SECTION I—CONTEXT

1. **Description of any state or institutional policies that may influence the application of SPA standards.**

   The specific requirements for a Professional Clear Services Credential with a specialization in Pupil Personnel Services (School Psychology) are specified in California Code of Regulations, Title 5, §80049. According to the California’s Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) webpage, the specialization in School Psychology authorizes the holder to perform the following duties at grades P-12: (a) provide services that enhance academic performance; (b) design strategies and programs to address problems of adjustment; (c) consult with other educators and parents on issues of social development and behavioral and academic difficulties; (d) conduct psycho-educational assessment for purposes of identifying special needs; (e) provide psychological counseling for individuals, groups, and families; and (f) coordinate intervention strategies for management of individuals and school-wide crises. The California State University, Sacramento (CSUC), School Psychology Program is a state approved program and its recommendations are recognized by CCTC (See Attachment I). This is relevant to NASP program approval in that California’s *Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Pupil Personnel Services Credentials* (which must be met by all institutions seeking to become an approved training program, Attachment N) are in most instances consistent with NASP training standards. The one exception is that while California requires postgraduate classes (consisting of a minimum of 60 semester units), it does not require a specific postgraduate degree. However, all CSUS program completers receive at least a MA degree and most also receive an EdS degree (Attachment D, Student Transcripts).

2. **Description of the administrative location of the program, including its relationship to the NCATE “unit” (typically, the college or school of education). Describe the support received from the institution and, if appropriate, others sources of support.**

   CSUS is the 7th-largest university in the 23-campus CSU system. As California’s “Capital University,” our students enjoy research and internship opportunities. The CSUS School Psychology program (Credential, MA, & EdS programs) is located within the College of Education. The University offers a range of scholarships (3 dedicated specifically to school psychology students) and financial aid packages. Our Center for Counseling and Diagnostic Services also offers employment opportunities. Working with our Financial Aid Office, many of our students receive financial assistance. Finally, the College of Education provides students with test kits and protocols, and access to computer scoring software through the program’s assessment office.

3. **Description of the program’s overall philosophy and goals, including any unique elements in the program or those it serves (NASP Standard 1.1).**

   The philosophy/mission of the Program is to promote practices that lead to positive student outcomes. We do this by training candidates to integrate knowledge into practice and to use a problem-solving model. We engage in research, dissemination of knowledge, and professional/community service that advances school psychology. The course of study evolves from this philosophy and is designed to convey the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to school psychology practice.
To be effective problem solvers, school psychologists need a broad base of knowledge. This knowledge serves as the foundation for the skills and abilities that practicing psychologists develop in response to the needs of the settings within which they practice and populations they serve. This approach requires an understanding of human growth/development, socio-cultural and biological influences on development and behavior, theories of learning, assessment, and individual/group counseling. Developing skills in consultation, program development and evaluation, research methodologies, interdisciplinary collaboration, and use of community resources are all critical in our training model. Also important is recognition that effective interpersonal skills form a basis for effective practice. Further, our program is designed with the unique needs of our region in mind. California is culturally and linguistically diverse. Consequently, consideration of cultural diversity is infused into all coursework.

Fieldwork is a core component of our training model. We include self-directed learning activities in training and provide candidates with first-hand experience in applying knowledge to practice. Candidates have the opportunity to work in field settings that complement their coursework.

Our expected goals or learning outcomes follow from the Program’s training model, philosophy, and knowledge base. We expect that candidates will: (a) continually develop professional skills through reflective practice, critical thinking, and mindfulness of current research; (b) understand the structure of schools/agencies that serve students with special needs; (c) are cognizant of effective instructional practices and use this knowledge in fostering student cognitive/academic development; (d) conceptualize student needs from a developmental and ecological perspective; (e) be cognizant of prevention and intervention strategies that foster positive mental, physical, and academic well being for both students and staff; (f) use a range of methods in assessing student needs, designing appropriate interventions, and evaluating intervention effectiveness; (g) engage in ongoing evaluation of programs and services with an awareness of organizational change strategies; (h) utilize counseling and consultation approaches that reframe problems with the goal of developing strategies for solution; (i) implement problem-solving approaches that lead to problem solution within the school framework or to an appropriate outside referral; (j) develop an understanding of specialized needs of diverse student populations, including issues of culture, unique learning needs, alternative lifestyles etc.; (k) collaborate with schools and families in implementing interventions that promote positive outcomes for all students; and (l) conduct themselves in a manner consistent with ethical and legal standards of the profession. Our training model is also designed to develop reflective practitioners. The ability to reflect on practice is critical to ongoing professional development. Therefore, we design learning experiences that will stimulate reflection about learning and field experiences. The program’s overall training model and program objectives are described in the School Psychology Program Handbook, [Attachment C, p. 4 (Training Model) and p. 5 (Learning Outcomes)]; and on the School Psychology Program webpage.

4. Description of field experiences, including supervised practica and internship experiences required for the program. (NASP Standards 3.1-3.5)

Our school psychology candidates have over 1650 supervised clock hours of practica and internship experiences for academic credit (at least 457 practica clock hours during years one and two, and at least 1200 internship clock hours during year three). The first experience (EDS
Psychology in the Schools) is intended to orient first semester candidates to the field of school psychology and requires them spend 17 hours observing specific school psychologist duties/job setting.

Second semester experiences included both counseling (EDS 440 Practicum in Individual Counseling) and assessment (EDS 242b Cognitive Assessment lab) practica. Both of these 60 clock hour University-based activities are combined with course work that is designed to teach the skills that underlie these school psychology practices (EDS 241 Counseling and Psychotherapy for School Psychologists and EDS 242a Cognitive Assessment).

Third and fourth semester experiences include a total 120 clock hours of psycho-educational assessment practica conducted in the College of Education’s School Diagnostic Clinic (EDS 243 Assessment Practicum). Again, both of these experiences are combined with course work designed to teach the skills that underlie psycho-educational assessment (EDS 244 Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Assessment and EDS 247 Assessment of Special Needs). In addition, a minimum of two semesters of field-based practica experiences (EDS 439 Early Fieldwork in School Psychology; a total of 200 clock hours minimum) is required.

During university-based practica University faculty supervises school psychology candidates. During field-based practica both on-site supervisors and University fieldwork supervisors supervise candidates. The on-site supervisor is required to have the training and credentials appropriate to the practicum experiences. This means, for example, that in a field-based practica emphasizing counseling, the field supervisor has the training and credentialing necessary to provide this service in a school setting. It is expected that the field supervision includes (a) assisting the candidate in becoming acculturated to the district; (b) providing regular supervision as agreed upon by the University supervisor, field supervisor, and student at onset of placement; (c) documenting hours as necessary; (d) monitoring student workload to assure that it is compatible with student’s competence and time commitment; and (e) maintaining contact with the University supervisor. These and other early fieldwork expectations are documented in the School Psychology Early Fieldwork Expectations form (Attachment J).

When combined with University-based experiences a minimum of 457 clock hours of practica are required before candidates begin the internship. Practica hours are documented in the School Psychology Training Program Fieldwork Activities Log (Attachment F, Fieldwork & Internship Handbook, Appendix A, p. 7) and are considered when developing the school psychology internship plan as documented by the University and Field Based Practicum Experiences form (Attachment K).

The internship occurs at the completion of the candidates’ course work (EDS 441 Internship in School Psychology) and consists of at least 1200 hours completed either on a full-time basis over one year or a half-time basis over two years. This is documented by the School Psychology Training Program Intern Activities Log (Attachment F, Fieldwork & Internship Handbook, Appendix B, p. 8). Internship sites follow guidelines established by the California and National Associations of School Psychologists (CASP & NASP) and as outlined in the School Psychology Internship Expectations form (Attachment F, Fieldwork & Internship Handbook, Appendix D, pp. 10-11), in the School Psychology Program Handbook, pp. 35-38 (Attachment C), and in the Fieldwork & Internship Handbook (Attachment F, pp. 5-6).
5. **Description of the criteria for admission, (including means of assessing prior graduate work, if any), retention, and exit from the program, including required GPAs and minimum grade requirements for the content courses, as well as the means by which the program assesses candidate professional work characteristics/dispositions. (NASP Standard 4.2)**

**Admission:** The Program’s criteria for admission are outlined in the University Catalog (Attachment L) and the School Psychology web page (Attachment M). Authority to grant the School Psychology credential is provided by CCTC (Attachment I). Our program is an “internship program,” meaning that candidates are granted intern credentials to do the work of a school psychologist prior to completing all coursework. This internship is part of our requirements. Since we grant an internship credential we must adhere to the following directive from CCTC: *...in the course of their training, interns provide professional services earlier than other credential candidates. For this reason, the state requires interns to meet higher standards of admission to preparation programs than other candidates* (Attachment N, p. 14).

We admit a limited number of students. We look for candidates who have the qualities necessary to be competent school psychologists. Some of the qualities evaluated during admissions are: critical thinking skills, ability to consider/integrate into a whole multiple sources of information, interpersonal skills, oral and written communication skills, commitment to and appreciation of diversity, commitment to ethical practice, the ability to work collaboratively, capacity for sustained work and the ability to self-motivate, flexibility in approaching new ideas and dedication to improving the educational and life outcomes for children.

More specifically, criteria for admission to the CSUS School Psychology Program include: (a) having a BA from 4-year institution, (b) an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0, (c) three letters of recommendations, (d) written professional/personal statement, (e) performance on the *California Basic Education Skills Test*, (f) a spontaneous writing sample, (g) a personal interview, (h) work experience, and (i) the presence of second language facility. Applicants to the EdS must meet all requirements for the MA program and hold an MA in school psychology, another specialized area of psychology, or a related field of study.

**Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR):** All CSUS graduate students follow a two-step process to meet the GWAR. In the first step writing is assessed to determine readiness for graduate-level writing tasks. The second step is the completion of the culminating experience. Students who are identified as needing additional help to complete graduate-level writing tasks are required to take ENGL 220W *Graduate Writing Intensive*.

**Retention and Exit from Program:** The program coordinator and faculty advisors consider progress, eligibility for continuation, and need for remedial support review each year by reviewing candidate grades and performance on assessments. As described in the *School Psychology Program Handbook*, p. 6 (Attachment C), CSUS requires that graduate students maintain a 3.0 GPA in graduate work involved in the program course requirements. A minimum of 70% of their course work must be taken in residence at CSUS. As required by the CSUS Office of Graduate Studies (Attachment O) students whose cumulative CSUS grade point average or overall grade point average falls below 3.00 will be placed on Academic Probation.
Candidates’ professional work characteristics are assessed by program faculty, field supervisors, and by candidate self-reflections during internship. At the end of first year of MA coursework, the CSUS School Psychology faculty assesses professional work characteristics of each candidate. Once candidates begin field experiences (i.e., early fieldwork and internship), the assessment of professional work characteristics is incorporated into the evaluations completed by field-based supervisors. These evaluation forms (School Psychology Training Program Fieldwork Evaluation Form and School Psychology Training Program Intern Evaluation Form) are found in the Fieldwork and Internship Handbook (Attachment F, Fieldwork & Internship Handbook, Appendices E & F, pp. 12-20). The School Psychology Program Handbook, p. 8 (Attachment C), contains a statement regarding determinations of candidate fitness and the potential exit from the program.