

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

## **SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY**

*Doctor of Philosophy*

### ***Application Deadlines: Ph.D. - December 1.***

The primary goal of the School Psychology program is to provide rigorous theoretical and clinical preparation of professionals who promote the learning and development of individuals in relation to schooling. Ours is a supportive professional community characterized by rich collaboration among students and faculty. While primarily psychological in nature, the program is housed in MSU's College of Education, a national leader in educational innovation and reform.

Our program is distinguished by:

- ❖ A developmental and contextual understanding of children, their families, and the schools, communities, and cultures within which learning occurs
- ❖ An emphasis on the promotion of children's competence and well-being, prevention of learning and mental health difficulties, and intervention as primary roles for professional practice
- ❖ An emphasis on understanding systems and systems change for the promotion of children's well-being and the benefit of schools and communities
- ❖ The integration of theory, research, and practice in professional preparation including the infusion of practice experiences in core coursework beginning with the first semester of graduate study

We offer the Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees in School Psychology. The doctoral program is accredited by the American Psychological Association and the National Association of School Psychologists. Our graduates take leadership positions within schools, community-based mental health facilities or universities.

## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

The goal of the doctoral program in School Psychology is to educate individuals to become skilled scientist-practitioners who are data-based, system-wide problem-solvers in the educational domain. Our objective is to prepare psychologists for an expanded role beyond the traditional clinician-tester role. Consistent with the scientist-practitioner role, students learn to conduct research on problems of concern to schools, provide expertise on matters pertaining to mental health (e.g., preventive programs), consult on district programs and special projects, and provide leadership in learning, instruction, and curriculum issues.

One focus of the program is on preparing school psychologists to work as researchers and educators in university settings. The program provides knowledge of experimental design, quantitative and qualitative methods, and data analysis; an understanding of what empirical research can and cannot contribute to education; and experience in conducting research on problems of interest to school psychologists.

We also prepare individuals to serve in broader roles as consultants and administrators in public school systems, helping to implement needed change at the school and district level. Graduates of the program have gone on to practice as school psychologists, teach in universities, and serve in administrative positions in schools. Employment in other clinical settings such as private practice or hospitals is also possible for graduates who meet the additional requirements for licensure for the professional practice of psychology.

The doctoral program typically consists of three to four years of academic coursework and research training beyond the bachelor's degree, in addition to a year long full-time internship.

The School Psychology doctoral program is accredited by the American Psychological Association and the National Association of School Psychologists. The program is also approved by the Michigan State Department of Education. Graduates of the program are eligible for certification in Michigan as a school psychologist. To be eligible for employment in states other than Michigan or for psychology licensure, a greater number of courses and internship hours may be required.

### ***Admission***

We seek applicants who are interested in working in expanded roles as school psychologists that include research, consultation, counseling, and interventions concerned with school-based problems. Applicants are required to have a bachelor's degree in psychology, special education, or a closely related field. Although a masters or an educational specialist degree is not required, we give preference to applicants who have prior work experience in psychology or education. We prefer applicants who have experience working with children, youth, or families in schools or community agencies as well as those who have evidence of research experience. An on-site interview is required prior to an admissions decision.

In addition to meeting the university and college requirements for admission, applicants must also satisfy the following criteria:

1. Professional goals and interests are compatible with program objectives and philosophy.
2. A minimum grade-point average of 3.0 (B) in the last two years of undergraduate coursework and a minimum grade-point average of 3.5 in coursework taken at the master's level or beyond.
3. Strong personal recommendations from individuals who are knowledgeable about your academic performance and/or ability to work effectively with people.
4. Satisfactory scores on the Graduate Record Examination. (The College requires that the GRE must have been taken no longer than five years prior to the application for admission.)
5. Evidence of effective interpersonal skills.
6. Evidence of previous research experience (e.g., a master's thesis or scholarly paper, work on a research project, publication in a professional journal, presentation at a professional conference).
7. A teaching certificate is not required, but evidence of experience with children, youth, and families in school, community, or agency settings is desirable.

In selecting students for the program, we attempt to bring together a richly diverse group of students representing women and men of varied cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, life experiences; and physical abilities/challenges. We particularly encourage applications from individuals of racial and ethnic minority groups. The program receives an average of 35 applications per year of whom 33% are offered admission to the program. The program has had an attrition rate of 0% in the past five years.

The deadline for applications to the Ph.D. program is **December 1**. To ensure full consideration for funding, we encourage you to submit the application as soon as possible to make certain that all of the materials have been received and the application is complete. Applicants are expected to be available to attend an on-campus interview in January, if invited.

### ***Degree Requirements***

Students who enter with an Ed.S. degree may be able to waive certain coursework requirements pending approval of the program faculty.

#### **1. Psychological Foundations**

To meet APA requirements, students must be grounded in the psychological research and theory relevant to the scientist-practitioner role. Thus, the following courses are required:

CEP 805	History of Psychology
CEP 975	Neuropsychological Assessment of Cognitive Dysfunction (or equivalent)
CEP 903	Cognitive Development Across the Lifespan
CEP 904	Social-Emotional Development Across the Lifespan

#### **2. School Psychology**

Students are required to complete several core courses in school psychology, including:

CEP 884	Roles and Functions of School Psychologists
CEP 880	Intellectual Assessment
CEP 881	Personality Assessment
CEP 886	Psychological Assessment and Intervention I
CEP 887	Psychological Assessment and Intervention II
CEP 889	Consultation in School Psychology
CEP 885	Behavior Disorders in Children
CEP 888	Theories of Child Psychotherapy
CEP 883	Psychology of Classroom Discipline
CEP 918	School-based Psychological Interventions
CEP 919	Current Research and Issues in School Psychology

(All of the courses in this area, with the exception of CEP 919, have practicum experiences infused with the course requirements.)

### 3. Research and Inquiry

Students are required to complete a series of courses in research methodology, including:

CEP 930	Educational Inquiry
CEP 932	Quantitative Methods in Educational Research I
CEP 933	Quantitative Methods in Educational Research II
TE 931	Qualitative Methods in Educational Research
CEP 934	Multivariate Methods in Educational Research
CEP 995	Research Practicum/Apprenticeship

### 4. Courses in Educational Psychology

Students are also expected to acquire important foundational knowledge in learning, development, and measurement, including:

CEP 900	Proseminar in Educational Psychology
CEP 920	Educational Assessment <b>or</b>
CEP 821	Educational Measurement

### 5. Courses in Related Areas

Students also complete additional coursework (minimum of 2 courses) in psychology, family and child ecology and/or education that constitute an approved area of specialization. Some possibilities include:

- subject matter learning and instruction (e.g., literacy, mathematics)
- counseling/therapeutic interventions
- parent/family/community partnerships
- infancy
- motivation
- technology
- measurement

### 6. Practicum and Internship

In addition to the course requirements and practicum experiences infused in selected required courses, two semesters of school-based practicum (CEP894B), one semester of advanced practicum (CEP994D), and a year-long field-based internship (CEP893B) of 2000 clock hours. Students will also be given the option of completing another semester of advanced practicum (CEP994E) prior to internship. All practicum and internship sites must be approved by the program. At least 600 of the 2000 Internship hours must be completed in a school setting.

\*\*\*Note: Students entering the program with an Ed.S degree in school psychology must also satisfy this internship requirement; they may however, have already met part of the 2000-hour internship requirement.

## **7. Research Training**

Students are actively engaged in research activities beginning in their first semester through involvement with their faculty advisor's research team. We use an apprenticeship model of research training in which students learn by working collaboratively with a mentor and more advance students on authentic research projects. Involvement in a community of research compliments students' course work and results in early opportunities to reflect upon, conduct and disseminate research.

## **8. Preliminary Exam**

The preliminary exam is taken at the beginning of the second year of doctoral study after the completion of research methods (CEP 930, CEP 932) and theoretical courses (e.g., CEP 900, CEP 902, CEP 903, or CEP 904). The exam involves a written critique of a research article selected by the faculty in School Psychology.

## **9. Comprehensive Exam**

All students take a comprehensive examination in their specialty area of School Psychology typically during their third or fourth year as stipulated by department policy.

## **10. Dissertation Credits**

Students must complete at least 24 credits of CEP 999 for the dissertation.

## **11. Residency Requirement**

Students are also required to complete a residency requirement of enrolling in at least 6 credits for two consecutive semesters on campus.

## **12. Time Limits**

University policy states that students must pass comprehensive exams within five years from the date of the first Ph.D. course. All requirements must be completed within eight years from the date that the student first enrolls.

For more information, please visit our web sites:

School Psychology Doctoral Program: <http://ed-web3.educ.msu.edu/schpsych/>

College of Education: <http://www.educ.msu.edu>

If you have any questions regarding accreditation you may contact the Committee on Accreditation and Dr. Susan Zlotlow at the APA: Susan Zlotlow, Ph.D., Director, Program Consultation and Accreditation, American Psychological Association, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242, (202) 336-5979, [szlotlow@apa.org](mailto:szlotlow@apa.org)

## **Program Questions & Answers**

- Q** *I was wondering if your program makes exceptions to the policy of needing 15 Psychology credits undergrad. I took 2 classes in Psychology as an undergrad. I have also been teaching for the past three years. Could I be considered for your program?*
- A** We would still consider your application, but you would probably need to take some additional courses in psychology to meet the prerequisites for courses in our program.
- Q** *Can I successfully complete the program on a part time basis?*
- A** Students who take 4 courses each semester complete the Ed.S. degree in three years, including a year long internship. Because of the high number of courses, we encourage students to be full-time. We do have a few students who have completed the program on a part-time basis (taking two courses each semester). Most come with a Master's degree, and they have fewer courses to take overall. The most challenging aspect is completing the internship, as you would have to be able to complete 1200 hours on a full-time basis. At this time, we do not have financial support for Ed.S. students, so this should figure into your decision.
- Q** *What are the requirements for the GREs. Which tests are required? Is a Psychology GRE subject test required as well? Do you know if it is required for Masters Programs in School Psychology at other schools?*
- A** We do not require the subject matter test in Psychology for admission to the Ed.S. program in school psychology. This requirement varies however, among school psychology programs, so you will need to check with each one.
- Q** *Is a teacher's certification a requirement for admission into the program? Do you offer a terminal masters program as well as the doctoral program?*
- A** A teaching certificate is not required, but we strongly recommend experiences working with children and youth in educational, community, or clinical settings. We offer a terminal Ed.S. (educational specialist degree), which is the entry-level degree for school psychology.
- Q** *Approximately how many people are accepted in to the School Psychology Program each year? Also, I am not a College of Education student. Will I still be able to apply to the program?*
- A** We receive a minimum of 35 applications just for the Ed.S. program. In 2002 we enrolled 5 students in the Ed.S. program and 6 in the Ph.D. program.
- A strong background in psychology is more important than education courses. If you can take any courses in special education or learning and motivation, those would be helpful. Having experience in schools either as a volunteer or through work experiences would also strengthen your application.
- Q** *Can I get a bachelors in Education and then a Masters in this program?*
- A** The program is a graduate program only and requires a bachelor's degree in psychology or education. We offer two degrees, the Ed.S., which is 60 semester credit hours, or the Ph.D. in School Psychology.

- Q *I currently have a Bachelor's degree with a Psych minor. I would like to obtain an advanced degree but at this point and time I cannot stop working to go to school full time. I was reading through some of the info on the web site and I understood it to say that you could enter the program with a Master's degree. Would that be an option for me at this time? Maybe get a Master's degree and then apply for the School Psych Program? Also, is any part of the internship a paid position in any way?*
- A If you enter the program with previous graduate experience we take that into account in planning your program – in other words, some courses may “transfer” to our program from other graduate studies. Most internships are not paid but we are working with school districts to develop paid placements.
- Q *I am curious to know if classes are offered at our extension sites or if all study is done in Lansing. I work full time and would need to continue to do so. Are the courses offered in the evening?*
- A Nearly all of the coursework for the Ed.S. and Ph.D. in school psychology need to be completed on campus. There are some courses that are offered from time to time in Birmingham at our off-campus center. We are currently developing several on-line courses that will allow students to take some of the required courses on the web. Some of our courses are at 4 p.m. and later, but students have practicum requirements where they are in the schools for 4 to 8 hours per week. The Ph.D. program is a full-time program which means that students must take at least 6 credits per semester. Most students enroll in 12 credits each semester. We do have some students who work full-time and are doctoral students in our program.
- Q *What fulfils the criteria of the writing sample?*
- A There is no specific format. We are looking for evidence of skills in academic writing and analysis. Therefore, a formal writing sample is most informative (e.g., a research paper, literature review, research report). The writing sample could be a paper that you've written for a course (doesn't need to be a psychology paper and we certainly don't need to see the grade!).
- Q *Is there a special form for letters of recommendation?*
- A No but the letters should be written on letterhead.
- Q *I am a psychology major and haven't taken any education courses, although I have a lot of experience in schools. Is that still acceptable?*
- A Yes. Most of our students are psychology majors with experience in working with children, youth, and/or families. You would be able to take additional courses in education if needed.
- Q *I was a little unclear about the written statement stating that we could complete an internship of 1200 clock hours. What does that include?*
- A Simply state that you “understand and are able to complete an internship of 1200 clock hours.”
- Q *What is MSU's program centered around?*
- A It is focused on the comprehensive role of psychologists to provide preventive, competence promotion across intellectual, academic, mental health, and socio-emotional areas of functioning.
- Q *Does MSU accept transfer credits into the School Psychology program?*
- A Up to 10 credits may be accepted if approved by the faculty and not more than 5 years old.

## PERSONAL GOAL STATEMENT APPLICATION FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

In the initial paragraph of your personal statement clearly specify the degree program to which you are applying (PhD or EdS) and the rationale for this decision. This rationale should include a description of your vision of the opportunities afforded by the degree you are seeking and an overview of your goals upon completion of the program.

The remaining paragraphs of your personal statement should concisely and effectively provide support for your interest in the MSU program and the skills and competencies that you think would fit well into the program's philosophy. Discuss how your academic and personal background prepares you to be successful in this rigorous and demanding graduate program. This should include a discussion of your undergraduate field of study, your performance within these courses, evidence of your experience with children, youth, and families across multiple settings, and other information to help the committee in its review of your application for admission.

As a general guide, the committee has found that applicants typically need two to three pages to succinctly communicate how their past experiences are likely to lead to future success within our program. Your personal statement should close with a brief summary of your background and goals.

**DEPARTMENT APPLICATION FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSION  
School Psychology**

**Application Deadlines:  
Ph.D. – DECEMBER 1.**

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM**

Application for: Fall Semester 20 \_\_\_\_\_ Type or Print Legibly!

Ms. \_\_\_\_\_  
Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_  
Miss \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Last Name First Name Middle  
\_\_\_\_\_ PID (if previous MSU student) Birth Date

E-mail Address:

Permanent mailing address:

Phone (include international code)

Day:

Evening:

FAX:

Temporary (current) mailing address:

Phone:

Day:

Evening:

Last Date to receive mail at this address:

FAX :

Check program for which you are applying:

School Psychology  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ph.D.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM**

Graduate Record Examination (GRE) – Date taken or planned: \_\_\_\_\_

Scores (if known): Verbal \_\_\_\_\_ Quantitative \_\_\_\_\_ Analytical \_\_\_\_\_

TOEFL Score (Total) \_\_\_\_\_ **(THIS IS A REQUIREMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS)**

Do you have teaching experience? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Fill in years & level: K-12 \_\_\_\_\_ community college/2 year \_\_\_\_\_ 4 year Institution \_\_\_\_\_

**Degrees earned (or in progress)**

<u>Institution and location</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Field of Study-Major/Minor</u>	<u>Date earned/expected</u>
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Undergraduate GPA last 2 years:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Overall Undergraduate GPA:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Overall Graduate GPA:

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSION  
School Psychology**

**Application Deadlines:  
Ph.D. – DECEMBER 1.**

**DO NOT RETURN THIS FORM**

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS REQUIRED:**  
(Please use this as a personal checklist)

**University Admissions Application**

Application Fee:  
**\$50.00**

**Departmental Application**

**Statement of Goals**

Statement Format is on the website

**Two (2) official copies of transcripts**  
from all previous institutions attended.  
These must be sent directly from the  
institution; please contact the  
Registrar's Office at the institutions  
you attended for appropriate  
procedures and fee information.

**Three Letters of Recommendation**

Must be submitted on letterhead  
stationery of recommender's school or  
company.

**Graduate Record Examination**

Information on testing may be obtained  
from the:  
MSU Counseling Center  
Testing Office  
207 Student Services Building  
East Lansing, 517-355-8385

**Vita or Resume**

List professional experience, awards,  
honors, publications, presentations,  
professional affiliations, and  
professional development activities.

**Writing Sample**

A writing sample is required for all  
Ph.D. program.

**[Conviction Disclosure Form](#)**

**PLEASE SEND ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS TO:**

Ayodele Webb, Admissions Secretary  
CEPSE  
Michigan State University  
447 Erickson Hall  
East Lansing, MI 48824-1034 USA  
[cepadmis@msu.edu](mailto:cepadmis@msu.edu)