

**Stephen F. Austin State University**  
**JAMES I. PERKINS COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**  
**Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership**



# Ph.D. in School and Health Service Psychology Program

Program Approved by the  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

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## Doctoral Student Handbook 2025-2026

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# Program Resources

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## Welcome

Dear Student,

On behalf of the faculty, staff, and students of the Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership at Stephen F. Austin State University, we welcome you to the School and Health Service Psychology Doctoral Program. Whether you are coming to us from near or far, you are joining a dynamic community of faculty and students who are engaged in learning, teaching, research, and professional leadership in the field of School and Health Service Psychology. With the ongoing advancement of research and professional practice, we believe that the spirit of inquiry and the dedication to professionalism that flows from the scientist-practitioner model will be a career-long gift. We hope you will find the School and Health Service Psychology Program, the Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership, the James I. Perkins College of Education, and University to be an exciting, stimulating environment in which to grow professionally and personally.

The role of a school and health service psychologist is a complex one that requires a variety of technical skills and personal qualities to be successful. Care has been taken to sort out the skills, knowledge, and qualities that should prepare you to work effectively with future clients and varied work settings. However, no training program can singularly develop all that is necessary. Your professional development ultimately depends upon your own abilities, desires, and initiative to learn and grow. By joining our program, you are also joining the specialty of school and health service psychology. Your experience as part of the psychology community will be enhanced by becoming a student member of such organizations as the American Psychological Association (APA), Texas Psychological Association (TPA), National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), and Texas Association of School Psychologists (TASP), among others. We strongly encourage membership in professional organizations and active engagement in our program-level student organization, which will prove beneficial in becoming a part of our local community.

The program faculty members have prepared this handbook to serve as a guide while you complete the doctoral program. We suggest you use it as your first source of reference for any questions you may have; however, please remember that the faculty is the best point of contact you have with the program.

The SFASU School and Health Service Psychology Faculty

## General Information about the Doctoral Program

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) is a regional university located in Nacogdoches, TX, a thriving historic community nestled in the beautiful piney woods of East Texas, only 132 miles from Houston and 165 miles from Dallas. With a student population of approximately 13,000, SFA has a strong reputation for excellence. Located within the SFA Perkins College of Education (PCOE) Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership, the School and Health Service Psychology Program has a long-standing commitment to engagement in cutting edge research, training practices, and the integration of technology.

Graduates of the School and Health Service Psychology Doctoral Program have a high rate of employability upon graduation and licensure. Typically, students in the program receive multiple job offers prior to, or shortly after, graduation. It is common for school districts and special agencies to contact program faculty with openings throughout the year for full and part time School Psychologists in Texas and around the country. Further, many of our graduates work in independent clinical practices or at higher education institutions. The State of Texas (and places across the country) have continued to identify a high need for School Psychologists and Psychologists in rural areas.

### Graduate Program Characteristics

The program accepts 8-10 students per year and maintains a consistent number of 30-35 (4-year average = 32.5) students enrolled in any given year. Although there have been ups and downs in the past years, the average number of degrees awarded per year is 6, a trend that has maintained over the past 4 years. The program has an attrition rate of 20%.

Racial/ethnic minority enrollment is currently at approximately 50% of the total doctoral enrollment in School and Health Service Psychology. There has been a consistent number of individuals identifying as Latino, Black, two or more races, and/or as international students since 2021. Currently, about 80% of the students are female. Students come from different socioeconomic and geographical backgrounds, and most enrolled students have bachelor's or master's degrees in psychology or education.

All graduates within one year of graduation are currently employed by public schools, private practices and/or universities. Based on a survey completed by 13 graduates from 2020-2024, all graduates are currently employed in the field. Five (5) are employed at K-12 campuses, five (5) work in private practice, one (1) in a college/university setting, one (1) in a combined K-12 campus and private practice, and one (1) in a combined college/university and private practice.

All graduates within the last 4 years hold a Licensed Specialist of School Psychology (LSSP) in Texas. The majority also are Provisionally Licensed Psychologists (PLP) in Texas and two have secured the Licensed Psychologist (LP) status. Salary ranges were between \$61,000 and \$100,000 per year.

## **The School and Health Service Psychology Doctoral Program**

The SFA School and Health Service Psychology Doctoral Program was authorized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) in 2009, and the 99-hours post-baccalaureate PhD track was authorized by THECB in 2018. Since 2009, the doctoral program has been dedicated to producing ethical, responsible, and competent school psychologists who employ scientific knowledge and methods of critical and creative problem-solving.

### **Program Aim**

The aim of our program is to apply scientific knowledge and methods to the assessment and treatment of learning, behavior, and psychosocial problems in general and special education populations in public and private schools as well as clinical practice. Our program emphasizes critical thinking, communication, personal responsibility, social responsibility, empirical and quantitative skills, and teamwork. Students in the School and Health Service Psychology Program will be prepared to become licensed doctoral-level health service psychologists who can work effectively with children and families. In addition, our students may be employed as educators, researchers, and/or practitioners in public schools and higher education as well as health service psychologists in community mental health facilities, hospital/medical settings, and independent practice.

### **Program Overview**

The School and Health Service Psychology Doctoral Program at SFA is a residential program that embraces a scientist-practitioner model of training in which practice, research, and theory are considered integrated components. The program views the role of scientist-practitioner as one who is: (1) a consumer of empirically based practices, (2) a reflective decision maker regarding professional actions and, (3) a researcher who collects data from their own setting(s) and reports these findings to the professional community. The program adheres to the idea that practice and research should reciprocally influence and strengthen each other. The program prepares students to integrate scientific knowledge and skills into all professional activities, promote empirically established practices on behalf of those being served, and exemplify the legal and ethical standards of the psychology profession.

### **Program's contributions**

As one of four doctoral programs at SFA, the Ph.D. in School and Health Service Psychology program helps address the growing demand for school psychologists in Texas and nationwide. Thus, the program contributes to SFA's mission by supporting the needs of children, families, and other individuals who require mental health services and behavioral support. The faculty and students within the program engage in research activities and promote evidence-based practices in psychology. This helps SFA stand as a quality education, research, and service institution.

The program offers and promotes several community engagement opportunities. For example, our School Psychology Assessment Center (SPAC) offers low-cost psychological assessments to SFA students and community members. Moreover, students and faculty often engage with local

schools, clinics, and serving institutions. These initiatives help SFA's role as a community partner.

## Accreditation

Stephen F. Austin State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as a Bachelor's, Master's, Specialist, and Doctoral degree granting institution. The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accredits teacher education programs at the bachelor's, master's, and specialist's degree levels. The program maintains National Association of School Psychology (NASP) approval through CAEP. The SFA Graduate School adheres to the Guidelines of the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States, and the SFA School and Health Service Psychology Program adheres to the Council's charge to protect the rights of students.

The program is not accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA).

\*Questions related to the program's accredited status should be directed to the Commission on Accreditation:

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation  
American Psychological Association  
750 1st Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: (202) 336-5979 / E-mail: [apaaccred@apa.org](mailto:apaaccred@apa.org)  
Web: [www.apa.org/ed/accreditation](http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation)

## State Licensure and Certification

Graduates of this program qualify for licensure as a Licensed Psychologist (LP) and as Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) in Texas. Licensure requires meeting the Rules of the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council (BHEC) and Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP). In addition to the degree in School and Health Service Psychology, students must pass a national exam for licensure: the Examination for the Professional Practice of Psychology (EPPP) for licensure as a psychologist (doctoral level) or as a licensed psychological associate (Master's level); or the National School and Health Service Psychology Examination (ETS/NTE #40) for licensure as a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP). Both levels of licensure, Licensed Psychologist and Licensed Specialist in School Psychology, require the passing of a state jurisprudence exam as well. Other requirements include a one-year doctoral internship supervised by licensed psychologists, and a one-year postdoctoral experience supervised by a licensed psychologist. Provisional licensure must be acquired prior to full licensure. EPPP and the Jurisprudence examination must be passed prior to this. TSBEP Rules change frequently. It is the responsibility of the student to remain informed of these changes. TSBEP has set rigid deadlines and guidelines, and students should request their information packet, and review it carefully to be well prepared for licensure. The licensing process is an expensive process. Current information can be found on the [BHEC website](http://www.bhec.org).



**State Licensure as a Licensed Specialist in School Service Psychology (LSSP) in the State of Texas** includes meeting the requirements of the BHEC and TSBEP. Subsequent to the degree in School and Health Service Psychology from a regionally accredited university, candidates must pass a national exam for licensure: the **Praxis School Psychologist** exam. These examinations are administered every other month beginning in January. Texas' minimum passing score for Licensed Specialists in School Psychology is 147. Licensure requires the passing of a state jurisprudence exam within 6 months of application. The Jurisprudence Examination is required of all candidates for licensure and covers the Texas Psychologists' Licensing Act, Board Rules, and applicable Texas laws.

Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council  
333 Guadalupe, Suite 3-900  
Austin, TX 78701  
512-305-7700  
[www.bhec.texas.gov](http://www.bhec.texas.gov)

**Certification as a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP)**

NASP offers the NCSP credential. *All students are required to take and pass the Praxis School Psychologist examination during the summer prior to enrollment in SPSY 6154 School and Health Service Psychology Internship.* To obtain certification as an NCSP, students must complete the NCSP examination and have their credentials successfully reviewed by the NCSP Board (administered by NASP)). Continued NCSP certification requires ongoing professional development with 75 documented clock hours of in-service education every three years. An application packet for the NCSP may be obtained from:

National Association of School Psychologists  
4340 East West Highway, Suite 402  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
301-657-0270

## Faculty

The program faculty body is composed of state licensed and/or nationally certified psychologists, school psychologists, or professionals having expertise in a content area deemed relevant in training school and health service psychologists. Graduate training in School and Health Service Psychology is complemented by the expertise and resources provided by faculty in the Departments of Psychology and Human Services and Educational Leadership. This interdisciplinary approach affords students a broader perspective of the field of psychology. The faculty of the program pride themselves in the practice of offering students individualized guidance and supervision as well as opportunities for continuous personal interaction between students and professors. Ethical practice is modeled, expected, and enforced. Ethics and professional practice standards are discussed across several classes and applied in practica and internship.

Program faculty members are dedicated to working with students in a close mentoring relationship to prepare them for doctoral-level practice and research. Students are encouraged to pursue outside experiences and professional interactions (e.g., professional organization membership, presentations at regional and national conferences, and publications in refereed professional journals). In particular, faculty are dedicated to working with students from diverse and multicultural backgrounds and are particularly interested in promoting the achievements of students from underrepresented populations.

### Core Faculty

**Dr. Nina Ellis Hervey (1.0 FTE)** acts as the *director for the program*. In her role as program director, Dr. Hervey oversees the program's operations, including curriculum development, faculty recruitment, student admissions, and overall program quality. Dr. Ellis-Hervey's expertise in the field of school psychology and licenses in Texas and Louisiana enable her to ensure that the program offers a high-quality education that meets the needs of students pursuing careers in the field. Dr. Ellis-Hervey is an award-winning Licensed Clinical and School Psychologist (Texas & Louisiana), a Nationally Certified School Psychologist, a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology in the state of Texas and a Certified Professional Life Coach. She is the director of the School Psychology Assessment Center. Her research interests include locus of control and self-esteem, findings of evidence-based treatments for children with autism spectrum disorder, psychological assessments, the significance of natural hair and personal presentation in multicultural men and women, the use of social media in education, and holistic health and wellness.

**Dr. Luis E. Aguerrevere (1.0 FTE)** is responsible for assessment, student recruitment, and retention. He helps to assess the program's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement, ensuring that the program meets its goals and objectives. He also works to recruit and retain a diverse student body. Dr. Aguerrevere's work helps to ensure that the program continues to attract and retain students who are committed to making a difference in the field of psychology. Dr. Aguerrevere is from Barquisimeto, Venezuela. He has a Bachelor of Science in psychology from Tennessee Technological University and a Master of Science and PhD in applied biopsychology from the University of New Orleans, with a concentration in clinical psychology. He is a licensed psychological associate (LPA)-independent practice in the state of Texas. Dr.

Aguerrevere has expertise in research and publications focused on the effectiveness of neuropsychological assessments in detecting poor effort in traumatic brain injury, chronic pain, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. He has supervised over fifteen dissertations in his tenure.

**Dr. Alison Bradford (1.0 FTE)** serves as the *Training Director for the School and Health Service Psychology Ph.D. Program at Stephen F. Austin State University*. She is responsible for developing and implementing the training programs that prepare our students. Dr. Bradford works closely with all faculty members and practicum supervisors to help ensure training sites integrate theoretical knowledge with direct practical experience. In short, Dr. Bradford's work ensures that students receive the best possible training and are prepared to make a positive impact in their future careers. She holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English, a Master's degree in School Psychology, and a Doctorate in School Psychology. Prior to joining the program, Dr. Bradford worked for six years as a Licensed Specialist of School Psychology (LSSP) in East Texas Independent School Districts. Currently, she is a Provisionally Licensed Psychologist (PLP).

## Other Essential Staff

### **Internship Director**

**Dr. Frankie Clark (0.3 FTE)** acts as the program supervisor of internship courses for the Ph.D. program. Her 30 years of providing mental health services to the community significantly contribute to shaping the practical experiences and professional development of those students in the internship year. Dr. Clark is also the Training Director of the APA-accredited SFA Charter School Doctoral Internship Program, which corresponds to her 0.7 FTE.

### **Administrative Assistant**

**Mrs. Jessica Cobb (0.5 FTE)** is the program's administrative assistant. Mrs. Cobb handles routine inquiries from both prospective and current students, assists with scheduling meetings, and provides logistical support for faculty members. She helps organize advising sessions, maintain student records, and coordinate student activities related to the program.

## Affiliated Faculty

### **Dr. Amanda Rudolf**

*Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction*

Dr. Rudolf brings extensive expertise in curriculum design, instructional strategies, and teacher education. She teaches core courses in educational research methods, guiding students in understanding quantitative and qualitative approaches to inquiry, research design, data analysis, and the ethical considerations inherent in conducting research in educational and psychological settings.

### **Dr. Joseph Kartye**

*Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology*

Dr. Kartye is a licensed psychologist with clinical expertise in psychotherapy, assessment, and counselor training. He teaches a range of therapy and intervention courses, with an emphasis on

evidence-based practices, therapeutic techniques, and multicultural competence. His instruction prepares students for practicum placements and future licensure.

**Dr. Glen McCuller**

*Ph.D. in Special Education*

With a focus on behavioral interventions and inclusive practices, Dr. McCuller teaches courses related to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and behavioral supports for individuals with developmental and learning differences. His courses equip students with the theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary to implement behaviorally-informed strategies across diverse settings.

**Dr. Sarah Savoy**

*Ph.D. in Socioemotional Development*

Dr. Savoy specializes in the developmental trajectories of emotional and social functioning across the lifespan. She teaches courses in developmental psychology and social psychology, integrating foundational theory with contemporary research to help students understand socioemotional development in diverse populations and contexts.

## **Facilities and Equipment**

The PhD in School and Health Service Psychology is located within the Human Services and Telecommunications building (HSTC). The HSTC houses programs in School Psychology, Professional Counseling, and Communication Disorders. It includes modern Zoom classrooms and labs with technology that supports teaching, service, and research activities. Each program faculty has an office and assigned desktop or laptop computer. These computers are replaced every five years. Typically, two graduate students share an office for semi-private office hours. The HSTC has a network infrastructure that accommodates gigabit Ethernet to the desktop for high-speed networking. It contains Interactive Television classrooms with H.323 protocol and H.320 backward compatibility. There is a digital video editing facility that allows users to stream media feeds for interactive internet-distributed multimedia content. All classrooms have Zoom and ethernet connectivity for student use as well as multimedia presentation capability, internet access, document cameras and sophisticated built-in computer systems. In addition, the building and campus offer wireless connection capability for students.

In addition to the above facilities and resources, the HSTC also contains the School Psychology Assessment Center (SPAC), Human Neuroscience Laboratory (HNL), Human Services Counseling Clinic, Stanley Speech and Hearing Clinic, and Cole Audiology Laboratory. The SPAC, HNL and Counseling Clinic serve as training facilities for School and Health Service Psychology students:

- The SPAC at SFA is a graduate training facility that serves both the university community and the surrounding areas of Nacogdoches, Texas. It offers psychological assessments for various disorders, including ADHD, learning disabilities, depression, anxiety, autism spectrum disorders, and more. These assessments are administered by school psychology graduate students under the supervision of licensed psychologists, providing hands-on training while also delivering affordable mental health services to the public.
- The HNL is a state-of-the-art facility focused on understanding how the brain supports human behavior. In this laboratory Dr. Luis Aguerrevere offers training in quantitative electroencephalography (qEEG), eye tracking technology, biofeedback, and neurofeedback systems.
- The Counseling Clinic offers therapeutic services conducted by graduate students who operate under the guidance of licensed psychologists and professional counselors. It also is a training facility for graduate students working toward their advanced degrees, serving individuals, couples, families, and community groups.

## Training

Situated within the Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership in the Perkins College of Education, the doctoral program emphasizes the professional identity of school and health service psychologists within the broader field of psychology.. The program also delivers an education that values and respects cultural diversity among students, faculty, and service recipients. The SFA School and Health Service Psychology Program stresses the applied scientific nature of psychology and its professional and ethical responsibilities to those it serves while respecting the cultural diversity of those with whom the faculty and students work. Training orientations combine assessment and intervention as well as the social ecological model as the central unifying scientific themes in understanding human behavior in working with children, youth, families, and schools.

## Degree Requirement policy

To successfully complete the program, students must complete all degree requirements. The Ph.D. program is a full-time on-campus program that typically requires five years of post-baccalaureate study to complete, including four years of coursework followed by a one-year full-time doctoral internship. A minimum residency of at least the first four years of full-time study must be met. Students are required to complete the program within ten years of the initial enrollment date. A minimum of 72 credit hours, 600 practicum hours, 1600 internship hours, and completion of a faculty committee-approved dissertation are required for successful completion of the Ph.D. program. The curriculum is designed to support students in meeting these requirements. The degree plan (see below) is designed to provide students with the knowledge and training necessary for entry into the field of school and health service psychology. The curriculum was developed by the faculty to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to work effectively with members of the public.

Students demonstrate their readiness for entry-level practice in school and health service psychology by meeting the following requirements:

1. Complete all required and elective coursework with a “B” or better
2. Complete all practicum training with a “P” (pass)
3. Obtain a Pass on the Comprehensive Exam
4. Successfully complete an Internship
5. Complete and successfully defend a dissertation
6. If applicable, the successful completion of any remediation plan implemented to support the student in meeting expectations

## Program Residency and Modality

To ensure a cohesive, immersive, and developmentally appropriate doctoral training experience, the program requires a minimum residency period of three (4) consecutive years of full-time study (3-years for advanced placement). This residency requirement is critical for fostering intensive mentoring relationships, professional socialization, academic rigor, and community building.

During this required residency period:

- All coursework during the fall and spring (long) semesters in the first three years (2 years for advanced placement) must be completed through in-person, face-to-face instruction. This approach ensures that students engage in rich academic discourse, receive direct faculty supervision, and benefit from immediate feedback and peer collaboration in a structured learning environment.
- Summer courses may be offered in either face-to-face or synchronous live-stream formats, depending on course design and instructional needs. Regardless of delivery mode, all summer coursework maintains high levels of interaction and academic integrity consistent with the program's expectations for doctoral-level education.
- Practicum courses, which typically occur in the fourth year of study, are delivered via synchronous live-stream. This modality provides students with the necessary flexibility to secure and engage in supervised field placements in a variety of settings while continuing to participate in structured academic support and supervision from program faculty.

This structure supports compliance with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board requirements and aligns with APA accreditation standards emphasizing the importance of face-to-face training for the development of professional competencies in psychology.

### Program Learning Outcomes

1. **Human Diversity:** Candidates should demonstrate awareness and sensitivity when working professionally with diverse individuals, groups, and communities.
2. **Psychoeducational Foundations:** Candidates must demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the historical, political, and legal aspects, as well as policies and procedures that impact the fields of psychology and education.
3. **Content Knowledge:** Candidates must demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge of biological, psychological, sociocultural, ethical, and legal factors to understand both typical and atypical behavior.
4. **Research & Technology:** Candidates must demonstrate the ability to apply their knowledge of research, statistics, and evaluation methods to inform all areas of practice, from selecting appropriate methods for collecting information to making recommendations for interventions based on empirical evidence.
5. **Professional Skills and Dispositions:** Candidates must conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the values and attitudes associated with the American Psychological Association policies and guidelines. The candidate will demonstrate knowledge, skills, and professional work characteristics/dispositions, effectively applying them in practice.
6. **Application of Principles and Procedures:** Assessment should demonstrate candidates' effective application of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the practice of School and Health Service psychology. As part of this assessment, each candidate must document the ability to use both problem-solving (client-centered) and process-focused (consultee-centered) models of consultation.



7. **Communication:** The candidate must demonstrate proficiency in communication skills relevant to the field of psychology, both written and spoken. This may include, but is not limited to, effective writing for different purposes, proficient presentation skills for various audiences and purposes, and appropriate interpersonal skills.

## Program Curriculum

### Alignment with APA

The APA Commission on Accreditation's [Standards of Accreditation](#) outline four categories of Discipline Specific Knowledge and nine Profession-Wide Competencies. The program curriculum has been designed to train students in each of these key areas, as described below. .

#### Discipline-Specific Knowledge (DSK)

The Ph.D. in School and Health Service Psychology program at Stephen F. Austin State University utilizes a comprehensive curriculum to train all students in APA's Discipline-Specific Knowledge (DSK) areas.

The four DSK categories outlined by APA are:

1. History and Systems of Psychology
2. Basic Content Areas in Scientific Psychology (*Affective Aspects of Behavior, Biological Aspects of Behavior, Cognitive Aspects of Behavior, Developmental Aspects of Behavior, Social Aspects of Behavior*)
3. Advanced Integrative Knowledge in Scientific Psychology.
4. Research Methods, Statistical Analysis, and Psychometrics (Research Methods, Statistical Analysis, Psychometrics)

Courses are designed to address these DSK categories by providing students with the requisite foundational knowledge and skills in psychology for the practice of school psychology and beyond. Students are required to complete a range of courses on topics such as developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, social psychology, social/personality theory, and neuroscience, among others. In addition, students are required to complete courses in research methods, statistics, and psychometrics which provide them with the necessary skills to design and conduct research in psychology.

#### General Knowledge Courses

<b>Class</b>	<b>APA's DSK Area</b>
History and Systems (SPSY 6349)-	<i>History and Systems of Psychology</i>
Learning Theory (SPSY 6301)	<i>Affective Aspects of Behavior and Cognitive Aspects of Behavior</i>
Human Neuroscience (SPSY 6314)	<i>Biological Aspects of Behavior</i>
Human Growth and Development (SPSY 6344)	<i>Developmental Aspects of Behavior</i>
Social Bases of Behavior and Personality (SPSY 6343)	<i>Social Aspects of Behavior</i>
Biopsychological Interventions (SPSY 6317)	<i>Advanced Integrative Knowledge of Basic Discipline-Specific Content Areas (Biological/Affective)</i>
Quantitative Research Methods (SPSY 6331)	<i>Research Methods</i>



Introduction to Educational Research (RSCH 6311)	<i>Research Methods</i>
Multivariate Statistics (SPSY 6335)	<i>Statistical Analysis</i>
Psychometrics and Clinical Research (SPSY 6334)	<i>Psychometrics</i>

## Profession-Wide Competencies (PWC)

The Ph.D. in School and Health Service Psychology program at Stephen F. Austin State University has developed a comprehensive plan to ensure that students develop proficiency in the nine Profession-Wide Competencies (PWCs) through active participation in didactic, research, and experiential learning.

The nine PWCs outlined by APA are:

1. Research
2. Ethical and Legal Standards
3. Individual and Cultural Diversity
4. Professional Values and Attitudes
5. Communication and Interpersonal Skills
6. Assessment
7. Intervention
8. Supervision
9. Consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills

## Courses by Competency

### 1. Research

To ensure competency in [research and evaluation](#), the program offers coursework and supervised training experiences in research methods and statistics, as well as opportunities for students to conduct research and program evaluations.

- Introduction to Educational Research (RSCH 6311)
- Quantitative Research Methods (SPSY 6331)
- Psychometrics and Clinical Research (SPSY 6334)
- Multivariate Statistics (SPSY 6335)
- Single Subjects Design (SPSY 6336)
- Dissertation (SPSY 6138)

### 2. Ethical

To ensure competency in [ethical and legal standards](#), the program provides coursework and supervised training experiences in professional ethics and legal requirements relevant to the practice of School and Health Service psychology. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge of professional ethical standards and legal requirements, as well as the ability to apply them in practice.

- Ethics (SPSY 6348)
- Introduction to School and Health Service Psychology (SPSY 6342)
- Practicum (SPSY 6353)

### 3. Diversity

To ensure competency in diversity, the program provides coursework and supervised training experiences that emphasize multicultural competence, cultural humility, and the application of psychological principles to diverse populations. Students are required to demonstrate the ability to recognize, respect, and adapt services to cultural, linguistic, and individual differences.

- Multicultural Issues and Systems in Schools (SPSY 6323)
- Severe Developmental Disabilities/Autism (SPSY 6305)
- Practicum (SPSY 6353)

### 4. Professional

To ensure competency in professional identity and behavior, the program emphasizes coursework and supervised experiences that focus on consultation, supervision, and the role of psychologists in school and health service settings. Students must demonstrate professional responsibility, accountability, and commitment to lifelong learning.

- Introduction to School and Health Service Psychology (SPSY 6342)
- Consultation and Supervision (SPSY 6303)
- Practicum (SPSY 6353)

### 5. Communication and Interpersonal Skills

To ensure competency in communication and interpersonal skills, the program requires coursework and training experiences that promote clear written and oral communication, collaborative problem-solving, and effective interpersonal interaction with clients, families, and professionals. Students demonstrate these skills in both academic and applied settings.

- Introduction to Educational Research (RSCH 6311)
- Psychometrics and Clinical Research (SPSY 6334)
- Introduction to School and Health Service Psychology (SPSY 6342)
- Dissertation (SPSY 6138)
- Practicum (SPSY 6353)

### 6. Assessment

- To ensure competency in [assessment](#), the program provides coursework and supervised training experiences in various assessment techniques, including cognitive, behavioral, and social-emotional assessments. Students also are required to demonstrate proficiency in administering, scoring, and interpreting standardized tests commonly used in school and in child clinical/counseling psychology practice. Child and Adolescent Psychopathology (SPSY 6346)
- Child Assessment (SPSY 6315)
- Individual Intelligence Testing (SPSY 6312)
- Psychoeducational Assessment (SPSY 6311)
- Neuropsychological Assessment (SPSY 6316)
- Practicum (SPSY 6353)

### 7. Intervention

To ensure competency in [intervention and prevention](#), the program offers coursework and supervised training experiences in evidence-based interventions for a wide range of behavioral,

academic, and social-emotional problems. Students are required to demonstrate proficiency in designing and implementing interventions, as well as evaluating their effectiveness.

- Child and Adolescent Therapy (SPSY 6321)
- Advanced Family Therapy (SPSY 6322)
- Applied Behavior Analysis (SPSY 6306)
- Practicum (SPSY 6353)

#### 8. Supervision

To ensure competency in supervision, the program offers coursework and supervised practice focused on supervisory skills, including providing constructive feedback, fostering professional growth, and ensuring ethical practice. Students demonstrate competency by applying supervisory techniques in practicum and supervised settings.

- Consultation and Supervision (SPSY 6303)
- Practicum (SPSY 6353)

#### 9. Consultation

To ensure competency in **consultation and collaboration**, the program provides coursework and supervised training experiences in the principles and techniques of consultation and collaboration with other professionals, parents, and community members. Students are required to demonstrate proficiency in developing and implementing collaborative interventions that involve multiple stakeholders.

- Consultation and Supervision (SPSY 6303)
- Practicum (SPSY 6353)

### **Alignment with NASP**

The Ph.D. in School and Health Service Psychology at Stephen F. Austin State University is consistent with National Association for School Psychologists requirements in multiple ways:

#### **Alignment with NASP Training Standards –**

- *Comprehensive Curriculum:* The program covers NASP's 10 Domains of Practice through its coursework and field experiences, including data-based decision making, consultation and collaboration, academic and behavioral interventions, diversity, research, legal/ethical practice, and program evaluation. These align with NASP's Graduate Preparation Standards.
- *Integration of Theory, Research, and Practice:* Following a scientist-practitioner model, the program blends empirical foundations with applied skills, a core NASP expectation for specialist- and doctoral-level preparation.
- *Supervised Field Experiences:* Practicum and internship sequences meet NASP requirements for supervised experiences in school and related settings, including at least 600 school-based internship hours and training under credentialed school

psychologists.

- *Assessment and Intervention Competence:* Multiple courses and practica develop student competence in psychoeducational, cognitive, behavioral, and neuropsychological assessment, as well as evidence-based academic, behavioral, and social-emotional interventions.
  - *Cultural and Individual Diversity:* The program integrates diversity and multicultural issues across coursework, practica, and research, consistent with NASP's emphasis on culturally responsive practice.
  - *Ethical and Legal Practice:* The curriculum includes dedicated ethics coursework plus ongoing integration of professional standards into training, meeting NASP's expectation for competence in legal and ethical service delivery.
- **NCSP Eligibility** – All students take and must pass the Praxis School Psychologist Examination before internship, positioning them to apply for NASP's *Nationally Certified School Psychologist* credential.

## Degree Plan

The plan of study is developed prior to admission into the School and Health Service Psychology program and must be reviewed and approved by the full body of program faculty, copied, and sent to the Graduate Dean. A copy of the approved plan of study is forwarded to the student and maintained in the local files with the program secretary. Below is an example degree plan for students standard placement:

### Sample Degree Plan for Standard Placement (99- hours)

#### Year 1

##### Fall

- RSCH 6311 – Intro. to Educational Research
- SPSY 6342 – Introduction to School and Health Service Psychology
- SPSY 6311 – Psychoeducational Assessment

##### Spring

- SPSY 6348 – Ethics
- SPSY 6347 – Advanced School Psychology
- SPSY 6312 – Individual Intelligence Testing

##### Summer

- SPSY 6346 – Child and Adolescent Psychopathology
  - SPSY 6344 – Human Growth and Development
- 

#### Year 2

##### Fall

- SPSY 6331 – Quantitative Research Methods
- SPSY 6315 – Child Assessment
- SPSY 6314 – Human Neuroscience

##### Spring

- SPSY 6321 – Child and Adolescent Therapy
- SPSY 6301 – Learning and Cognition
- SPSY 6306 – Applied Behavior Analysis

##### Summer

- SPSY 6336 – Single Subject Design
  - SPSY 6323 – Multicultural Issues in Schools
- 

#### Year 3

##### Fall

- SPSY 6322 – Advanced Family Therapy
- SPSY 6334 – Psychometrics
- SPSY 6303 – Consultation and Supervision

##### Spring

- SPSY 6353 – Practicum
- SPSY 6335 – Multivariate Statistics
- SPSY 6316 – Neuropsychological Assessment

##### Summer

- SPSY 6317 – Biopsychological Interventions
  - SPSY 6343 – Social Bases of Behavior and Personality
- 

#### Year 4

##### Fall

- SPSY 6353 – Practicum
- SPSY 6138 – Dissertation
- SPSY 6305 – Severe Developmental Disabilities/Autism

##### Spring

- SPSY 6353 – Practicum
- SPSY 6349 – History and Systems
- SPSY 6138 – Dissertation

##### Summer

- SPSY 6138 – Dissertation
  - PRAXIS
  - Comprehensive Exam
- 

#### Year 5

##### Fall

- SPSY 6154 – Internship

##### Spring

- SPSY 6154 – Internship

## Admissions

Following the guidelines of APA, the program's faculty members take steps to ensure that all qualified students and faculty are welcome within the program, regardless of their backgrounds. Thus, program faculty seek to create a learning environment where individuals of all backgrounds have the opportunity to learn and make contributions to the profession of psychology. Consistent with such efforts, the program faculty act to ensure a supportive and encouraging learning environment appropriate for the training of individuals and the provision of training opportunities *for all individuals* in the program. Further, the program faculty avoids any actions that would restrict program access on grounds that are irrelevant to success in graduate training. The program implements a thoughtful and coherent plan to provide students with relevant knowledge and experiences about the role of cultural and individual diversity in psychological phenomena as they relate to the science and practice of professional psychology.

The following are the minimum core requirements to apply to the Ph.D Program:

- Completion of a bachelor's degree in psychology or closely related field from an accredited college or university verified by submission of undergraduate transcripts, with a minimum 3.0 undergraduate GPA
- Applicants with completed graduate course work should submit graduate transcripts with a minimum 3.2 GPA. Applicants with master's degrees in Health Service Psychology areas could be eligible for advancement placement (see below)
- The most competitive undergraduate juniors in psychology or psychology-related fields may apply for early admission to the Ph.D. program through the SFA Overlap Program <https://www.sfasu.edu/academics/orgs/graduate-admissions>
- Three letters of recommendation from academic faculty and/or work supervisors who can evaluate the applicant's qualifications for graduate study
- A statement of interest in the program, including a description of how the program fits with the applicant's long-term career goals
- Current resume or curriculum vitae
- Completion of a Livestream interview with the program faculty
- Submission of a "live" written sample
- Applicants are not required to submit Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) results as part of the admissions packet

### Admission Decisions

Admission decisions are based on full faculty review of applications, size of incoming cohort, and consideration of the collective body of application materials. Applications are due **March 15th** of each year. Applicant interviews will occur at the end of March. Graduate Teaching and Research Assistant (GTA/GRA) applications also will be considered at this time.

*It is anticipated that the program will accept 7-8 new students per year, with emphasis on attracting a highly qualified student population.*

## Advanced Placement

A select number of students may qualify for advanced placement, which requires students to complete 72 semester hours, including the full-time academic year internship (see below).

To qualify for this track, students must:

- Hold a master's degree in School, Clinical, or Counseling Psychology from a regionally accredited institution
- Grades of B or better on ALL graduate-level courses:
  - Introduction to a health service psychology area (i.e., School, Clinical or Counseling Psychology)-3 credit hours
  - Abnormal Psychology or Psychopathology- 3 credit hours
  - Assessment- 6 credit hours
  - Ethics- 3 credit hours
  - Multiculture- 3 credit hours
  - Intervention (e.g. therapy, counseling, ABA, etc.)- 6 credit hours
  - Supervised practica/internship (at least 300 hours).

*To be considered for advanced placement within the doctoral program, courses must meet all of the following criteria:*

- 1. The course must have been completed at a regionally accredited institution.*
- 2. The course must be classified and transcribed as graduate-level coursework.*
- 3. The course must have been completed within ten (10) years prior to the student's matriculation into the doctoral program.*
- 4. A grade of B or better must have been earned in the course.*
- 5. The course must clearly meet the content requirements for either a Discipline-Specific Knowledge (DSK) area or a Profession-Wide Competency (PWC) as delineated in the program's curriculum. A current syllabus must be provided and will be reviewed by program faculty with expertise in the relevant content area.*
- 6. The course must have been delivered in person or in a blended/hybrid format. Fully online courses are not eligible for advanced placement consideration.*

Below is an example degree plan for students advanced placement (72 hours plan):

**Year 1**

**Fall**

- RSCH 6311 – Intro. to Educational Research
- SPSY 6314 – Human Neuroscience
- SPSY 6315 – Child Assessment

**Spring**

- SPSY 6306 -- Applied Behavior Analysis
- SPSY 6301 – Learning Theory
- SPSY 6347 Adv. School Psychology

**Summer**

- SPSY 6305 – Severe Developmental Disabilities/Autism
- SPSY 6344 – Human Growth and Development

**Year 2**

**Fall**

- SPSY 6331 – Quantitative Research Methods
- SPSY 6334 – Psychometrics
- SPSY 6303 – Consultation and Supervision

**Spring**

- SPSY 6335 – Multivariate Statistics
- SPSY 6316 – Neuropsychological Assessment
- SPSY 6349 – History and Systems

**Summer**

- SPSY 6317 – Biopsychological Interventions
- SPSY 6343 – Social Bases of Behavior and Personality
- SPSY 6336 –Single Subject Design

**Year 3**

**Fall**

- SPSY 6353 – Practicum
- SPSY 6138 – Dissertation

**Spring**

- SPSY 6353 – Practicum
- SPSY 6138 – Dissertation

**Summer**

- SPSY 6138 – Dissertation
- PRAXIS & Comprehensive Exam

**Year 4**

**Fall**

- SPSY 6154 – Internship

**Spring**

- SPSY 6154 – Internship



## Advising

Each student is assigned an academic advisor from the department upon admission to the Ph.D. program. The advisor is available to support the student in a variety of ways, including program planning and scheduling, corrective intervention, and career exploration.

## Shifts in Course Schedules

Program shifts in course schedules will only occur in cases of unanticipated, significant attrition within cohorts. Changes in any degree plan due to a student's change in enrollment status or the program's required adjustment because of cohort enrollment will result in the development of new individual student plans and distribution. When the program is required to make a course schedule shift, an announcement will be made to all students.

## Independent Study

Independent study occurs in rare situations and requires approval of the faculty member, program director, and department chair.

## Deviations from the official course sequence

Any student-requested deviation from the official course sequence and/or degree plan must be approved by the School and Health Service Psychology Program Faculty (SPPF) in writing. Students should first bring proposed changes to their advisor, who will then bring the proposal to the SPPF for a final decision. Changes made without SPPF written approval will result in delays in program completion and a loss of good standing in the program. Loss of good standing could result in being placed on probation, delayed approval for practicum, internship, and dissertation, and/or dismissal from the program.

## Changing the Degree Plan and/or Program Requirements

Upon admission to the School and Health Service Psychology Doctoral Program, students will receive a degree plan and a copy of this handbook. These two documents describe the requirements for degree completion. Students who want to deviate from their degree plan or modify program requirements must submit a formal request to the program faculty. The program faculty will approve/modify/not approve changes to the degree plan or program requirements. Changes in the requirements will be noted in the student's file, and a degree plan change form will be submitted to the Dean's office.

## Continuous Progress

The School and Health Service Psychology Doctoral Program expects all students to make continuous progress towards their degrees. A program is only considered "complete" after the appropriate documentation for degree completion has been filed with the Graduate School.

## Students Rights

Students in the program have the right to receive high-quality education, access to necessary resources, and fair and impartial treatment from faculty and staff. They are entitled to clear communication regarding program requirements, expectations, and any evaluations of their performance. Additionally, students have the right to voice concerns and appeal decisions that

affect their academic standing or progress in the program. Privacy and confidentiality regarding their academic records and personal information are also fundamental rights.

## Responsibilities

Students are expected to demonstrate a high level of academic integrity, engage actively in their coursework and research, and adhere to ethical standards in all academic and professional activities. Regular and productive communication with program faculty members is essential to ensure timely progress and address any issues that may arise. Students must also respect the rights and contributions of their peers and contribute to a positive and collaborative academic environment. Meeting all deadlines, fulfilling program requirements, and participating in professional development opportunities are critical components of their responsibilities.

## Professional Development

The program integrates rigorous academic coursework with practical and research experiences, enabling students to develop a strong foundation in theoretical knowledge, empirical skills and in the practice of psychology. The program faculty members are committed to providing personalized guidance to foster the student's development of professional competencies, including critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and effective communication. We accomplish this, by organizing bi-weekly workshops or seminars with invited guest speakers to expose students to the latest advancements in the field and to facilitate networking with professionals and peers. The program also emphasizes the importance of teaching experience, offering opportunities for students to lead undergraduate courses. Additionally, students are encouraged to engage in community outreach and professional organizations, further broadening their experience and preparing them for diverse career paths in academia, research, and applied settings.

## Grade Standards and Quality Points

Grades of A, B, and C will allow students to receive graduate credit representing 4, 3, and 2 quality points, respectively. If a student receives a C in any class, they will be placed on academic probation and will be required to repeat the course in which the C was earned during the next semester the course is offered and make at least a B. *If a student makes a second C, they will be dismissed from the program. If a student makes any grade lower than a C, they will be dismissed from the program.*

AGPA of 3.25 must be maintained at all times. A student whose cumulative grade point average is less than this will be placed on academic probation. In the next semester or summer term in attendance, the student must achieve a cumulative 3.25 average. If the cumulative 3.25 is not met, the student is ineligible to continue graduate studies at SFA for one year and must officially reapply to the program in order to complete the degree after the suspension period. These rules apply to all 5000 and 6000 level courses.

**Withheld:** A grade of Withheld is given to the student who shows good cause for not completing the work by the end of the semester. The grade of Withheld is appropriate only when, because of unavoidable circumstances, a student cannot complete all of the coursework by the end of the semester/term. Examples of unavoidable circumstances include documented illness which prevents a student from attending classes, death in the immediate family, military service, or other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor. A grade of Withheld should not be requested nor given for lack of completion of work because of procrastination or dissatisfaction with the grade earned.

A student who is entitled to receive a grade of Withheld must develop a written contract with the instructor of the course to remove the grade of Withheld. The contract, signed by both instructor and student, must be filed with the program secretary and Office of the Department Chair. The instructor and student shall maintain copies for future reference. The instructor will also specify that, if the work is not completed by the designated time, a grade of F will replace the Withheld on the student's transcript. If the student completes the required work by the assigned completion date, the instructor will submit the new grade to the Office of the Registrar. In most instances, work to be completed should be finished within the first several weeks following the end of the semester/term. The maximum time allowed to finish the course work is one calendar year, after which time the grade of Withheld automatically becomes an F.

### Time Limitations

All requirements toward a doctoral degree must be completed within a period of 10 consecutive calendar years from the date that doctoral credit is first earned. This should be considered when transferring in courses completed prior to registration in the doctoral program. Although the time limit for completing the doctoral degree is 10 years, the School and Health Service Psychology Doctoral Program strongly encourages full-time students to complete their doctoral program within 5 years of their acceptance into the program.

## Student Support Opportunities and Resources

Financial support for graduate students may include financial aid, grants, loans, scholarships, and assistantships. Information regarding these opportunities can be found at the [SFA Financial Aid Office](#) ().

### Graduate Assistantship

The School and Health Service Psychology Doctoral program provides 16 assistantships for qualified graduate students. Stipends vary according to assignment and educational level of the applicant. Graduate Assistantships in the School and Health Service Psychology Doctoral program require assisting in research and/or teaching or assisting with undergraduate courses. Graduate Assistantships require 20 hours of work per week. A 20-hour assistantship carries a stipend of \$21,225 for a 9 month employment (Fall and Spring semesters). To be considered for a graduate assistantship, applicants must indicate their interest in writing when accepted into the program.

Graduate assistantship positions are competitive (e.g., there are typically more students than assistantship slots) and are not guaranteed with an offer of admission. Graduate assistantship positions are renewable for up to four years for post baccalaureate students and two years for students coming into the program with a Master's degree in an area of School or Health Service Psychology, pending adequate performance/annual reviews and budgetary requirements.

A graduate student on scholastic probation may not hold a graduate assistantship. In general, a person may not have any employment in addition to the graduate assistantship. If a graduate assistant wants to maintain additional employment, a request must be made to and approved by the program faculty, and an outside employment form must be submitted according to University policy. **The minimum course load for a graduate assistant is 6 semester hours.**

### Professional Activities

**Student-to-student mentoring.** Each incoming doctoral student is assigned to an existing graduate assistant from the School and Health Service Psychology Doctoral Program for mentoring purposes during their first semester. The role of the mentor is to provide information regarding the program from a student's perspective. The specific arrangement and form of mentoring are determined by each pair of students.

**Professional conference attendance.** All faculty within the Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership encourage students to attend appropriate professional conferences and workshops. In this program, conferences and workshops sponsored by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), the Texas Association of School Psychologists (TASP), the Texas Psychological Association (TPA), and the American Psychological Association (APA) are most meaningful to students. Students will present research with faculty at these conferences, and there are plenty of opportunities for informal interaction with faculty at these times. Students are expected to document engagement in ongoing professional involvement (e.g., professional conference and workshop attendance, professional organization service and leadership) and scholarly activities (e.g., professional presentations, publications). Such documentation should be present in dossiers submitted annually for program faculty review and evaluation. Students are

expected to maintain updated dossiers throughout enrollment. Students who participate in professional activities, such as attending or presenting papers at state or national conventions, are eligible to apply for travel funds through the PCOE.

**Professional involvement.** Student membership in at least one professional state organization (e.g., TASP) and at least one national organization (e.g., NASP, APA) and professional liability insurance are required throughout enrollment. Beyond these minimum expectations, the following activities are products that meet the criteria for professional involvement to be included in dossiers for annual review.

1. Active participation in professional service leadership in a local, regional, state, and/or national professional organization (i.e., representative, student liaison, officer, conference development)
2. Active participation in service leadership in program-sponsored professional development activities
3. Active participation and service leadership in university graduate student organizations
4. Participation in log-approved Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities, which may include, but are not limited to opportunities offered in and outside the program. Participation in service leadership in program-related activities (i.e., Orientation, peer mentoring, admission interviews, faculty search interviews, student recruitment)

**Scholarly activities.** Prior to degree completion, all students are expected to have at least one professional conference presentation at the state, regional, or national level or publication in a refereed journal. Beyond this minimal requirement, the following are products that meet the criteria for this area in annual reviews:

1. Submission of a manuscript for publication in a professional journal, which may be completed with faculty or fellow students
2. Submission of a grant proposal for review
3. Presentation of a workshop for a professional community, agency or organization
4. Presentation of a workshop for parents, adolescents or young children
5. Presentation of a scholarly paper or poster at a local non-program, state, regional or national/international professional conference; and
6. Author or co-author of a book chapter, journal article, encyclopedia entry, book review, or test review

**Departmental graduate student organizations.** The School and Health Service Psychology Student Organization introduces interested students to the professional side of School and Health Service Psychology and facilitates in presenting and attending state and national conferences enhancing School and Health Service Psychology.

**Other resources.** Other sources of support for doctoral students include easy access and full use of the University library system, grant-related opportunities, research funding opportunities, electronic mail/internet access, and use of the University's computer labs.

## Student Performance Evaluation

**Formal reviews of student performance.** Student progress is reviewed on an ongoing basis. Review of student performance occurs on two levels. One level is the annual review, which includes all students in the program. The second level is the individual review, which occurs when a student-related problem is documented and filed by a faculty member, field supervisor, or other individuals affiliated with the training program.

**Annual review.** The annual review has two components: (a) the student portfolio submission and (b) a review of the student's overall performance conducted by the School and Health Service Psychology Program faculty.

Students document progress and performance in the program by establishing and maintaining a portfolio. Annual performance portfolio submissions are due every January via the "School Psychology PhD program" class' D2L dropbox. Portfolio requirements include:

1. Cover letter
2. Updated Vitae
3. Inclusion of your unofficial transcript
4. Certificate of Insurance
5. Verification of attendance at professional conferences
6. Proof of professional membership(s)
7. Graduate Assitanship contracts/evaluations
8. Signed copy of practicum/internship hours
9. Research or service presentations/publications (to demonstrate knowledge and ability in psychological research, all students are required to be the first author or primary presenter at **one** state, regional, or national psychology conference). A poster or paper presentation is acceptable.
10. Evaluations of professional dispositions (if applicable)
11. Course evaluations (if applicable)
12. Professional training or certificates
13. Dissertation progress (if applicable)

The assessment of the annual portfolio follows this process:

1. A selected faculty member (reviewer) uses the attached rubric to evaluate the student's annual performance.
2. After completing the review, the reviewer presents the score and discusses the student's strengths and weaknesses with the entire faculty group.
3. The faculty members then vote to determine if: a) the student is in good standing, b) the student is in good standing but has missing documentation, or c) the student is not in good standing.
4. Following the meeting, feedback is communicated to the student via email.

Evaluation: If the student is deemed to be in good standing but has missing documentation, they are allowed to gather and submit the necessary documents by April 1st. If the student is not in good standing, an individualized remediation plan is created. The remediation plan includes the following:

1. Meeting with the faculty reviewer to explain why items were not included/unacceptable.
2. Submission of items or plan on how items will be completed April 1<sup>st</sup> every year.
3. Students should complete the initial remediation plan to avoid a second remediation plan, which may include professional behavior/conduct training.
4. If the second remediation plan is not completed, an academic suspension due to non-compliance may result in an inability to register for classes, including internship and dissertation. At this point, continued registration in the program is contingent on demonstration of adequate progress as determined by faculty review. In addition, students receive regular feedback on their professional dispositions throughout each academic year.

*Annual Portfolio Rubric*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Exemplary (Full Points)</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Not Submitted/ Incomplete</b>
<b>1. Cover Letter</b>	Clear, professional, reflective; summarizes accomplishments and goals; error-free.	Adequate summary of accomplishments and goals; few minor errors.	Minimal summary; vague goals; noticeable errors.	Missing or incomplete.
<b>2. Updated Vitae</b>	Complete, professional format; includes all relevant academic, clinical, and professional activities.	Complete, professional format with minor omissions.	Partial or outdated; missing key elements.	Missing or incomplete.
<b>3. Transcript</b>	Included, up-to-date, legible.	Included but outdated or unclear.	Poor quality or missing pages.	Missing.
<b>4. Certificate of Insurance</b>	Submitted, current, and correct.	Submitted but expired or with minor errors.	Submitted but unclear/incomplete.	Missing.
<b>5. Conference Attendance Verification</b>	Evidence of multiple conferences; reflects active professional engagement.	Evidence of at least one conference.	Evidence unclear or attendance minimal.	Missing.
<b>6. Proof of Memberships</b>	Documentation of multiple relevant memberships (APA, NASP, etc.).	Documentation of at least one membership.	Membership unclear or inactive.	Missing.
<b>7. Graduate Assistantship Contracts/Evaluations*</b>	All contracts and evaluations included; demonstrate strong performance.	All included but limited feedback provided.	Some missing or weak documentation.	Missing.



<b>8. Practicum/Internship Hours*</b>	Signed, complete, accurate documentation of hours.	Hours documented but with minor errors or missing signatures.	Incomplete or unclear documentation.	Missing.
<b>9. Research/Presentations/Publications*</b>	Evidence of first-author presentation/publication; reflects high scholarly engagement.	Evidence of participation in presentations/publications but not first-author.	Minimal evidence of scholarly engagement.	Missing.
<b>10. Professional Dispositions Evaluations*</b>	Included and demonstrates strong dispositions.	Included with generally positive evaluation.	Included with concerns noted.	Missing.
<b>11. Course Evaluations*</b>	Comprehensive set included, with evidence of reflective growth.	Some included; demonstrates adequate performance.	Limited or weak evidence of evaluations.	Missing.
<b>12. Professional Training/Certificates*</b>	Evidence of multiple trainings/certifications relevant to professional growth.	Evidence of at least one training/certificate.	Evidence unclear or minimal.	Missing.
<b>13. Dissertation Progress*</b>	Clear documentation of progress (proposal approved, data collection, chapters completed, etc.).	Documentation included with some progress.	Limited or unclear progress.	Missing.

\*If applicable

**Individual review.** An individual review may also occur when a faculty member and/or concerned party expresses a concern or complaint about the student in writing to the School and Health Service Psychology Doctoral Program program director (Dr. Nina Ellis-Hervey), at which point the student's faculty advisor is informed. The concern may revolve around academic or behavioral issues, such as but not limited to:

- Inability or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into clinical practice
- Inability to acquire professional skills and reach an accepted level of competence expected of doctoral students
- Inability to manage personal behavior to the extent that it interferes with training or work with clients

The student and faculty advisor meet. The advisor completes the appropriate evaluation form (such as Dispositions Assessment form, Professionalism Rating Form, Internship Evaluation Form). The advisor, in conjunction with program faculty, makes one of three possible decisions:

- The problem is resolved and requires no formal action (state reasons).
- A Plan of Improvement, to which both parties agree, is developed and documented.
- The faculty advisor has ongoing serious concerns about the problem, or the problem cannot be remediated through a student Plan of Improvement, and the matter is forwarded to the Department Chair.

If this process is initiated, a letter will be sent to the student regarding the decision of the faculty. It is the responsibility of the faculty advisor to follow up and monitor the situation regardless of the specific decision.

## Evaluation and Review of Student Performance

### Retention and Dismissal

After students enroll in the Department and Graduate School, they may continue to register as long as they remain in good academic standing, make satisfactory academic progress, and are within the time limitations contained in the departmental handbook and the graduate catalog. Students are considered in good standing if they have a minimum GPA of 3.25, have no letter grades lower than a B, are making satisfactory progress toward completing degree requirements, and meet the minimum requirements, as outlined in the [SFA Graduate Handbook](#). Note that failure to complete departmental requirements by the department's stated deadlines may also result in corrective action by the Graduate School.

Students must maintain appropriate professionalism in class and field settings; observe the fundamental rules of ethical conduct; and receive successful annual reviews conducted by program faculty throughout their graduate training experience. Consistent with University policy, the Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership reserves the right to refuse the privilege of further attendance to a student when it has become evident that the student lacks the personal qualities, professional characteristics, or scholastic attainments essential for success.

When necessary, faculty will work in collaboration with the student to develop a Plan of Improvement designed to improve the student's performance in the program. The faculty will provide specific goals and objectives to the student, as well as deadlines related to the Plan of Improvement. The plan could include, but is not limited to, the following options:

- additional clinical coursework and/or supervised experience
- reduction in the number of classes taken each semester
- change of amount, format, and/or content of supervision
- an individual Plan of Improvement.
- referral to SFA's Early Alert Program
- a leave of absence from the program

If students are not satisfied with the decision of this review, they should work closely with their advisor to ensure that an acceptable resolution is achieved. If students are still dissatisfied, they may appeal the decision by following the "Student Appeals Process" as described in the [SFA Student Handbook](#).

### Inactive Status

Students are expected to be enrolled each semester until completion of the degree. Failure to enroll each semester over the course of a school year without written approval by the Program Director and Department Chair for the absence will result in removal from the program. If the student wishes to return to the program, reapplication for admission is required.

### Leave of Absence

Students must register each semester unless they have been granted an approved leave of

absence. Requests for a leave of absence should be made in writing to the Program Director. Requests must be made prior to the semester in which the leave will begin; the maximum length of leave that can be approved is one calendar year. Leaves of absence must also be approved by the Department Chair. Failure to register without a leave of absence will result in being dropped from the program.

### Due Process

To ensure fairness and transparency in addressing academic and behavioral concerns, decisions regarding termination follow a process that involves several steps.

1. **Initial Identification of Concern.** Concerns regarding a student's academic performance or behavior are identified by faculty, staff, or peers. These concerns are documented in writing and reviewed by the faculty body during the monthly program meetings.
2. **Informal Resolution Attempt.** The concerned faculty member or advisor meets with the student to discuss the issue and attempt an informal resolution. This may involve providing feedback, offering support resources, and setting expectations for improvement.
3. **Formal Notification** If the issue is not resolved informally, the student receives a formal written notification detailing the specific concerns, the evidence supporting these concerns, and the potential consequences if the issues are not addressed.
4. **Meeting with Faculty.** The student is invited to meet with the program faculty to discuss the concerns. In this meeting, the student has the opportunity to present their perspective, provide additional information, and suggest potential solutions.
5. **Development of a Remediation Plan** If the committee determines that remediation is appropriate, a written remediation plan is developed. This plan outlines specific actions the student must take to address the concerns, a timeline for completion, and the criteria for evaluating success.
6. **Implementation and Monitoring** The student implements the remediation plan. Progress is monitored regularly, with the student receiving ongoing feedback from the advisor or designated faculty member.
7. **Evaluation of Progress.** At the end of the remediation period, the student's progress is formally evaluated by the program faculty. The evaluation considers whether the student has met the criteria outlined in the remediation plan.
8. **Outcome Decision.** Based on the evaluation, the program faculty decides whether the student has successfully addressed the concerns. Possible outcomes include:
  - **Successful Completion:** The student is deemed to have met the criteria, and no further action is needed.
  - **Continued Remediation:** The student has made progress but has not fully met the criteria. The remediation plan is extended with revised expectations.
  - **Program Dismissal:** If the student has not made satisfactory progress, the committee may recommend dismissal from the program. The student receives written notification of this decision.
9. **Appeal Process.** The student has the right to appeal the decision. The appeal must be submitted in writing within a specified time frame (e.g., 30 days) and should outline the

grounds for the appeal (below). The appeal will be reviewed by the department chair, associate dean, dean, and dean of graduate studies.

- 10. Final Communication.** The final decision is communicated to the student in writing. If the appeal is successful, appropriate actions are taken to support the student's continuation in the program. If the appeal is denied, the decision is final, and the student is informed of any further steps they need to take.

## Grievance Procedures

Students who have a grievance with the program are encouraged to first discuss the issue with the person or people involved in an attempt to resolve the matter informally. If this approach is not successful, the student may file a formal grievance with the program director. The formal grievance process involves submitting a written complaint to the program director, outlining the nature of the grievance and any supporting documentation. The program director will have one month then investigate the complaint and may meet with the student and any other parties involved to gather additional information.

After the investigation is complete, the program director will make a decision regarding the grievance and communicate this decision in writing to the student. If the decision is not satisfactory to the student, they may appeal the decision to the chair of the Human Services and Educational Leadership and the dean of the College of Education to which they will receive a response within 3 weeks. The program is committed to resolving grievances in a timely and fair manner. Students are encouraged to follow the grievance process and to seek guidance and support from their faculty advisor or other members of the program as needed. Additionally, the program is committed to maintaining confidentiality throughout the grievance process, to the extent possible, to protect the privacy of the student and any other parties involved.

## Filing an Appeal or Academic Grievance

A student who wishes to appeal a grade, or who wishes to contest the course requirements, examinations, course content, admission to a program, instructor behavior, or similar issue, must first make informal attempts to resolve the issue at hand. Information designed to help you navigate the situation and ensure your concerns are addressed can be found on the Concerns About Faculty and Staff page on the [Dean of Students Office website](#). After informal resolution strategies have been pursued, you may file a formal written complaint through your mySFA account. Select the "File a Formal Written Complaint" link in the "University Policies" box on the mySFA home screen.

## Practicum and Internship Requirements

The practicum sequence in the program is designed to complement the program's scientist-practitioner model, offering a scaffolded approach to professional development through increasing levels of exposure and responsibility. This sequence includes pre-practicum, practicum, and internship experiences, providing students with opportunities to develop foundational skills, gain supervised experience, and build entry-level expertise in psychological service delivery across multiple settings. Practicum experiences focus on assessment, academic and behavioral intervention, counseling, home-school collaboration, and consultation.

### Practicum Requirements

*Pre-Practicum (hours do not count for practicum requirements)*

The practicum sequence begins in the first year with a pre-practicum experience embedded within the *SPSY Intro to School Psychology* course. Pre-practicum activities are limited to shadowing, which consists primarily of observation. The intent is to provide broad exposure to professionals, procedures, settings, and populations, laying the groundwork for future practica and professional opportunities. While these shadowing hours do not count toward formal practicum requirements, they offer valuable opportunities to build foundational skills and establish professional connections. Additional shadowing opportunities may be available throughout the program, depending on student placements and site availability.

### *Practicum*

The formal practicum experience begins in the third and fourth years of the program with enrollment in SPSY 6353 Practicum courses. Students complete two to three integrated practicum courses (SPSY 6353) depending on their placement. The integrated practicum course required for both post-bachelor (regular admission) and post-masters (advanced placement) doctoral students requires the student to accumulate **800 and 600 hours respectively**. Practicum experiences will be based on the experience and background of the student, as well as the needs of the site. It is required that students with no prior school experience complete 80% of their hours in a school-based practicum. Students with previous school-based supervised training are encouraged to complete outside-school experiences, which typically occur in a clinical setting.

Throughout their practicum experiences, students will progress developmentally from observation to assisting with services, and ultimately to the direct delivery of services under supervision. Upon successful completion of their practicum experiences, students are prepared for the internship.

*Note: Students should refer to themselves as a "School Psychology Practicum Student" in all meetings with practicum agency personnel and clients and indicate this title on all reports and written correspondence. They must also indicate that they are working under supervision.*

### Supervision and Evaluation

Each practicum student is supervised by both field-based and university-based supervisors who are appropriately licensed and credentialed. Students participate in weekly on-campus group supervision and have individual weekly meetings with their university supervisor. They are

required to:

- Develop and submit goals and objectives for their practicum experience
- Maintain weekly and cumulative logs documenting their activities
- Participate in ongoing evaluation by the university supervisor

The university supervisor maintains regular contact with the field site throughout the semester, including site visits, to assess the student's progress and professionalism. A written evaluation is completed twice per semester and used collaboratively by the university and field supervisors to support the student's development and strengthen the partnership between the University and practicum sites.

### **Agreements and Documentation**

An Affiliation Agreement must be in place for all participating practicum sites and must be updated every five years. In addition, a Field Supervision Practicum Agreement is completed for each student prior to the start of their practicum. These agreements ensure that all supervision and training activities meet program and accreditation standards. Students will keep detailed and thorough records of their time spent at practicum sites. Typically, students use Time2Track to keep accurate and detailed logs of accumulated hours.

Students must obtain student professional practice liability insurance before they begin practicum. This liability insurance must be maintained while enrolled in the practicum courses. Proof of liability insurance must be provided to the university supervisor.

Be aware that some sites may require a criminal background check. Should students have any concerns, they are encouraged to consult with the program director as soon as possible.

# Doctoral Internship Training

## Eligibility

Eligible students must:

- Be enrolled in the SFA School and Health Service Psychology doctoral program,
- Completed all courses, except dissertation.
- Have completed all supervised practica
- Be in good standing with the program
- Successfully passed their doctoral comprehensive exam
- Have proposed their dissertation (it is highly recommended that students also defend their dissertation prior to beginning their doctoral internship training).

## Doctoral Internship Training Program Options

The doctoral internship is an organized program consisting of properly administered, systematically coordinated, planned, structured, and sequenced training experiences that extend beyond practicum training in depth, breadth, duration, frequency and intensity of experiences. The primary training method is experiential, including modeling, vicarious/observational learning, and supervisory or consultative guidance. At all times, interns and supervisors adhere to the ethical principles of APA and/or NASP. Specific responsibilities for the internship agency, intern, and university are outlined in the SPSY 6154 Memorandum of Agreement.

In general, students have three options for completing their doctoral internship training experience. Any option that a student chooses must be approved by the School and Health Service Psychology program faculty in order to ensure appropriateness of the placement, activities, and field supervision. The doctoral internship training requirements outlined below are a minimum standard. They do not necessarily lead to licensure as a psychologist. Licensure as a psychologist means that an individual may practice psychology independently. The requirements for licensure as a psychologist typically require specific training beyond earning a Ph.D. and vary from state to state. Students that wish to become licensed psychologists should research the requirements for internship training in the jurisdiction in which they wish to become licensed and ensure that their doctoral internship training program meets those standards. It is the responsibility of the student to maintain all documentation and secure experiences necessary to become licensed in the jurisdiction in which they seek licensure.

### **Option 1 – Accredited Internship Training Program**

When choosing this option, the student applies for and is accepted into a doctoral internship training program accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) or the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA).. Although there are some APA accredited internships in the state of Texas, this option may require relocation to another state for one year. Applications for accredited internships may be due as early as October during the fall semester prior to beginning internship. Doctoral graduate students in School and Health Service Psychology who pursue an accredited internship will typically meet state psychology board requirements for licensure as a psychologist; however, it is not guaranteed.



## **Option 2 –Internship Training Program**

This option is open to students who apply for and are admitted into internship training programs that are not accredited by APA or CPA, but are designed to meet a synthesis of requirements for doctoral internship training programs outlined by NASP, APA, The Council for Directors of School and Health Service Psychology Programs (CDSPP), and the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists(TSBEP). The requirements for this type of training program are outlined in the Affiliation Agreement. Internship programs meeting these requirements must employ two or more interns and two or more licensed psychologists at their agency. Also, the training program must be sequenced and structured in nature with clear training goals and experiences. If the internship training program is completed in a school and a separate licensure/certification is required to practice psychology in a school setting in the jurisdiction in which the internship agency is located, the supervising psychologist must also have this license/certification. This option is designed to meet licensure requirements in the state of Texas; however, there is no guarantee that this experience will lead to licensure as a psychologist.

### **Required Hours and Settings**

If the internship program takes place in a school setting, interns must log a total of 1,750 hours with at least 25% of those hours spent in direct services. If the internship program takes place in a mental health setting, a total of 2,000 hours with at least 25% of those hours spent in direct services is required. Students in the post-bachelor's and in clinical/counseling masters track must complete their doctoral internship in a placement that allows for a minimum of 600 hours in a school setting. Students in the School and Health Service Psychology post-masters track can complete their doctoral internship in a school and/or clinical placement.

### **Obtaining Doctoral Internship Training**

Academic training programs and internship training programs are two separate training experiences in health service psychology. The internship training experience typically occurs in a different agency and/or institution than academic training. Academic training programs are not required to provide internship training programs. Internships are not guaranteed under Options 1, 2, and 3 for all students; therefore, it is the student's responsibility to apply for and build relationships with possible internship agencies. Also, a willingness to relocate during internship year is highly encouraged.

### **Responsibilities**

In general, the responsibility for the effectiveness of the internship is shared equally by the intern, the school or agency supervisor and internship program, and the university-based supervisor. If a problem is identified it should be brought to the attention of the other parties as soon as possible. Examples of problems which might interfere with the effectiveness of the internship are inappropriate experiences for the intern, misunderstanding the requirements of the internship, personality conflicts, inappropriate or unprofessional behavior on the part of the intern, or other issues. If a problem is determined by the intern or school/agency supervisor, it is particularly important that the university-based supervisor be contacted immediately. Such problems should not be ignored until the end of the semester. The SFA university-based supervisor will work with the intern and the supervisor to find a solution to the problem. If no solution can be found, the internship would be terminated before the end of the semester.

**The intern.** The intern is responsible for discharging their assigned duties in a professional manner and for responding to supervision appropriately. The intern shall follow all rules and regulations of the sponsoring school or agency comparable to that of any other employee. This includes such matters as working hours, time off, vacations, and manner of dress.

**The school or agency supervisor.** The intern supervisor must have a minimum of three (3) years of credentialed experience as a school psychologist or psychologist and be employed as a regular employee or consultant with the school district or agency. The school or agency supervisor helps determine the most appropriate experiences for the intern, assigns duties to the intern, and provides on-going supervision of the intern's work, either directly or through other staff personnel. It is especially important for the school or agency supervisor to notify the SFA internship coordinator if a problem develops during the internship which does not seem amenable to solution within the school or agency. At the end of each semester and at the end of the internship, the supervisor will be asked to submit a written evaluation of the intern's work, and to help the SFA internship coordinator determine a grade for the intern.

**The SFA university-based supervisor.** The university-based supervisor helps place the intern, determines the experiences of the intern, and works with the intern and the school or agency supervisor as necessary to work out details and training experiences of the internship. The coordinator contacts the supervisor periodically to monitor the progress of the intern and to be apprised of any problems.

## Doctoral Dissertation Requirements and Procedures

### Doctoral Dissertation Committee

PhD candidates must write a dissertation based upon research that makes an original contribution to the literature. Before beginning the dissertation process, the student should obtain and become familiar with the Dissertation Guide, which is applicable to all doctoral dissertations. This guide is located on the SFA Graduate School website (See <http://www.sfasu.edu/graduate/108.asp>).

The SFA School and Health Service Psychology PhD program requires a dissertation committee that consists of three members of the School and Health Service Psychology faculty, one graduate faculty member from the Human Services and Educational Leadership department and at least one graduate faculty member from outside the department of Human Services and Educational Leadership.

The required courses related to dissertation are: SPSY 6138 Dissertation – taken for a total of nine (9) hours. As per Graduate School policy, if the student is unable to complete the dissertation by the time these 9 hours have been completed, the student must continuously enroll in a minimum of one credit of SPSY 6138 every fall, spring, and summer until the dissertation is defended and approved. At a minimum, the student will meet with the dissertation committee two times; once for the proposal defense and once for the final dissertation defense. The student's committee may request additional meetings if necessary. Students may not propose their dissertation and defend their dissertation within the same semester. Students should not expect to be able to propose or defend their dissertations during the summer semester or during semester breaks. Faculty may or may not be on contract during the summer semester, and so may not be available for a dissertation proposal or defense during that time period. Students must plan carefully, so as to be able to propose the dissertation, and defend the dissertation, within the academic year (e.g., fall or spring semesters) and within the parameters set by the graduate school.

Students are encouraged to complete their dissertation during their last year of coursework prior to internship. Completion of the dissertation prior to internship benefits the student during their internship experience and ensures graduation upon completion of the internship experience. At a minimum, the dissertation proposal should be completed before the student leaves for internship. Having the dissertation proposal approved prior to internship facilitates timely degree completion. Dissertations are graded as a Pass (P) or Fail (F) scale. Students will be given a grade of Pass (P) on the 9 credits required for SPSY 6138 after they successfully complete their proposal (6 credit hours) and defend (3 credit hours). The grade of WH will be assigned to indicate progress on the project. The grade of F will be assigned to students that do not make any progress during the enrolled semester and subsequently be dismissed from the program.

### The Dissertation Process

The following information is provided as a guide to help students initiate and sustain a successful dissertation process. The most conscientious students will begin the process the first year of enrollment by seeking faculty-guided engagement in critical review of bodies of literature that address their social issue areas and populations of greatest interest. Each opportunity for paper development might be used to further shape and hone research questions that could be considered in pilot studies and the future dissertation. Variation in the details below may occur as

a function of the dissertation topic itself, the student, the dissertation chair and committee, and other aspects of the process. Students are responsible for initiating all the major steps of this process.

#### **a) Preparing the dissertation proposal**

Before registering for dissertation credit, the student should choose a dissertation chair. The dissertation chair should be a School and Health Service Psychology faculty member (or the dissertation needs to be co-chaired and one of the co-chairs must be a School and Health Service Psychology faculty member). The dissertation topic must be approved by the student's doctoral committee chair prior to proceeding with the proposal process. Once an idea has been generated, the student should write several research questions that address the selected topic. The dissertation chair will assist the student in formulating researchable questions. In conjunction with the chosen chair, the student will then select the dissertation committee and gain permission of each faculty member chosen to serve on the committee. Note that all departmental committee members must be members of the graduate faculty, which requires approval by the departmental and university committees. Students are to verify this status as invitations are extended for committee membership.

The dissertation proposal should provide information on the need/rationale and overview of the study (Chapter One), review relevant literature (Chapter Two), and describe research methodology for addressing the questions (Chapter Three). Students should work with their doctoral committee chairperson and committee members as needed in order to refine the proposal and schedule the proposal meeting. The student should allow the dissertation chair(s) and committee members at least a two-week period for returning drafts during regular semesters. When the dissertation chair has approved the proposal manuscript, the student should work with the committee chair and other members to schedule a date for a proposal meeting. The student is responsible for (A) working with the department administrative assistant or secretary to secure a room for the meeting, (B) notifying committee members of proposal date and time, (C) providing all committee members with a copy of the proposal, and (D) collecting and bringing multiple copies of the appropriate forms to the meeting for faculty signatures.

The proposal manuscript must be given to committee members at least three weeks in advance of the scheduled proposal meeting to provide time for committee members to prepare for the meeting or to raise major questions that should be addressed prior to the meeting. The student is also responsible for securing the necessary approvals and sanctions related to the dissertation study from the agencies and settings where the research will be implemented prior to the proposal meeting.

At the meeting itself, the student will be asked to provide an overview of the dissertation proposal in a PowerPoint presentation and to address related questions from committee members. The meeting is designed to clarify dissertation plans and procedures as deemed necessary by the student and committee members. At the conclusion of the meeting, committee members vote on the proposal and share the decision with the student. Upon successful completion of the proposal meeting and approval by the SFA Institutional

Review Board (IRB), students may proceed with their dissertation research. Students are responsible for all arrangements and details associated with conducting the dissertation study including (but not limited to) securing the necessary research settings(s), subjects, observers, data collectors, and other related details. This includes any financial costs incurred in order to carry out the dissertation and approval process.

#### **b) Preparing the dissertation defense**

Upon completing the entire study, analyzing the data, and preparing a final copy of the dissertation in accordance with the university's Dissertation Guide, students should schedule the dissertation defense meeting. For this, the student should work with the committee chair and other members to determine an agreed upon date for the defense meeting. If necessary, changes in committee membership may be made by the student or the faculty or the committee. The request is submitted to the committee chair, and the change would be reflected on the School and Health Service Psychology Doctoral Dissertation Committee form.

The student **MUST** notify the the program director at least 30 days prior to the proposed dissertation defense date. The student must then complete the routing form to notify the following people regarding date and time of defense: Department Chair, College Dean, and Graduate Dean. It is not unusual for the announcement to be publicized in the university newspaper and members of the student body may be encouraged to attend. It is the student's responsibility to reserve a room with appropriate technology to support the defense presentation. Once a location for the meeting has been secured, the student will email committee members with the date and time.

The PhD candidate will give a formal 30-40 minute presentation (overview of study, summary of results, discussion, and implications). The dissertation committee may question the candidate during or after the presentation; however, in the most structured process questions are reserved until after the completion of the PowerPoint presentation. Following the formal presentation, at the discretion of the committee, questions can be solicited from the non-committee attendees for up to 20 minutes followed by a break. Following the question and answer period, the candidate and all non-committee members will be asked to leave the room so that the committee may discuss the candidate's performance in private. During deliberations, which usually take no longer than 30 minutes, committee members will vote to "approve," "approve with conditions," or "not approve" the defense. The candidate is then asked to return to the room to receive the committee's final decision.

#### **c) After the dissertation defense**

Once the dissertation has been defended, the student works with the chairperson to make any committee-recommended changes to the dissertation document. Committee members reserve the right to review and approve the final revised manuscript. The final manuscript is the document signed by the dissertation committee and the dean of Graduate Studies and is subsequently bound, placed in the library and uploaded to ScholarWorks. Therefore, the manuscript must be of the highest possible quality with respect to content and presentation. The student bears the primary responsibility for quality but must realize

that each member of the dissertation committee also bears responsibility and is not obligated to sign the manuscript until satisfied with the overall quality of the dissertation.

*Details concerning datelines, forms and requirements for submission of the dissertation are available on the PCOE Graduate School's webpage*  
<https://www.sfasu.edu/coe/student-resources/advising/graduate>

## *Dissertation Defense Expectations:*

### **I. Presentation Content**

1. Clarity of Research Question(s)  
Clearly stated and well-defined research questions or hypotheses.
2. Literature Review  
Comprehensive and relevant review of existing literature.
3. Research Design and Methodology  
Sound and appropriate research design and methodology.

### **II. Presentation Delivery**

4. Organization and Structure  
Logical flow and well-organized structure of the presentation.
5. Verbal Communication  
Clear articulation, appropriate pace, and effective use of language.
6. Visual Aids  
Effective use of slides or other visual aids to enhance understanding.

### **III. Defense and Engagement**

7. Responses to Questions  
Thoughtful and articulate responses to committee questions.
8. Engagement with Committee  
Active participation and responsiveness during the defense.
9. Handling Challenges  
Ability to address and navigate challenges or critiques.

### **IV. Research Contribution and Significance**

10. Originality and Innovation  
Demonstration of original thinking or innovative approaches.
11. Contribution to the Field  
Clear articulation of how the research contributes to the existing body of knowledge.

### **V. Professionalism**

12. Professional Demeanor  
Professional behavior, demeanor, and respect for committee members.
13. Time Management  
Effective use of the allocated time for the defense.

## College Thesis/Dissertation Benchmarks & Document Standards

2/15/2023

PCOE thesis/dissertation documents are to reflect the American Psychological Association (APA), 7<sup>th</sup> Edition (2020), style, unless an exception is formally requested.

We are aware that theses within the Department of Kinesiology & Health Science often use a manuscript approach to their capstone experience—the thesis. When this is to occur, the student/thesis chair formally requests an exception from using APA style and indicates the name of the journal to which the thesis document will be submitted and identifies that journal's required style. Kinesiology & Health Science theses must reflect the journal and its required style each time the document is submitted for benchmarks in the process.

Please visit the PCOE Graduate Studies website for information, deadlines, and forms:

<https://www.sfasu.edu/coe/student-resources/advising/graduate>

### **PCOE Thesis/Dissertation Benchmarks**

**NOTE:** Students are responsible for completing and submitting forms with all of the required signatures and must submit all of the additional documents, when required. Submit forms and documents to: [coegrad@sfasu.edu](mailto:coegrad@sfasu.edu).

<b>(1)</b>	<b>Appointment of thesis/dissertation chair form</b>
	student initiated
	requires signatures
	submit to <a href="mailto:coegrad@sfasu.edu">coegrad@sfasu.edu</a>
<b>(2)</b>	<b>Appointment of thesis/dissertation committee form</b>
	student initiated
	requires signatures
	submit to <a href="mailto:coegrad@sfasu.edu">coegrad@sfasu.edu</a>
<b>(3)</b>	<b>Thesis/dissertation proposal meeting request form</b>
	student initiated
	requires signatures
	submit to <a href="mailto:coegrad@sfasu.edu">coegrad@sfasu.edu</a>
	requires the thesis/dissertation proposal document — must be complete, polished, reflecting APA style with accuracy
	the committee chair must approve of readiness of the proposal document prior to initiating the meeting request form
	the proposal meeting request form may be submitted as soon as a day/time/location is confirmed and the formal proposal document is ready, but no later than 10 business days prior to the established proposal meeting date
	the proposal meeting is open to the public — the date, time, location is posted across the university and on social media platforms
	this formal proposal document must be distributed to the chair and committee members for their review at least 10 business days in advance of the approved Proposal Meeting presentation/defense date



	requires a formal, comprehensive, and polished presentation
	all submitted materials (form with signatures and formal proposal document) remain in the PCOE Graduate Studies Coordinator's office
	<b>NOTE:</b> neither the academic unit head nor the dean will review this version of the document
<b>(4)</b>	<b>Thesis/dissertation proposal approval form</b>
	student initiated
	requires signatures
	submit to <a href="mailto:coegrad@sfasu.edu">coegrad@sfasu.edu</a>
	requires the updated thesis/dissertation proposal — must be updated to reflect the outcome of the proposal committee requirements identified during the proposal presentation meeting
	must be complete, polished, reflecting APA style with accuracy; this formal version of the document requires committee chair, program coordinator (acknowledgement), academic unit head (acknowledgement), dean, and PCOE Graduate Studies Coordinator review/approval prior to submission of the proposal approval form
	student begins next steps for the study, including applying for IRB/Human Subjects, following a successful proposal presentation/defense and prior to submitting the signed form with the updated, polished proposal document
	student must submit the signed form with the updated, polished proposal document no later than 10 business days prior to SFA Office of Research & Graduate Studies deadline for the semester/term
	original documents are sent to the SFA Office of Research & Graduate Studies and copies are kept on file in the PCOE Graduate Studies Coordinator's office
	<b>NOTE:</b> both the academic unit head and the academic dean will review this document; once their approvals are secured, the student may take the next steps in this process
<b>(5)</b>	<b>IRB &amp; Human Subjects Review forms</b>
	student initiates
	requires signatures
	submit to IRB/Human Subjects personnel within the Office of Research & Graduate Studies
	<b>NOTE:</b> the dissertation chair is always the Principal Investigator (PI) for the study while the graduate student is listed as the Student Researcher (SR)
<b>(6)</b>	<b>Implement study</b>
	collect data, analyze data, & write the final report
	be sure to include the IRB approval documents in the final report's appendix
<b>(7)</b>	<b>Thesis/dissertation defense meeting request form</b>
	student initiated
	requires signature
	submit to <a href="mailto:coegrad@sfasu.edu">coegrad@sfasu.edu</a>
	requires the thesis/dissertation final report — must be complete, polished, reflecting APA style with accuracy
	the committee chair must approve of readiness of the dissertation report document prior to initiating the meeting request form
	this final report meeting request form may be submitted as soon as a day/time/location is confirmed and the formal final document is ready, but no later than 10 business days prior to the established report presentation/defense meeting date
	the dissertation report presentation/defense meeting is open to the public — the date, time,

	location is posted across the university and on social media platforms
	this formal report document must be distributed to the chair and committee members for their review at least 10 business days in advance of the approved Thesis/Dissertation Defense meeting presentation/defense date
	requires a formal, comprehensive, and polished presentation
	original documents are sent to the SFA Office of Research & Graduate Studies and copies of all submitted materials (form with signatures and formal final report document) remain in the PCOE Graduate Studies Coordinator's office
	<b>NOTE:</b> neither the academic chair nor the academic dean will review this version of the document
<b>(8)</b>	<b>Report of Exam form</b>
	sent from the SFA Office of Research & Graduate Studies to the thesis/dissertation committee chair
	requires signatures
	submit to <a href="mailto:coegrad@sfasu.edu">coegrad@sfasu.edu</a>
	requires the updated thesis/dissertation final report — must be updated to reflect the outcome of the final defense report committee requirements
	must be complete, polished, reflecting APA style with accuracy
	this formal version of the document requires committee chair, academic unit head, academic dean, and PCOE Graduate Studies Coordinator review/signatures
	<b>NOTE #1:</b> both the academic unit head and the academic dean will review this document prior to the submission of this Report of Exam form to the SFA Office of Research and Graduate Studies
	once all approvals are secured, the student may take the next steps in this process
	this formal final version of the document is submitted to the Graduate Studies Office and to ScholarWorks
	<b>NOTE #2:</b> students will be removed from commencement/graduation when the formal final version of the dissertation is not approved and submitted prior to the SFA deadline for submission — this will result in the student being required to enroll in the next semester for graduation

### **Formal Documents Standards**

All written documents submitted with required forms must be of high quality, without errors, and reflecting the APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition style, unless a formal exception has been granted. Submit forms and documents to: [coegrad@sfasu.edu](mailto:coegrad@sfasu.edu).

It is recommended that you submit forms and documents as early as possible for review. Should the documents not be of high quality, without errors, and reflecting APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition style, they will be returned for correction. Should the documents not be approved or identified as acceptable, the benchmark date may need to be rescheduled. This may delay your progress through your formal steps of the thesis/dissertation and, thus, your graduation date.

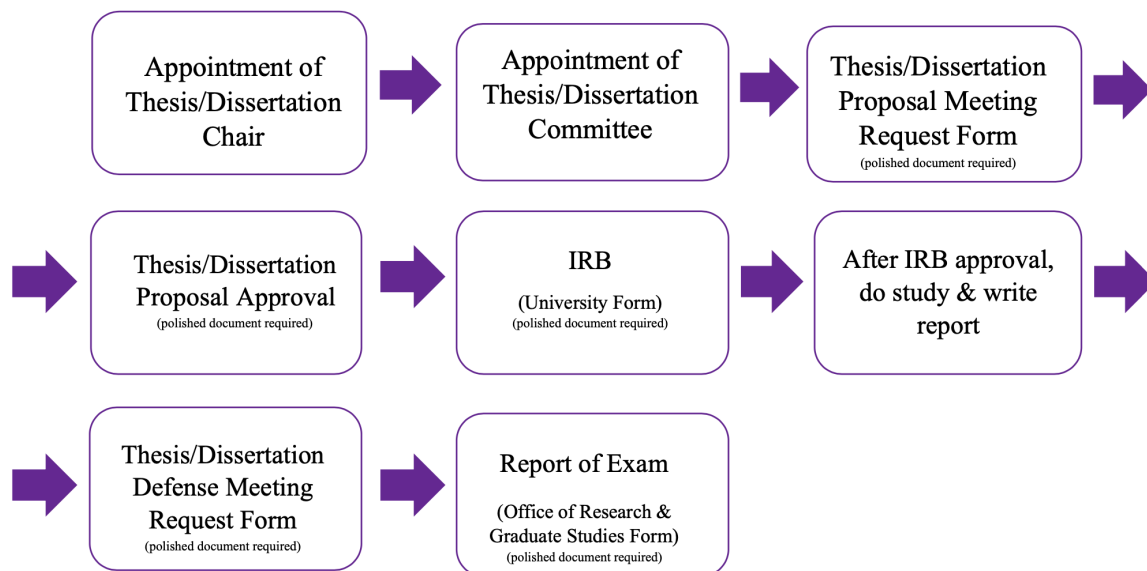
High quality, without error, and reflecting the APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition style means attention to:

- the document reflects scholarly writing and publishing principals, including ethics compliance (APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Ch 1)

- the document includes professional paper required elements (APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Ch 2; academic unit templates/guidelines)
- the document must reflect high quality, error-free text; see APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Ch 4, Writing Style and Grammar; pay particular attention to both sections of this chapter: Effective Scholarly Writing and Grammar and Usage; the subsection on Verbs, pp 117-120, is of particular importance. This section addresses the necessary verb tense differences between a proposal document and a final defense document. This section also addresses the necessary verb tenses of different chapters/sections of the thesis/dissertation document
- the document must reflect attention to the mechanics of writing; see APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Ch 6, Mechanics of Style; pay particular attention to all sections of this chapter, pp 153-191
- the document must reflect attention to the presentation of tables and figures; see APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Ch 7, Tables and Figures, pp 195-250
- the document must reflect accuracy in citations within the text and the accuracy in presenting complete citations within the reference list section; see APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Ch 8, Works Credited in the Text, pp 253-278 and Ch 9, Reference List, pp 281-309

**NOTE:** Documents are reviewed for high quality, error-free text, reflecting APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition style by your chair and committee, by the unit head, by the PCOE Graduate Studies Coordinator, and by the academic dean BEFORE the document is allowed to move to the SFA Office of Research and Graduate Studies. It is worth your while to ensure that you are **ALWAYS submitting your very best written work to your chair and committee and to the formal review processes within PCOE.** The quality and accuracy of your document is your responsibility. The more polished your document is early in the process/through the benchmarks, the smoother, quicker your documents will be approved to move forward. Should your efforts to polish your final document cause you to miss the final submission date for graduation, you will be removed from the graduation list. You will then need to enroll in the next semester to graduate.

## PCOE Thesis/Dissertation Process



\* All forms (except the IRB) should be emailed to [coegrad@sfasu.edu](mailto:coegrad@sfasu.edu).