

ASSESSMENT PLAN

PERFORMANCE-BASED PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (Adapted from NASP Standard IV for WASC Review)

School psychology training programs employ systematic, valid evaluation of candidates, coursework, practica, internship, faculty, supervisors, and resources, and use the resulting information to monitor and improve program quality. A key aspect of program accountability is the assessment of the knowledge and capabilities of school psychology candidates and of the positive impact that interns and graduates have on services to children, youth, families, and other educators.

Because we are a small faculty and all closely involved with the local practitioner community, we frequently engage in discussions regarding our program. Informal data collection and program improvements are therefore constant. Samples of more formal program evaluation occur at the class, student and program levels.

Mission:

Our mission is to promote educational practices that lead to positive outcomes for children and youth. We strive to do this, first, by training exemplary school psychologists who consistently integrate knowledge into practice and effectively utilize a problem-solving model to improve educational outcomes for the students whom they serve. We also engage in research, the dissemination of knowledge and professional and community service that will advance school psychology practice.

Learning Outcomes:

The expected student learning outcomes are that program graduates will be able to:

- 1) continually develop professional skills through reflective practice, critical thinking and mindfulness of current research
- 2) be cognizant of effective instructional practices and use this knowledge in fostering cognitive/academic development for all students
- 3) conceptualize student needs from a developmental and ecological perspective,
- 4) be cognizant of prevention and intervention strategies that foster positive mental, physical and academic well being for both students and staff
- 5) utilize a wide range of methods in assessing student needs, designing appropriate interventions and evaluating the effectiveness of those interventions,
- 6) utilize counseling and consultation approaches that reframe problems with the goal of developing strategies for solution,
- 7) implement problem-solving approaches that lead to problem solution within the school framework or to an appropriate outside referral,
- 8) collaborate with schools and parents in implementing interventions that promote positive outcomes for all students.
- 9) conduct themselves in a manner consistent with ethical and legal standards of the profession

Measures:

The above outcomes are linked to composites on two measures we use for evaluating our program's success. Scores of relevant composites are aggregated to determine how well our program is doing as a whole. The two primary sources of information are the the Praxis Test in School Psychology and the Intern Field Supervisor Evaluation.

The Praxis Test in School Psychology is given at the end of the second year in the program, prior to the beginning of an internship. The Praxis provides an overall score and composite scores for the following categories: Diagnosis and Fact Finding, Prevention and Intervention, Applied Psychological Foundations, Applied Educational Foundations, and Ethical and Legal Considerations.

The Intern Field Supervisor Evaluation is completed at the end of the spring semester of an intern's academic year. Thus the two sources of information are from two consecutive years. These evaluations have the following categories: Personal Characteristics, Professional Responsibilities, Use of Data in Decision Making, Psycho-educational Evaluation Skills, Collaboration and Consultation Skills, SST/IEP Team Skills, Counseling Skills and Legal and Ethical Practice. These are linked to the above learning outcomes.

In addition to these aggregate measures, we engage in more fine grained, ongoing program evaluation as described below.

Formal Program Evaluation

- All classes are evaluated by students each semester through anonymous evaluation procedures. Faculty members and the Department Chair receive copies of these evaluations. In addition, these evaluations are provided to committees for use in the retention, tenure, and promotion process. Within the College of Education, teaching effectiveness constitutes 55% of the criteria for retention, tenure, and promotion.
- In addition, faculty members use their own evaluations to gain more course specific information.
- Information from the community is considered essential to our program evaluation. To that end, each advisory meeting is used as a means for gathering information regarding the program. This information is solicited by written survey (see Employer Survey, Section VII, Curriculum) and informal discussion. In addition, discussion also addresses how current trends in the field impact training needs.
- Successful completion of the Praxis exam (this exam is a national standard in school psychology) is required prior to entering internship. Students must obtain a total score of 600 or higher before beginning the internship.
- The evaluation of students described below also provides us with feedback regarding the program. Both fieldwork and internship evaluations are aligned with our expected learning outcomes. Thus aggregate results allow us to measure how well the program is doing as a whole in achieving expected outcomes.

- An alumni questionnaire (See Alumni Survey, Section VII, Curriculum) has been circulated twice in the last five years and this document has provided valuable information that has been helpful in redesigning our course sequence.
- An employer questionnaire (see Employer Survey, Section VII, Curriculum) has been used to solicit feedback regarding skills of interns and our graduates

Informal Program Evaluation

- Faculty meets with students informally to gather information on course and program functioning.
- Members of the School Psychology Advisory Board are frequently in a position to share feedback regarding the competencies of recent graduates as the members are employers in the local area.
- Involvement with practicing school psychologists in the professional associations (CASP) has provided an opportunity for feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of graduates. All faculty members are members of the CASP listserv.

Examples of response to Program feedback

- Local employers and graduates emphasized the importance of students' developing behavior analysis skills. In response to this input, this area of study has been expanded. A specific course was added to the curriculum and a day long refresher was provided to previous students during Winter Intersessions 2002 and 2003.
- Due to an expressed need for more awareness regarding autism, a one-day autism training was developed and held during Winter Intersession in 2004. In addition, this content area has been structured into a current assessment course (EDS 247).
- Coursework (EDS 246a) has been added to address academic interventions due to student concerns that they did not know enough about academic issues.
- We successfully recruited and hired a part-time bilingual specialist in response to feedback from all stakeholders regarding the need for more training in working with children for whom English is their second language.
- The program was significantly changed for fall, 2003 entry. At that time, redundant courses were removed and courses that would provide our students with the skills needed to be data based problem solvers in a new model of school psychology service were added. Those included Preventive Academic Interventions, an expansion of Preventive Mental Health Interventions and an elective in Teacher Education. In addition, students now start Early Fieldwork in the first semester of their second year. Following are some of the data leading to these program changes:
 - Graduation Intern Questionnaire included recommendations from graduates for "more training in writing goals and objectives;" more training in CBM; "get into schools earlier" (see Section VII, curriculum, Alumni Survey).
 - Employer recommendations for more awareness of academic standards.
- In response to graduates who expressed concerns for more supervision during Early Fieldwork, supervision for this course was taken over by a full time core faculty member.

- In response to graduates' suggestions, advisors now make sure they meet with advisees at least once per semester.
- In response to graduates' suggestion for more assessments in the field, candidates began performing at least two of their practica assessments in the field during the 03-04 school year.
- The syllabus for EDS 441, Internship Seminar was developed for the 2003-2004 school year in response to field supervisor feedback generated at the first meeting held between university supervisors, field supervisors, and interns.

Evaluation of Student Competence

- As noted in the attached Flow Chart, (see attachment, Section XIV) academic and professional competencies are addressed sequentially throughout the program through course work evaluations and portfolio review.
- At the beginning of the second semester in the second year, each student meets individually with faculty to discuss their readiness for beginning an internship.
- Evaluations by Early Fieldwork supervisors (both university-based and school site-based) are used to assess students in preparation for this meeting.
- Individual students are evaluated on a regular basis both through coursework and within faculty meetings. Students whose progress is deemed less than satisfactory are counseled as to issues of concern and a plan for remediation is developed.
- Practica and fieldwork experiences provide an opportunity for faculty to observe and monitor the level of competence with which students apply their knowledge in professional service. Students who are not meeting an acceptable standard during their practica or early fieldwork experiences are required to repeat practica before beginning an internship. In the past two years, we have had two students each year who took an extra practica prior to beginning their internships. This approach has been highly successful for students leading to increasing in both skill and confidence.
- Internship evaluations are a critical measure for assessing student competence as well as providing us with feedback regarding the program. As stated above these evaluations are aligned with learning outcomes and are gathered during a student's last year in the program (their internship). The evaluation is thorough, including both knowledge-based and interpersonal competencies. In this way we are able to determine the level at which students are able to apply the skills and knowledge gained in their coursework.
- Logs of activities augment this assessment of strengths and weakness, and help us to more thoroughly evaluate student progress.
- The Internship seminar also provides a way for University supervisors to monitor student progress. The seminars are discussion based, therefore allowing supervisors to check on the understanding and developing skills of the interns.
- Another method of evaluation which is outside the department is Advancement to Candidacy. This is student initiated and is only for those candidates wishing to obtain a graduate degree. Application is possible once a student has completed 40% of the graduate degree coursework. The candidate's academic plan and eligibility for the degree are reviewed by the Graduate Center. (The majority of students in this program do obtain a Master's degree with their credential.) Upon

- initiation of the Ed.S. degree students will also be required to meet Advancement to Candidacy requirements for that degree.
- The Portfolio evaluation process provides faculty with an additional method for determining that all students are meeting NASP competencies as they progress through the program.
 - During Early Fieldwork, students must work with a case in which they consult with the teacher, design an intervention, assure implementation of the intervention, and monitor progress. They often start this project in EDS 246a or EDS 240 (Case Study Requirements EDS 246a).
 - Prior to receiving an Internship Credential, students must pass the Praxis exam with a score of 600+. A passing score on this exam indicates beginning competence. In addition, they must successfully complete the Case Study Exam (CSUS).
 - In addition to passing the examination, faculty members must agree that a student is ready to function competently and fairly independently as an Intern prior to any student being allowed to begin an Internship.
 - Student fitness for the practice of school psychology is directly addressed in the Student Handbook. Faculty reserve the right to *not* grant a credential to any student deemed unfit for the practice of school psychology regardless of course grades.

Results of these evaluations are addressed at faculty meetings and shared with advisory groups.