, Procedures and Requirements**

### **Evaluation of Students' Fitness to Practice**

Evaluation of students' development of knowledge and professional competencies will occur continually throughout the program as a regular component of students' coursework. Within this context, students will be evaluated via formal exams and quizzes, projects, individual and group presentations, video- or audio-taped counseling and consultation sessions, video-taped assessment administrations, research papers, literature reviews, literature critiques, case studies, assessment reports, case notes, intervention plans, supervisor evaluations, class activities, class participation, and other methods as appropriate. In addition to academic skills, students will be evaluated based on their ability to demonstrate professional and ethical behaviors. Formal review of students' progress and fitness to practice will occur on an as-needed basis.

It is the duty of faculty members in the School Psychology program to evaluate all students according to these standards in all settings in which faculty members and students interact, including classes, practicum and internship sites, advising, and supervision. It is expected that students will respond to evaluations, formal or informal, in appropriate ways and will attempt to conform to professional standards as explained to them.

Admission to the program does not guarantee fitness to remain in the program to completion. Only those students who meet program standards will be allowed to continue in the program. If and when a student is judged not to meet program standards sufficiently to be allowed to provide psychological services to others, that student will be removed from continuation in the program.

Only two courses with the grade of "C" will be accepted toward this degree. A minimum of a 3.0 GPA will be required for graduation. Those who obtain more than two grades of "C" will be put on probation and may be required to complete appropriate remedial work. Those who receive an "F" for a course grade will automatically be dismissed from the program.

Please refer to the complete Fitness to Practice Policy in the Appendix.

### **Program Policy on Student Usage of Social Media**

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by students within the School Psychology program. For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including but not limited to, blogs, wiki's, social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Flickr, and YouTube.

This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet. The School Psychology program is committed to supporting honest, transparent, and knowledgeable dialogue through social media. While School Psychology students are welcome to publish or comment using social media in accordance with this policy, they are urged to do so thoughtfully. The same reasons that make social media

attractive also are the same elements that can injure how you come to be perceived as a professional. As such, all uses of social media should be treated in the same manner as other professional obligations as outline in the ethical guidelines and policy recommendations set for by the *American Psychological Association (APA)*, *National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)*, and the *Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP)*.

Please refer to the complete Policy on Student Usage of Social Media in the Appendix.

### **Liability Insurance**

Students must obtain student professional liability insurance prior to having any type of course-related field experience for any course. This is typically obtained when the assessment courses begin but could be required for other courses as well. Proof of insurance is asked for the courses where it is needed. Students are responsible for obtaining their own liability insurance and incurring the costs of the liability insurance.

### **Comprehensive Examination**

Students take the comprehensive examination after all or almost all coursework has been completed, with the exception of EPSY 7350 and EPSY 7351: Internship in School Psychology I & II. Students typically take the exam during the summer before Internship. The comprehensive examination is the School Psychology Praxis Exam (5402) that is conducted by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). Please refer to the ETS website for dates of testing as well as fees. Students are responsible for the exam fees.

### **Licensure and Certification**

In the state of Texas, professionals who provide psychological services in the schools must possess the Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) credential. This license is granted by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP) and requires a graduate degree with at least 60 hours of appropriate coursework (including internship), a passing score on the National School Psychology Examination administered by ETS, a passing score on the Board's Jurisprudence Examination, and letters of reference from three professionals with appropriate licensure. Students must provide documentation (e.g., course syllabi) indicating that their graduate program included particular content areas (i.e., Psychological Foundations, Research and Statistics, Educational Foundations, Assessment, Interventions, Professional Issues, and Practicum). The School Psychology curriculum at UTRGV was specifically designed to capture all of these content areas, in order to facilitate students' documentation of these competencies. Students pursuing licensure in another state must check the specific requirements for that state in order to ensure that the UTRGV program will meet those requirements.

The state of Texas also offers the Licensed Psychological Associate credential, which requires documentation of a graduate degree in Psychology, a passing score on the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP), and a 450-hour practicum or internship experience in which the student is supervised by a Licensed Psychologist. Thus, students who wish to pursue this licensure must ensure that their internship supervision is provided by a Licensed Psychologist.

Program graduates also will be eligible to apply for the Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) credential, which is granted by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). In addition to earning a passing score on the National School Psychology Exam, applicants must provide documentation (e.g., course syllabi, completed course assignments and projects, supervisor evaluations) of knowledge and skills in multiple domains, and also must complete a case study demonstrating their ability to apply knowledge and skills related to assessment, intervention, and progress monitoring.

### **School Psychology Program Faculty**

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### **Program Evaluation**

In order to satisfy institutional requirements for ongoing program assessment, the School Psychology program will continually gather data to assess important outcomes. Students provide important information for program evaluation via course evaluations, feedback regarding practicum and internship experiences, and surveys upon completing the program. Site supervisors also provide important information in their evaluations of practicum students and interns, as these evaluations are used to help the program identify areas that may need to be improved in order to make students more competitive. Other sources of data used for program evaluation include students' scores on the National School Psychology Examination, evaluation of students' case studies, evaluations of students' portfolios, percentage of graduates obtaining the LSSP and NCSP, and graduates' employment rates.

### **School Psychology Program Advisory Board**

The UTRGV School Psychology Program Advisory Board (SPPAB) was created in Fall 2019. Role and Function of the Advisory Board: The SPPAB is composed of practicing Licensed Specialists in School Psychology (LSSPs), practicing Licensed Psychologists who are also LSSPs, Special Education Administrators, Administrator, and University Faculty who collaborate on a wide variety of issues related to the School Psychology Program. The SPPAB participates in

decisions related to the development, implementation, and revision of the program. In this way competencies of program graduates continue to evolve to meet the ever-changing needs of our schools and communities. The UTRGV SPPAB is comprised of the following professionals and meets at least twice a year:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Organization/Role:</b>
Dr. Michael Cantu	Vanguard Academy Special Education Director/LSSP
Dr. Ralph Carlson	UTRGV Professor/LP & LSSP
Ms. Belinda Garcia	IDEA Public Schools Special Education Project Manager/LSSP
Ms. Erin Garza	Rio Grande City CISD LSSP
Mr. Christopher King	Mission CISD Special Education Supervisor/LSSP
Dr. David Montemayor	Edinburg CISD Administrator
Dr. Gerardo Mireles	Mireles Psychological Health Services/LP & LSSP
Dr. Vittorio Puente	Mid-Valley Behavioral Health & Psychological Services/LP & LSSP
Dr. Noe Ramos	UTRGV Assistant Professor/LSSP
Dr. Nancy P. Razo	UTRGV School Psychology Program Coordinator/LSSP
Ms. Meagan Schuster	McAllen ISD LSSP

## **Professional Organizations**

Students are strongly encouraged to join professional organizations in School Psychology, such as the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and the Texas Association of School Psychologists (TASP). These organizations provide important opportunities for students to contribute to the field, collaborate with other students and practitioners from across the state and nation, and access research and other resources that guide the profession. Annual conventions hosted by these organizations also provide professional development opportunities, which are critical to updating knowledge and maintaining professional competence.

- [NASP: www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)
- [TASP: www.txasp.org](http://www.txasp.org)

## **Program Resources**

School Psychology students at UTRGV have access to numerous resources to help them reach their academic and professional goals. Some of these resources are specific to School Psychology students, but most are available to all graduate students at UTRGV. These resources are briefly described below.

### **Counseling and Training Clinic**

The Counseling and Training Clinic is an important learning resource for students. Located in the Education Building of the Edinburg Campus, the Counseling and Training Clinic houses all of the assessment instruments used in the psychological assessment courses, and also contains resources to facilitate students' learning of assessment such as computers with scoring and interpretive



software programs, training rooms where students can practice test administration, equipment for recording practice administrations, and a library that includes references for counseling.

## Student Services

Students who demonstrate financial need have a variety of options when it comes to paying for college costs, such as scholarships, grants, loans and work-study. Students should visit the Student Services Center (U Central) for additional information. U Central is located in BMAIN 1.100 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 1.145 (Edinburg) or can be reached by email ([ucentral@utrgv.edu](mailto:ucentral@utrgv.edu)) or telephone: (888) 882-4026. In addition to financial aid, U Central can assist students with registration and admissions.

Students seeking academic help in their studies can use university resources in addition to an instructor's office hours. University Resources include the Advising Center, Career Center, Counseling Center, Learning Center, and Writing Center. The centers provide services such as tutoring, writing help, counseling services, critical thinking, study skills, degree planning, and student employment. In addition, services such as the Food Pantry are also provided. Locations are listed below.

Center Name	Brownsville Campus	Edinburg Campus
<b>Advising Center</b> <a href="mailto:AcademicAdvising@utrgv.edu">AcademicAdvising@utrgv.edu</a>	BMAIN 1.400 (956) 665-7120	ESWKH 101A (956) 665-7120
<b>Career Center</b> <a href="mailto:CareerCenter@utrgv.edu">CareerCenter@utrgv.edu</a>	BINAB 1.105 (956) 882-5627	ESSBL 2.101 (956) 665-2243
<b>Counseling Center</b> <a href="mailto:Counseling@utrgv.edu">Counseling@utrgv.edu</a>  <a href="#">Counseling and Related Services List</a>	BSTUN 2.10 (956) 882-3897	EUCTR 109 (956) 665-2574
<b>Food Pantry</b> <a href="mailto:FoodPantry@utrgv.edu">FoodPantry@utrgv.edu</a>	BCAVL 101 & 102 (956) 882-7126	EUCTR 114 (956) 665-3663
<b>Learning Center</b> <a href="mailto:LearningCenter@utrgv.edu">LearningCenter@utrgv.edu</a>	BMSLC 2.118 (956) 882-8208	ELCTR 100 (956) 665-2585
<b>Writing Center</b> <a href="mailto:WC@utrgv.edu">WC@utrgv.edu</a>	BUBLB 3.206 (956) 882-7065	ESTAC 3.119 (956) 665-2538

### UTRGV Counseling Center:

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can negatively interfere with your academic experience. Examples include relationship difficulties, family problems, sexual orientation or gender related issues, academic difficulties, anxiety, depression, and substance use problems. You may even be struggling in your life and are not sure why. There is help for you. The UTRGV Counseling Center provides confidential\* and free mental health services for enrolled UTRGV students. Service options include individual counseling, group counseling, coping skills workshops, and consultations. Call the center or walk in to make an initial appointment. The counselor will then work to match your needs to resources that can help you. For more information, check out the following website: <https://www.utrgv.edu/counseling/>. And for questions, you can email at [counseling@utrgv.edu](mailto:counseling@utrgv.edu).

**Edinburg:** 956-665-2574 EUCTR 109

**Brownsville:** 956-882-3897 BSTUN 2.10

\*Confidentiality include rules and procedures that protect the privacy of your information. For example, participation in treatment and any related diagnosis will NOT be a part of your academic record.

### **Vaqueros Crisis Line:**

The **Vaqueros Crisis Line** is a 24/7 confidential helpline for enrolled UTRGV students experiencing an emotional crisis that may include suicidal thinking, thoughts of harming self or other, confusion, panic, or otherwise feeling distressed. A trained counselor will be available on the line to provide assistance. 956-665-5555. You are not alone. There is help.

## **UTRGV Policy Statements**

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive reasonable academic accommodations should contact **Student Accessibility Services (SAS)** for additional information. In order for accommodation requests to be considered for approval, the student must apply using the *mySAS* portal located at [www.utrgv.edu/mySAS](http://www.utrgv.edu/mySAS) and is responsible for providing sufficient documentation of the disability to SAS. Students are required to participate in an interactive discussion, or an intake appointment, with SAS staff. Accommodations may be requested at any time but are not retroactive, meaning they are valid once approved by SAS. Please contact SAS early in the semester/module for guidance. Students who experience a broken bone, severe injury, or undergo surgery may also be eligible for temporary accommodations.

### **Pregnancy, Pregnancy-related, and Parenting Accommodations**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination, which includes discrimination based on pregnancy, marital status, or parental status. Students seeking accommodations related to pregnancy, pregnancy-related condition, or parenting (reasonably immediate postpartum period) are encouraged to apply to **Student Accessibility Services** using the following link: [Pregnancy Accommodations Request Form https://www.utrgv.edu/pregnancy](https://www.utrgv.edu/pregnancy)

### **Student Accessibility Services**

**Brownsville Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in 1.107 in the Music and Learning Center building (BMSLC) and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 or via email at [ability@utrgv.edu](mailto:ability@utrgv.edu).

**Edinburg Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center (EUCTR) and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 or via email at [ability@utrgv.edu](mailto:ability@utrgv.edu).

## Academic Integrity

Members of the UTRGV community uphold the [Vaquero Honor Code](#)'s shared values of honesty, integrity and mutual respect in our interactions and relationships. In this regard, academic integrity is fundamental in our actions, as any act of dishonesty conflicts as much with academic achievement as with the values of honesty and integrity. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to: cheating, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations, STU 02-100, and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). **All violations of Academic Integrity will be reported to Student Rights and Responsibilities through [Vaqueros Report It](#).**

## Sexual Misconduct and Mandatory Reporting

In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “Responsible Employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report to the Office of Institutional Equity & Diversity (OIED@utrgv.edu) any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, and sexual harassment, about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at [www.utrgv.edu/equity](http://www.utrgv.edu/equity), including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct, discrimination, and all forms of violence. If students, faculty, or staff would like confidential assistance, or have questions, they can contact OVAVP (Office for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention) at (956) 665-8287, (956) 882-8282, or [OVAVP@utrgv.edu](mailto:OVAVP@utrgv.edu).

## The Vaquero Student Honor Statement

I pledge I will not cheat, plagiarize, falsify data or give or receive unauthorized assistance on academic work in accordance with the Vaquero Honor Code. I further pledge to support a culture of academic integrity. Please refer to the UTRGV Student Conduct and Discipline Code at <http://www.utrgv.edu/hop/policies/stu-02-100.pdf>

## Academic Appeals

Scholastic Probation and Suspension — Graduate

*Students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA or higher after each semester.*

In order for a degree-seeking masters level student to remain in good academic standing, the student must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (3.0=B on a 4.0 scale). Masters students are ineligible to continue if they receive a grade of “C” or lower in 9 semester hours of

credit attempted for graduate credit, regardless of the student's classification, whether or not in repeated courses. Within the following 9 semester credit hours, the overall GPA must return to 3.0 or the student will be suspended from the program. A student who receives an "F" in any course is automatically dismissed from the graduate program.

A suspended graduate student may petition for readmission. To petition for readmission, the suspended student must submit a written appeal to the Graduate College to [gradappeals@utrgv.edu](mailto:gradappeals@utrgv.edu). Appeals will be forwarded to the Program Coordinator, Dean of the College, and finally to the Graduate College Dean. The decision of the Graduate College Dean is final.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** All students are responsible for knowing whether they are eligible to continue at the University. An ineligible student, who nevertheless registers, or has registered prior to completion of the semester in which academic standing is determined, shall be dropped and cannot attend classes. Refund of payment for any classes dropped due to ineligibility to continue will be determined by the University schedule for such refunds. Students shall not receive special consideration for lack of knowledge of scholastic status, regardless of whether the student registered and paid fees. Please review the Policy [http://www.utrgv.edu/\\_files/documents/admissions/paying-for-college/satisfactory-academic-progress-policy-grad.pdf](http://www.utrgv.edu/_files/documents/admissions/paying-for-college/satisfactory-academic-progress-policy-grad.pdf)

Please see the following website for additional information found in the [Graduate Student Handbook](https://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/for-new-and-current-students/forms/index.htm): <https://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/for-new-and-current-students/forms/index.htm>

## Appendix

### Important Documents for the School Psychology Program

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## UTRGV School Psychology Program: Fitness to Practice Policy

This Fitness to Practice Policy applies to all students upon enrollment in the School Psychology Program and remains in effect until completion of the Program. It is important to note that satisfying the curricular requirements is not sufficient for completion of the School Psychology Program. In addition to satisfactory completion of the academic requirements and standards of the UTRGV Graduate School (delineated in the Graduate Catalog), all candidates are expected to demonstrate skills sufficient to provide psychological and educational services to children, families, and schools. Progress in the Program is a result of successful completion of university coursework *and* the demonstration of important characteristics and dispositions identified below as Fitness to Practice Standards. These Standards are guided by the School Psychology Program Principles, which are based on the profession's values and reflect goals for those graduating from the Program. The Fitness to Practice Standards are especially critical given the nature of the services provided by school psychologists, and program faculty reserve the right to recommend or not recommend students' continuation in the Program on the basis of whether students demonstrate Fitness to Practice as outlined below.

### School Psychology Program Principles

Three principles represent core values demonstrated across all levels of school psychology and guide every aspect of the UTRGV School Psychology Program. Implied with each is the expectation that students will embrace a rigorous and closely monitored academic plan necessary to acquire requisite skills that will be used in providing professional services to diverse schools, communities, individuals, and families. The values of human rights, respect, dignity, and integrity are clearly mandated by all those associated with this program.

Principle A: Cultural and Individual Dignity

Principle B: Commitment to Self-Reflection

Principle C: Honesty and Integrity

- **Principle A: Cultural and Individual Dignity:** Students must maintain an active cultural self-awareness in serving diverse communities and individuals. Personal self-awareness of values and beliefs is an important disposition that facilitates working with other group values, cultures, mores, and experiences. Students should be able to demonstrate appreciation and respect of persons of different cultural, racial, and/or individual differences. Student efforts to understand underrepresented communities are important components of all professional contacts.
- **Principle B: Commitment to Self-Reflection:** All students are expected to be self-regulated learners. Thus, the principle of self-reflection involves deliberate self-monitoring and self-regulatory management in order to reflect on skill development, academic progress, and professional strengths and weaknesses. Students should set personal goals on a regular basis and then monitor progress towards goal attainment so that professional behaviors can be adjusted as necessary.

- **Principle C: Honesty and Integrity:** Students will demonstrate honesty and integrity in all areas of their professional development. These behaviors will be observable in how the students prepare and complete assignments, maintain themselves in relationship to all professional and informal contacts, and how they operate in consultation settings. Students will also be expected to demonstrate how they respond to potentially challenging situations and ethical dilemmas.

### **Fitness to Practice Standards**

In addition to all curriculum requirements (including taking advanced coursework, enrolling in practicum and internship, and applying to take the comprehensive examination) students must meet the following standards in order to progress through the School Psychology Program:

- **Academic Excellence:** Maintenance of scholastic performance meeting or exceeding UTRGV and department standards.

*Academic standards include:*

- Attendance of all classes; preparedness and punctuality are the expected norm.
- Completion of all course assignments in a professional and timely manner.
- Demonstration of academic integrity (i.e., refraining from dishonest behaviors such as cheating and plagiarism).
- Demonstration of written and oral communication skills necessary to convey their ideas within both academic (e.g., in the classroom, during supervision) and professional (e.g., with children, parents, and school personnel) contexts. Written communication includes the ability to write clearly, use correct grammar and spelling, and convey ideas to a range of audiences in a way that facilitates understanding. Oral communication includes the ability to communicate effectively with other students, faculty, staff, and professionals by expressing ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrating a willingness and an ability to listen to others. This also includes the professional level skills in spoken English required to understand content presented in the program, to adequately complete all oral assignments, and to meet the objectives of field placement experiences, as specified by faculty.
- **Acquisition and Application of Skills:** Demonstration of the acquisition of, *and ability to apply*, skills necessary to work effectively with persons and systems having diverse needs. This standard will be evaluated throughout the curriculum, but will be most directly observed in Practicum in School Psychology and Internship in School Psychology. Both university faculty and site-based supervisors will ensure that students demonstrate the skills necessary to work as practitioners of school psychology.

*These skills include (but are not limited to) the following:*

- Psychoeducational assessment and diagnosis
- Individual and group counseling
- Consultation with teachers, parents, and other professionals



- Crisis intervention
  - Ethical decision making
  - In-service training
- **Professionalism:** Demonstration of professionalism in interactions with others. This standard will be evaluated throughout the curriculum as the student's interactions with classmates, faculty, clients, and supervisors are monitored.

*Students must demonstrate:*

- Flexibility and openness to new perspectives and ways of thinking.
  - Acceptance and openness to professional feedback and constructive coaching.
  - The ability to separate personal and professional issues when working with clients and when completing coursework.
  - The ability to build effective professional relationships with children and parents/families.
  - The ability to work collegially and productively with classmates, university faculty and staff, and school personnel at field-based sites.
  - Appropriate social skills in professional and social interactions with faculty, colleagues, and clients.
  - Skills in working with culturally diverse populations.
  - Behaviors that would preclude any risk of sexual harassment, verbal and physical aggression, and sexual relationships with clients, supervisors, and faculty.
  - The ability to maintain a professional appearance when in professional contexts (e.g., field-based experiences).
- **Emotional and Mental Fitness:** Demonstration of emotional and mental fitness in their interactions with others, and in completing curricular requirements. This standard will be evaluated throughout the curriculum as the student's interactions with classmates, faculty, clients, and supervisors are monitored.

*Student emotional and mental fitness are demonstrated through the following behaviors:*

- Ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms. He or she will handle stress effectively by using appropriate self-care and developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others.
  - Demonstration of the judgment, emotional health, and mental health required to function effectively as a school psychologist.
  - Ability to think analytically about professional and scholarly issues.
  - Ability to self-reflect on their own learning and professional practice and competence.
- **Ethical Standards:** Students will conform to the codes of ethics of relevant professional associations in psychology (e.g., National Association of School Psychologists, American

Psychological Association) in addition to the ethical and legal regulations relevant to the practice of psychology in the State of Texas (e.g., Texas Administrative Code, Rules and Regulations of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists; <http://www.tsbep.state.tx.us/>).

*Examples of student ethical behaviors include the following:*

- Maintenance of confidential information concerning clients unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.
- Demonstration of self-awareness and management of the limits of their own competence.
- Adherence to informed consent procedures prior to providing professional services.
- Maintenance of test security of all assessment-related materials.
- Adherence to clients' right to privacy, and requirements associated with the storage of all client records (in a secure location).
- Commitment to seek supervision when faced with ethical dilemmas or difficult situations.

It is the duty of faculty members in the School Psychology Program to evaluate all students according to these standards in all settings in which faculty members and students interact, including classes, practicum and internship sites, advising, and supervision. It is expected that students will respond to reviews, formal or informal, in appropriate ways and will attempt to conform to professional standards as explained to them.

**Admission to the Program does not guarantee fitness to remain in the program to completion.** Only those students who meet program standards will be allowed to continue in the program. If and when a student is judged not to meet program standards sufficiently to be allowed to provide psychological services to others, that student will be removed from continuation in the program.

### **Fitness to Practice Review (FPR) Procedures**

Faculty members, staff, advisors, and field supervisors (Evaluators) will evaluate students according to the standards outlined above. All faculty members may have some input into student performance or conduct.

Students may be evaluated using the Fitness to Practice Review Form at any time during their program if and when, in the opinion of one or more Evaluators, significant deviations from the Standards have occurred. All students referred for review are expected to participate in the process. Refusal to participate will not terminate the process. The level of review will depend on factors such as the nature, severity, and frequency of the incident or concern. For example, repeated violations may result in immediate Formal Level 2 Review. Violations of the UTRGV or field-based site's code of conduct will result in immediate Formal Level 2 Review.

## Levels of Review

### 1. Informal Review

An informal review involves a faculty member and a student. When a faculty member has concerns about a student meeting any of the Fitness to Practice criteria, the faculty member may take any or all of the following steps as necessary:

- a. Discuss the concerns directly with the student and seek to work with the student to resolve the difficulties.
- b. Advise the Department Chair and the student's Advisor of the concern(s) in order to identify potential patterns and issues related to the student.
- c. Document dates and content of meetings with students using the Fitness to Practice Review Form and provide a copy of the signed form to the Graduate Advisor of Record for documentation purposes.
- d. If a problem arises at a field-based site, the site supervisor may discuss concerns directly with the UTRGV faculty member. The student may also be included in this meeting.

### 2. Formal Review: Level 1

When a faculty member or supervisor is sufficiently concerned about a student's Fitness to Practice, he or she will fill out the Fitness to Practice Review Form. These forms are to be turned in to the student's Advisor, the Graduate Advisor of Record, and the Department Chair. A conference will then be scheduled with the instructor/supervisor, the student, the student's Advisor, the Graduate Advisor of Record, and the Department Chair. When possible, the conference will be mediated by a departmental faculty member who has not had the student in class. During this conference, a plan for remediation will be developed. The nature and content of the plan will depend on the specific situation. The remediation plan will include a reasonable timeline for the student to demonstrate adequate progress and will be signed by all parties involved. The remediation plan may continue for more than one semester, depending on the individual circumstances. If the student fails to implement the remediation plan(s) satisfactorily, he/she will be placed on Formal Level 2 Review.

### 3. Formal Review: Level 2

If a second incident or concern is reported on the same student, the student has failed a remediation plan during the Level 1 Review, or the seriousness of the incident or concern warrants it, the Fitness to Practice Committee will be convened. This group (made up of at least one School Psychology faculty member, at least one additional faculty member from the Department of Human Development and School Services, the Graduate Advisor of Record, and chaired by the Department Chair) will meet to:

- a. Review the paperwork,
- b. Interview the faculty members who instructed the student,
- c. Interview the student,
- d. Make a determination regarding the student's suitability to continue in the program.

## **Appeals and Procedures Subsequent to Request for Withdrawal**

Following the review of information at the Fitness to Practice Committee meeting, the Committee must make a decision and report to the student and the Graduate Advisor of Record that the student: (1) should be allowed to remain in the program with conditions/without conditions or (2) should be removed from the program, immediately dropped from enrollment in current courses, and prevented from enrolling in subsequent courses.

If the decision is to allow the student to remain in the program, the Committee may place remedial conditions (a corrective plan) on the student's continuing in the program, may set time limits for meeting the conditions, or may make other recommendations.

If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Fitness to Practice Committee, he or she may appeal to the Office of the Dean of the College of Education & P16 Integration by submitting a written appeal to the Dean's office. This appeal must be submitted within 10 working days after receiving the decision from the Fitness to Practice Committee. The Dean (or Dean's designee) will consider the matter, and based on information submitted by the Fitness to Practice Committee, the Dean (or Dean's designee) may meet with the Fitness to Practice Committee and/or with the student. After gathering and reviewing all information, the Dean (or Dean's designee) will communicate his/her decision to the student in writing. The final decision will be either continuation in the program (with conditions) or dismissal from the program. The decision of the Dean (or Dean's designee) will be final.

## School Psychology Program: Fitness to Practice Review Form

**Student's name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ID#:** \_\_\_\_\_

Check one:     Informal Review     Formal Level I Review     Formal Level II Review

This concern is related to the following Fitness to Practice Standard(s) (Check all that apply):

- Academic Excellence
- Acquisition and Application of Skills
- Professionalism
- Emotional and Mental Fitness
- Ethical Standards

**Directions:**

1. If this is an Informal Review, please describe the specific behavior, situation, or class requirement that motivated you to complete this form and the setting(s) in which it was recognized. Also, summarize the discussion with the student about the concern (and possible solutions) including the dates of the discussions.
2. If this is a Formal Review, please describe the specific behavior, situation, or class requirement that motivated you to complete this form and the setting(s) in which it was recognized. Also, include any contextual information that is important in understanding this review (e.g., previous Informal Reviews, patterns of behavior, severity of behavior).
3. Please use the back of this sheet if necessary, and attach any additional relevant documentation.

Student signature indicates notification regarding concern(s) and is not an indication of agreement.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty signature indicates that the student has been informed in writing of the concern(s) and of the formal Fitness to Practice review (when applicable).

Faculty Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Course title: \_\_\_\_\_

*If this is an Informal Review, please provide this signed form to the Graduate Advisor of Record for documentation purposes. If this is a Formal Review, please provide this signed form to the student's Advisor, the Graduate Advisor of Record, and the Department Chair.*

## **School Psychology Program Policy on Student Usage of Social Media**

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by students within the School Psychology program. For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including but not limited to, blogs, wiki's, social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Flickr, and YouTube.

This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet. The School Psychology program is committed to supporting honest, transparent, and knowledgeable dialogue through social media. While School Psychology students are welcome to publish or comment using social media in accordance with this policy, they are urged to do so thoughtfully. The same reasons that make social media attractive also are the same elements that can injure how you come to be perceived as a professional. As such, all uses of social media should be treated in the same manner as other professional obligations as outline in the ethical guidelines and policy recommendations set for by the *American Psychological Association (APA)*, *National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)*, and the *Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP)*.

Students who are placed on practicum and/or internship students should comply not only with the statements outlined herein, but also any policies and procedures of the placement district. Below are recommendations for appropriate social media use. These tips will contribute to successful use of social media.

### ***Maintain Confidentiality***

- Refrain from posting confidential information about the School Psychology program, its faculty, its students, its alumni, or various affiliates to the program.
- Refrain from posting any sensitive information regarding records of students and families that you may work with as part of your training experience. Use good ethical judgment and follow university polices and federal requirements, such as the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)* and the *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)*.
- As a guide, do not post anything that you would not present at a conference.

### ***Maintain Privacy***

- Refrain from posting or contributing to discussions about a situation involving named or pictured individuals without their expressed permission.
- As a guideline, do not post anything that you would not present in any public forum. Let your social networking do no harm to the School Psychology program, its faculty, its students, its alumni, various affiliates, or to yourself.

### ***Respect Your Audience and Colleagues***

- The public, in general, reflects a diverse set of customs, values, and points of view. Thus, maintain a tone of respect in all posts and comments to social media networks.
- Avoid personally offensive comments, ethnic slurs, insults, obscenity, or potentially defamatory statements that may be interpreted as ridicule or demeaning to persons on the basis of their age, color, creed, disability, national origin, immigration status, socioeconomic status,

political beliefs, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation or any other personal or distinguishing characteristic.

- Respond respectfully to anyone who posts comments you disagree with. Be prepared for negative responses/comments.

### **Manage “*Friending*” Appropriately**

- In general, faculty/staff and other affiliates who hold management/supervisory roles are discouraged from “*friending*” requests from students they oversee. Supervisors may accept friend requests initiated by the student if s/he does not believe it will impact the work relationship negatively. Supervisors may deny friend requests initiated by the student if s/he believes doing so would create a conflict of interest.
- “*Friending*” of students and families on social media websites is discouraged. Professionals in care roles generally should refrain from initiating or accepting friend requests except in unusual circumstances such as the situation where an in-person friendship pre-dates the professional relationship (a situation that may pose a conflict of interest, in and of itself).

### ***Time Posts Carefully***

- Make sure that your social media presence does not interfere with your commitments and obligations as a student.
- Refrain from using social media while in class or during experiential learning opportunities within schools (i.e., Practicum and Internship), unless it is work-related. Maintain your focus on work so as to not become distracted.

### ***Think Before You Post***

- While communication through social media is primarily a personal matter, this does not mean that it is private. Written conversation inside social media networks can be found through search engines such as Google. Even in cases where only your contacts can see what you write, there is a possibility that one of them will forward or copy what you say and make it visible to a wider audience. Further, archival systems save information even if you delete a post. As a result, personal conversation within social media should be considered public rather than private. If you feel passionate or angry about a subject, it’s wise to delay posting until you are calm and clearheaded. Social networks often are not the best forums for raising grievances that might be better addressed in other venues or handled privately.
- Post only pictures that you would be conformable sharing with the general public.

### ***Respect Copyright and Trademark Laws***

- Copyright and Trademark law as it relates to online media is still emerging. As a general rule of thumb, always attribute material to the original author/source or link to others’ work. Avoid reproducing logos or trademarks.

### ***Pass the Publicity Test***

- If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the telephone, or in another medium, it likely will not be acceptable for social media. Ask yourself, would I want to see this posted publicly tomorrow or ten years from now?
- Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see—Google has a long memory! Think of every post as being on record.

### ***Correct Mistakes***

- If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction. If someone accuses you of posting something improper, deal with it quickly.
- If you chose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so.

The School Psychology program believes that sharing of information and experiences benefits the whole humanitarian community and ultimately the beneficiaries we serve. However, use of social media also entails personal responsibility. As such, use common sense where information is concerned that is confidential and/or outside of your areas of understanding/expertise; and, refrain from commenting negatively on others within the program or those who are affiliated with the program. All allegations of violations by students in the UTRGV School Psychology program will be appropriately investigated and corrective action taken, including academic disciplinary action that may result in dismissal (see the *UTRGV Student Code of Conduct and the UTRGV School Psychology Fitness to Practice Policy*).



### Recommended Course Sequence for MA in School Psychology (Full-Time Track)

	Fall Entry		Spring Entry
Fall 1	<b>PSY 6325</b> - Conditioning & Learning <b>EPSY 6350</b> - Intro to Statistics <b>EPSY 6358</b> - Intro to Research		
Spring 1	<b>PSY 6320</b> – Neuropsychology <b>EPSY 6301</b> – Child & Adol. Psychopathology <b>EPSY 6320</b> - Consultation Collaboration	Spring 1	<b>PSY 6320</b> – Neuropsychology <b>EPSY 6350</b> - Intro to Statistics <b>EPSY 6301</b> – Child & Adol. Psychopathology
Summer 1	<b>EPSY 6310</b> – Legal, Ethical & Prof. Issues <b>EPSY 6370</b> –Psychological Meas.  <b>**Must take EPSY 6370 by this time to begin assessment sequence</b>	Summer 1	<b>EPSY 6310</b> – Legal, Ethical & Prof. Issues <b>EPSY 6370</b> –Psychological Meas. <b>**Must take EPSY 6370 by this time to begin assessment sequence</b> <b>EPSY 6358</b> - Intro to Research
Fall 2	<b>EPSY 6380*</b> - Intro Cog/Aca Assessment <b>PSY 6330</b> - Developmental Psychology <b>EPSY 6314</b> – Academic Assessment & Intervention	Fall 1	<b>EPSY 6380*</b> - Intro Cog/Aca Assessment <b>EPSY 6314</b> – Academic Assessment & Intervention <b>PSY 6325</b> - Conditioning & Learning
Spring 2	<b>EPSY 6381*</b> - Adv Cog/Aca Assessmt <b>EDUL6305</b> : Socio/Cultrl Contexts of Ed	Spring 2	<b>EPSY 6381*</b> - Adv Cog/Aca Assessmt <b>EPSY 6320</b> - Consultation Collaboration <b>PSY 6330</b> - Developmental Psychology
Summer 2	<b>EPSY 6315</b> – Beh. Assmt & Intervention <b>EPSY 6340*</b> – Mental Health Services in the Schools	Summer 2	<b>EPSY 6315</b> – Beh. Assmt & Intervention <b>EPSY 6340*</b> – Mental Health Services in the Schools <b>EDUL6305</b> : Socio/Cultrl Contexts of Ed
Fall 3	<b>EPSY 6382*</b> - Billing Multicult Assess <b>COUN6327</b> – Theories of Psychotherapy <b>EDUL 6325</b> – Instructional Leadership <b>OR EDUL 6330</b> Instr. Leadership for Diverse Learners	Fall 2	<b>EPSY 6382*</b> - Billing Multicult Assess <b>COUN6327</b> – Theories of Psychotherapy <b>EDUL 6325</b> – Instructional Leadership <b>OR EDUL 6330</b> Instr. Leadership for Diverse Learners
Spring 3	<b>EPSY 6383*</b> - Personality & Beh Assmt <b>EPSY 7340*</b> – Practicum in School Psychology <b>COUN6328</b> – Methods & Techniques of Psychotherapy	Spring 3	<b>EPSY 6383*</b> - Personality & Beh Assmt <b>EPSY 7340*</b> – Practicum in School Psychology <b>COUN6328</b> – Methods & Techniques of Psychotherapy
Fall 4	<b>EPSY 7350*</b> – School Psychology Internship I	Fall 3	<b>EPSY 7350*</b> – School Psychology Internship I
Spring 4	<b>EPSY 7351*</b> – School Psychology Internship II	Spring 4	<b>EPSY 7351*</b> – School Psychology Internship II

\*Courses with an asterisk have prerequisites

\*\*\*Course offerings per semester are subject to change. This is meant to be used only as a guide. It is important to stay in contact with your advisor for planning.

### Recommended Course Sequence for MA in School Psychology (Part-Time Track)

	Fall Entry		Spring Entry
Fall 1	<b>EPSY 6350</b> - Intro to Statistics <b>EPSY 6358</b> - Intro to Research		
Spring 1	<b>EPSY 6301</b> – Child & Adol. Psychopath <b>PSY 6320</b> – Neuropsychology <b>EPSY 6320</b> - Consultation Collaboration	Spring 1	<b>EPSY 6301</b> – Child & Adol. Psychopath <b>PSY 6320</b> – Neuropsychology <b>EPSY 6320</b> - Consultation Collaboration
Summer 1	<b>EPSY 6310</b> – Legal, Ethical & Prof. Issues <b>EPSY 6370</b> –Psychological Meas. <b>**Must take EPSY 6370 by this time to begin assessment sequence</b>	Summer 1	<b>EPSY 6350</b> - Intro to Statistics <b>EPSY 6310</b> – Legal, Ethical & Prof. Issues
Fall 2	<b>PSY 6325</b> - Conditioning & Learning <b>EPSY 6314</b> – Academic Assmt & Interv	Fall 1	<b>PSY 6325</b> - Conditioning & Learning <b>EPSY 6314</b> – Academic Assmt & Interv
Spring 2	<b>PSY 6330</b> - Developmental Psychology <b>EDUL6305</b> : Socio/Cultrl Contexts of Ed	Spring 2	<b>PSY 6330</b> - Developmental Psychology <b>EDUL6305</b> : Socio/Cultrl Contexts of Ed
Summer 2		Summer 2	<b>EPSY 6358</b> - Intro to Research <b>EPSY 6370</b> –Psychological Meas. <b>**Must take EPSY 6370 by this time to begin assessment sequence</b>
Fall 3	<b>EPSY 6380*</b> - Intro Cog/Aca Assessment <b>COUN6327</b> – Theories of Psychother	Fall 2	<b>EPSY 6380*</b> - Intro Cog/Aca Assessment <b>COUN6327</b> – Theories of Psychother
Spring 3	<b>EPSY 6381*</b> - Adv Cog/Aca Assessmt <b>COUN6328</b> – Methods & Techniques of Psychotherapy	Spring 3	<b>EPSY 6381*</b> - Adv Cog/Aca Assessmt <b>COUN6328</b> – Methods & Techniques of Psychotherapy
Summer 3	<b>EPSY 6315</b> – Beh. Assmt & Interv <b>EPSY 6340*</b> – MH Services in Schools	Summer 3	<b>EPSY 6315</b> – Beh. Assmt & Interv <b>EPSY 6340*</b> – MH Services in Schools
Fall 4	<b>EPSY 6382*</b> - Billing Multicult Assess <b>EDUL 6325</b> – Instructional Leadership <b>OR EDUL 6330</b> Instr. Leadership for Diverse Learners	Fall 3	<b>EPSY 6382*</b> - Billing Multicult Assess <b>EDUL 6325</b> – Instructional Leadership <b>OR EDUL 6330</b> Instr. Leadership for Diverse Learners
Spring 4	<b>EPSY 6383*</b> - Personality & Beh Assmt <b>EPSY 7340*</b> – Practicum in School Psychology	Spring 4	<b>EPSY 6383*</b> - Personality & Beh Assmt <b>EPSY 7340*</b> – Practicum in School Psychology
Fall 5	<b>EPSY 7350*</b> – School Psychology Internship I	Fall 5	<b>EPSY 7350*</b> – School Psychology Internship I
Spring 5	<b>EPSY 7351*</b> – School Psychology Internship II	Spring 5	<b>EPSY 7351*</b> – School Psychology Internship II

\*Courses with an asterisk have prerequisites

\*\*\*Course offerings per semester are subject to change. This is meant to be used only as a guide. It is important to stay in contact with your advisor for planning.

## Course Descriptions for all Courses

### Required Courses

#### EPSY 6301: Child and Adolescent Psychopathology [3-0]

Course addresses DSM classification to discuss major emotional and behavioral disorders experienced by non-adult populations. Current state of knowledge with regard to the characteristics, etiological factors, and developmental outcomes of psychological disorders of childhood and adolescence will be considered.

#### EPSY 6310: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues in School Psychology [3-0]

History of professional psychology with emphasis on school psychology; legal, ethical and credentialing issues in psychology; scholarly writing; models of providing clinical child and special educational services.

#### EPSY 6314: Academic Assessment and Intervention [3-0]

Examines educational and clinical applications of individual achievement assessment within the context of response-to-intervention; specific diagnostic measures of academic skills, including curriculum-based assessment; supervised instruction in administration, scoring, and interpretation; and using academic assessment results to inform intervention.

#### EPSY 6315: Behavior Assessment and Intervention [3-0]

This course examines behavioral learning theory and operant conditioning principles; overview of behavioral assessment and classroom management strategies with an emphasis on systematic observations of behavior and interviews; functional behavior assessment and applied behavior analysis as systematic assessment-intervention approaches to behavior modification; and specific behavior therapy approaches for use with children and adolescents of diverse backgrounds.

#### EPSY 6320: Consultation and Collaboration in Inclusive Settings [3-0]

Examines educational and clinical applications of individual achievement assessment within the context of response-to-intervention; specific diagnostic measures of academic skills, including curriculum-based assessment; supervised instruction in administration, scoring, and interpretation; and using academic assessment results to inform intervention.

#### EPSY 6340: Mental Health Services in the Schools [3-0]

This course will cover selected psychotherapeutic and comprehensive intervention approaches for treating childhood and adolescent emotional and behavioral disorders that interfere with learning. Topics include play therapy, solution-focused strategies, cognitive-behavioral techniques, group and individual therapies, case management, involvement of the family and other service providers, and crisis response. Emphasis will be placed on empirically-supported services within a school systemic framework. Prerequisites: EPSY 6301, EPSY 6310.

#### EPSY 6350: Introduction to Statistics [3-0]

The content of this course will include central tendency; variance; exploratory data analysis; normal, t, chi square and F distributions; bivariate correlation and regression analysis, t-test between means, goodness of fit and test of independence of chi square; one-way, two-way, and

three-way factorial ANOVA. There will be an emphasis on hypothesis testing; Type I and II errors; and understanding of statistical significance, and practical or functional significance/effect size.

#### **EPSY 6358: Introduction to Research [3-0]**

This course will provide an overview of research methods used in educational settings. Both quantitative and qualitative methods will be covered. Ethical and legal issues associated with conducting research will be addressed. Students will demonstrate their knowledge and skills by completing a project.

#### **EPSY 6370: Psychological Measurement [3-0]**

The content of this course will include scaling; variance; scores derived through linear and nonlinear transformations; traditional item analysis and item response theory (IRT/ICC) models; partitioning true and measurement error variance, and measurement error variance into its different source; validity; content, predictive, concurrent/diagnostic, and construct/theoretical; models of unbiased assessment. These topics will be related to the construction and interpretation of norm and criterion reference measures; survey, and observational scales.

#### **EPSY 6380: Introduction to Cognitive and Academic Assessment [3-0]**

Examines educational and clinical applications of individual assessment; specific diagnostic measures of intelligence and academic achievement; and supervised instruction in administration, scoring, and interpretation. Practica is required. Prerequisites: EPSY 6370.

#### **EPSY 6381: Advanced Cognitive and Academic Assessment [3-0]**

Theory and application of specific instruments and techniques, including administration and scoring. Emphasis on analysis, interpretation, and integration of intelligence, achievement, and other developmental measures; report-writing is emphasized; results for diagnostics as well as treatment planning. Practica is required. Prerequisite: EPSY 6380.

#### **EPSY 6382: Bilingual and Multicultural Psychoeducational Assessment [3-0]**

In this course students will be presented with the psychometric theories, issues and strategies to consider in assessing children and adolescents from various cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, including nondiscriminatory assessment. Students will have an opportunity to administer and score a variety of assessments, including utilizing techniques that are useful with these populations. Emphasis on analysis, interpretation, and integration of language assessment and cultural data and its potential effects on intelligence and achievement. Report-writing is emphasized; results for diagnostics as well as treatment planning. Practica required. Prerequisite: EPSY 6380 and EPSY 6381.

#### **EPSY 6383: Personality and Behavior Assessment of Children and Adolescents [3-0]**

This course covers the evaluation of personality, mental status, and behavior. This includes the theoretical bases, construction, administration, scoring, and interpretation of structured and projective personality tests with integrative report writing emphasizing the assessment of emotional disturbance and behavior disorders. Practica required. Prerequisite: EPSY 6370, 6380, 6381, and 6301.

### [EPSY 7340: Practicum in School Psychology \[3-0\]](#)

Supervised field-based experience in approved public school and mental health settings in school psychology. Supervision provided by on-site supervisors and university faculty. Emphasis is on orientation to school settings; learning the role of the school psychologist within the larger context; evaluation of psychological and academic difficulties; consultation with parents and teachers; and direct counseling interventions with students. May be repeated for up to 6 hours credit. Prerequisite: Completion of Practicum Form indicating required coursework has been completed, consent of instructor.

### [PSYC 6320: Neuropsychology \[3-0\]](#)

In-depth study of the relationship between the human brain and behavior. Emphasis is on how neurological disorders change behavior.

### [PSYC 6325: Conditioning and Learning \[3-0\]](#)

A study of the principles of laws of respondent and operant conditioning in determining behavior. Emphasis will be placed on the experimental analysis of behavior with attention to other learning theories that have been extensively studied in the laboratory and productively applied to problems of human behavior. Prerequisites: None for School Psychology Students.

### [PSYC 6330: Developmental Psychology \[3-0\]](#)

The study of growth and development processes throughout the life cycle. Physical, social and psychological factors involved in life change are addressed. An overview, as well as selected current special topics within lifespan human development are addressed.

### [COUN 6327: Theories/Methods/Techniques I \[3-0\]](#)

A survey of prominent theories in psychotherapy and counseling. Specialized approaches such as group therapy, play therapy and family therapy will be studied. Prerequisites: None for School Psychology Students.

### [COUN 6328: Theories/Methods/Techniques II \[3-0\]](#)

Primary focus is on techniques and interviewing skills utilized during counseling sessions. In addition, this course addresses how these techniques are applied to special topics and issues such as career counseling, group counseling and family counseling. Prerequisites: None for School Psychology Students.

### [EDUL 6305: Socio-Cultural Contexts of Education \[3-0\]](#)

This course develops an understanding of how socio-cultural forces and emerging issues impact the school leader's role in creating culturally responsive learning environments. Attention will be given to leadership strategies and best practices essential for addressing diverse learners. Future leaders learn to promote the success of all students and shape campus culture by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the full community. Applicable laws, policies, and regulations will be emphasized.

### [EPSY 7350: Internship in School Psychology I \[3-0\]](#)

Full-time, supervised field-based experience in approved professional employment settings in school psychology. Supervision provided by on-site supervisors and university faculty. Students will complete a minimum of 600 clock hours of clinical work per semester, during which they will integrate and apply knowledge gained through coursework and begin to develop a professional identity. Can be taken only when all other required coursework in the School Psychology program has been completed. This is a Fall Semester course only. Prerequisite: Completion of Internship Form indicating required coursework has been completed, consent of instructor.

### [EPSY 7351: Internship in School Psychology II \[3-0\]](#)

Full-time, supervised field-based experience in approved professional employment settings in school psychology. Supervision provided by on-site supervisors and university faculty. Students will complete a minimum of 600 clock hours of clinical work per semester, during which they will integrate and apply knowledge gained through coursework and begin to develop a professional identity. Can be taken only when all other required coursework in the School Psychology program has been completed. This is a Spring semester course only. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

### **Designated Electives: Select 3 hours from the following:**

#### [EDUL 6325: Instructional Leadership \[3-0\]](#)

This course examines effective instructional approaches and programs used in schools. It explores critical issues specific to curriculum, innovative instructional methods, and the role of educators as school leaders. Additionally, the course focuses on the development of educators as leaders in assessment, research and evaluation. Applicable laws, policies, and regulations will be emphasized.

#### [EDUL 6330: Instructional Leadership for Diverse Learners \[3-0\]](#)

This course provides a study of the delivery of differentiated instruction for diverse learners to include Bilingual Education/ESL, Gifted & Talented, Migrant, Special Education, 504, Career & Technology Education (CATE), and other special programs. Emphasis is placed on the principal's role of elementary and secondary school programs. Applicable laws, policies, and regulations will be emphasized.

### **Free Electives (not required for completion of degree)**

#### [EPSY 6351/8351 Intermediate Statistics \[3-0\]](#)

The content of this course will include general linear model; partial, semi-partial, and multiple correlation and regression analysis; discriminant analysis; experimental design Models I, II, III; ANOVA: repeated measures, higher-order factorial crossed and nested analysis, analysis of covariance; methods of multiple comparisons; MANOVA; Hotelling's T-squared, Wilk's lambda, Lawley-Hotelling Trace, Roy's GCR. There will be an emphasis on the blending of research design and statistical analysis.

### EPSY 6352/8352 Multivariate Analysis [3-0]

The content of this course will include exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis; principal component theory; number of factor extracted; path analysis; canonical analysis; and analysis of covariance structures; and nested hierarchical/nested multilevel data structures.

### EPSY 6353/8353 Seminar in Statistical Analysis [3-0]

The content of this course will include various advanced topics in statistical analysis. This course may be repeated once for credit.