

STUDENT HANDBOOK
FOR THE
APPLIED MASTER'S PROGRAM IN PSYCHOLOGY

Department of Psychology and Special Education
Texas A&M University-Commerce

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Revised May 2011

The faculty of the Department of Psychology and Special Education welcomes you to graduate study in the Applied Master's Program in Psychology at Texas A&M University-Commerce. We are pleased that you have decided to come here for your graduate work. While all of us will assist you to the greatest possible extent, you must assume primary responsibility for the smooth functioning of your graduate education. Among the major resources available for you here are the faculty, fellow graduate students, libraries, courses and seminars, and related organizations such as schools, hospitals, clinics, and professional organizations. If you use these resources well, and work diligently, your graduate education can be excellent. We are currently the only nationally accredited masters program in the state of Texas in Clinical or Applied Psychology.

The single most important faculty member for you, especially in the early part of your graduate work, is your Faculty Advisor. This individual is your primary resource and is responsible for assisting you with the paper work necessary for the orderly administration of the graduate program. Your faculty advisor is the Coordinator of the Applied Master's Program. It is essential that you visit with the Coordinator of the Applied Master's Program at your earliest convenience.

There are a number of rules, regulations, and procedures applicable to graduate study. To the extent that you take time to become informed about these, you will experience fewer frustrations. Please save this handbook and consult it often. In addition to the information contained in this booklet, students are reminded to become well acquainted with all of the rules and regulations contained in the Graduate Catalog.

Students admitted to the Applied Master's Program are expected to exhibit the highest level of ethical behavior in both their classroom experiences as well as their clinical training. Breaches of ethical behavior can result in immediate removal from the Applied Program. Examples of such behaviors would be plagiarism or breach of confidentiality

Additionally, students in clinical training are expected to provide services in a professional manner as directed by their clinical supervisor. If a student does not meet the standards of professionalism required to provide safe and ethical psychological services to the public, they may be removed from or refused admittance to the clinical practicum (691). Examples of such behavior would be not following direction of the clinical supervisor in client care and evaluation or behavior that would suggest the student may not be appropriate for providing psychological services to the public.

The main offices of the department are in Henderson Hall, Room 201-203. Faculty offices have the names of the faculty above the door and are located

throughout the second floor of Henderson Hall. Mail boxes for faculty and graduate assistants are located in Room 203.

As you proceed with your studies here, your record file (kept by the Departmental Secretary) should reflect all decisions regarding your program. Whenever any important decision is made, make certain that the decision is recorded in writing and that the written record gets into your file. The official file is kept in the Graduate Office in the McDowell Administration Building. The maintenance of these files is the responsibility of the graduate student with the cooperation of the Faculty Advisor. Your grades and copies of official forms will go into your record file automatically.

It is the responsibility of the student to maintain contact with the Graduate Office, the Department Head, and Coordinator of the Applied Masters Program regarding progress toward a degree. We will send information to the email and regular mail address you have given us. If you move or change your email address, it is your responsibility to make sure we have the updated addresses. You may miss information on meetings, courses, and even your comprehensive exam results if we do not have current addresses. It is also the responsibility of the student to read carefully the requirements in the Graduate Catalog concerning the degree to which he/she aspires. Questions regarding program requirements should be directed to the Coordinator of the Applied Master's Program.

The faculty in the Department of Psychology and Special Education adheres to the APA Ethical Standards of Psychologists, and it is understood that students will become familiar with those standards and conduct themselves in accordance with them at all times. Failure to conform to these standards can lead to disciplinary action determined by a committee of the Graduate Faculty.

At the beginning of each semester students should also inform the department, in WRITING, of CHANGES OF ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER, E-MAIL, etc. Make sure that such changes are made with the Secretary of the Department. Do this promptly so that we will be able to contact you in an emergency.

THE APPLIED MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM IN PSYCHOLOGY

The Applied Master's Program in Psychology is oriented to providing students with an understanding of the scientific principles of psychology and skills in application of those principles in the mental health field. It is one of three master's programs in psychology offered by the department. The other two being The School Psychology Program which focuses on working with children in school settings and The Master's Program in Applied Educational Psychology (Cognition) which prepares its students in the area of human learning and instructional design.

The Applied Master's Degree Program is designed to prepare students to meet the requirements for certification as a Psychological Associate by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists. Psychological Associates are employed in a variety of governmental and private organizations, such as mental health centers, clinics, and hospitals. Psychological Associates typically provide assessment and diagnostic services, do intake and evaluation, and often are involved in case management and treatment plans. In private practice, Psychological Associates work under the supervision of Licensed Psychologists providing services to clients.

Based on the Standards of Master's Training of the Council on Applied Master's Programs in Psychology, this program exhibits a curriculum design based on the Boulder Model of training for graduate psychology also known as the scientist-practitioner model. The curriculum is organized around a basic core of general theoretical psychology and methodology overlaid with a concentration of theory and principles of application, supervised experiences, and ethical and professional standards appropriate to the mental health field. Research experiences are highly recommended.

The program emphasizes that the principles which guide the thinking and work of applied psychologists are based on empirical knowledge derived from scientific enterprise. Recognizing that scientific presuppositions in psychology vary considerably among workers, the department has declined to embrace any particular view and accepts as potentially valid and useful findings of many psychological scientists, so long as they represent empirical inferences based on articulable methodologies. Thus, the conclusions of such divergent positions as traditional and cognitive behaviorism, trait-factor and other statistically based approaches, and psychodynamic psychology may all find their way into the program. The result in practice should be the development of a technical eclecticism, against which students are encouraged to derive for themselves a coherent and consistent theoretical model of psychological functioning.

Oversight of the Applied Master's Program is the responsibility of the Applied Master's Committee of the departmental faculty chaired by the Coordinator of the Applied Master's Program.

Entrance Requirements

The entrance requirements for the Applied Master's Program in Psychology include the following undergraduate prerequisites:

- a. A bachelor's degree in psychology from an approved institution or an introduction statistics course.
- b. Applicants must meet the general university requirements for admission to the Graduate School.
- c. Applicants must have a grade point average of at least "B" (3.00) in all advanced psychology courses completed.

In addition, the following are required:

- a. Graduate Record Examination. Applicants must submit scores for the quantitative, verbal and analytical sections of the GRE. There are no minimum scores required for consideration. Seniors who plan to apply for graduate training should arrange to take the GRE during their senior year.
- b. Three letters of reference, including one from the last employer if he/she has professional experience, and one from the bachelor's degree granting institution.
- c. A brief statement of goals in psychology and an explanation how these goals will be obtained.
- d. Approval of the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Psychology and Special Education.

Faculty Advisor

Upon admission to the program, students are advised by the coordinator of the Applied Psychology Master's Program. Students who are admitted to graduate study by the Graduate School, but have not yet been admitted to the Applied Master's Program, shall also be advised by the Coordinator. The advisors assists students in planning their program of study and students should consult with their advisors about program details as needed.

Applied Master's Program Faculty and Their Areas of Interest

Steven E. Ball, Ph.D.; Developmental Aspects of Personality and Representation

Curt Carlson Ph.D.; Cognitive psychology in the domain of memory

Raymond Green, Ph.D.; Social/Industrial..

Jerry B. Hutton, Ph.D.; Behavior Disorders, Assessment, and Consultation.

Gail Johnson, Ph.D., Health Psychology, Ethics and Treatment of Depression.

Chuck Keenan, Forensic psychological assessment.

Lacy Krueger, Ph.D.; The domain of metamemory.

William G. Masten, Ph.D.; Assessment of Bilingual Students, School Psychology.

Stephen Reysen, Ph.D.; Issues of identity

Jennifer Schroeder, Ph.D.; Mental health issues in schools

Karin Tochkov, Ph.D.; Development and maintenance of addictive behaviors

Kashunda Williams, Ph.D.; Academic & behavioral consultation and intervention

Admission to Candidacy for the Master's Degree

Enrollment in a graduate course or admission to Graduate School does not assure admission to candidacy for a graduate degree. Admission to candidacy may take place when the student achieves the following criteria:

- a. Has completed all requirements for full admission to the Graduate School, including prerequisite course requirements.
- b. Has been accepted for admission to the Applied Master's Program in Psychology.
- c. Agreement by a simple majority of the psychology and special education faculty that the student is personally adequate to assume the role of a professional psychologist at the master's level. The Department will require a written and/or oral qualifying examination before granting approval. A student's minor department may also require an examination before granting approval. A student who fails one or more examinations may take them a second time only with special approval of the major and/or minor departments.
- d. Has achieved the grade point average necessary for candidacy before the beginning of the last semester or summer session prior to graduation. Those failing to meet this requirement must fulfill this requirement by enrolling and satisfactorily completing, at least one graduate course during a semester or summer term.

Curriculum Requirements

Curriculum requirements for the degree are 60 semester hours. Students may choose to satisfy the research requirement either by the non-thesis route SpEd 595 Research Literature and Techniques (3sh) or Psy 518 Thesis (6sh). It is strongly recommended that students follow the Thesis option unless there are unusual circumstances which make this untenable.

Supervised experience. In accordance with the requirements for certification as a Psychological Associate by the State Board of Examiners of Psychologists in Texas students are provided 480 clock hours of supervision by a member of the faculty who is a Licensed Psychologist. The supervision occurs as a part of their experiences within the Psychology and Community Counseling Clinic which is offered when students register for Psy 691 Practicum in Psychology. Students register for nine semester hours in three-three hour blocks for a total of 9 semester hours. Credit for each three semester hours requires the student to work 160 clock hours in the clinic. At a minimum, students should have completed the following courses prior to starting their clinic experience: Advanced Abnormal (503), Ethics (594), Theories & Techniques of Applied Psychology

(508), Foundations of Assessment (572), Assessment 1 (573) and Assessment 2 (575).

The Psychology and Community Counseling Clinic is operated by the departments of Psychology, Counseling and Social Work. The clinic offers psychological testing and counseling provided by graduate student clinicians to the public. Services are offered on a sliding fee basis. Clients seeking services represent a broad range of ages and psychological diagnosis and needs. The clinic also employs a graduate assistant who works with students. Funds generated by the clinic are used to maintain the testing materials and equipment used by the clinic.

Course Offerings

Courses are offered according to a planned schedule which allows most students to complete the program within a two year cycle. Courses are offered in Commerce with a few also being offered off-campus at the Metroplex Center in Mesquite, Texas, a Dallas suburb, approximately 65 miles southwest of Commerce. Those courses with the Distance Education (DE) designation are offered via remote television at several sites as well as in Commerce. Generally the instructor originates the signal either from Commerce or the Metroplex Facility with students having the flexibility of attending at any site. Usually these courses also involve extensive correspondence between the instructor and students via e-mail.

Table 2

DEGREE PLAN - APPLIED MASTER'S PROGRAM IN PSYCHOLOGY, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-COMMERCE

NAME _____ SS# _____ DEGREE: MS/MA
 LAST FIRST MI
 ADDRESS _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____
 GRE: VERBAL _____ QUANT _____ TOTAL _____ ADVANCED _____

COURSES*	COURSES TRANSFERRED	COURSES TAKEN-TAMU-C	COURSES NEEDED
CORE: Psy 502 Theories of Personality Psy 503 Advanced Abnormal Psychology Psy 515 Physiological Psy 620 Learning Psy 545 Developmental Psychology Psy 527 Advanced Social Psychology Psy 594 Ethics APPLIED: Psy 691 ⁹ Practicum in Psychology Psy 535 Behavior Modification Psy 508 Theories & Techniques of Applied Psychology Psy 572 Foundations of Psychological Assessment Psy 573 Assessment I Psy 575 Assessment II Psy592 Group Psychotherapy Psy 612 Psych & Ed Statistics RESEARCH: Psy 521 ¹ Research Design Psy 595 Research Literature and Techniques (Option II)or Psy 518 ⁶ Thesis (Option I) ELECTIVES Psy 615 Psych Consultation Psy 675 Special Topics in Clinical Psych Others as approved by the Applied Director			
	_____ SH	_____ SH	_____ SH

The following courses must be completed prior to starting the clinical experience: 503,594,508,572,573,&575.

 Advisor Date Total SH

 Student

Comprehensive Examinations

Each student demonstrates his/her competence in the core and applied areas by passing a two day written comprehensive examination known as the Qualifying Examination. The core examination covers ethics, fundamental processes (learning, physiological psychology) and information on the person (personality, abnormal, social, and developmental psychology). The applied portion of the examination is divided into assessment and intervention. Examinations are graded blindly by two readers using a pass/fail system. Successful completion of the examination requires two passes on all parts of the examination. In case of one pass and one failure given by readers on any part of the examination, a third reading of that part is completed. Students not receiving two passes on any area may retake those areas a second time. Following a second failure to receive two passes the student will have to petition to take the exam a third and last time.

Prerequisites for taking the examination are: consent of the Advisor. Reading lists for the examinations may be obtained from the departmental secretary. Students planning to take the examination should also consult with instructors of course areas for information about what is expected on the examination. Comprehensive examinations are offered in the fall and spring semester. Examinations are occasionally offered in the summer.

Thesis Option

Students are strongly encouraged to write a thesis. The thesis allows a student to explore in depth an area of their own interest. Additionally, students who opt to apply for doctoral programs are required to do a thesis and have demonstrated their research abilities. The thesis is a written report of a research (experimental, applied "action", or survey) project carried out by the student under supervision of the thesis committee. It is intended to be a demonstration of students' understanding of and skills in research and a demonstration of an in-depth knowledge of an area of psychology. During the first semester of study, the student should begin to consider topics and discuss these with the Coordinator of the Applied Psychology Program and the department faculty. The project should be in at least the advanced stage of planning by the end of the student's second semester of graduate study.

Thesis Advisor

Having chosen an area of study, the student should recruit a Thesis Advisor from among the Psychology Faculty who has time and an interest in the project. The student and the Thesis Advisor will then select a Thesis Committee which will consist of the Thesis Advisor, and two additional members of the Faculty. The Thesis Advisor serves as the chair of the Thesis Committee. The student should

then report to his/her Program Advisor the names of the Thesis Committee members to be certain they are recorded in the student file in the departmental office. It should be noted that all members of the Department are ex-officio members of every Thesis Committee.

With the help of the Thesis Advisor, the student prepares a proposal for the Thesis using the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (1994), (6th ed), American Psychological Association: Washington, DC. Student will also need to check the Graduate School Web page to find current requirements for the thesis. When the proposal meets the approval of the Thesis Advisor and the committee, a copy of the thesis will be made available to all department faculty by email and 3 hard copies shall be placed in the department office. The student shall make additional hard copies available to any faculty who requests these. After the thesis is made available to the faculty, a proposal defense meeting shall be scheduled in about 2 weeks time. The committee with input from other interested faculty will assess the proposal and decide whether the project, as described in the proposal, will be an acceptable thesis and whether the student is prepared to carry it out adequately. Following the presentation of a written confirmation of the committee's acceptance of the thesis proposal to the Department Head, the student, with the help of the Thesis Advisor, will then schedule a date and time to present the proposal before the Graduate Faculty of the department.

Prior to the proposal meeting the Human Subjects Committee must review and approve the proposal. At least one week before the date of the meeting of the Human Subjects Committee, the student will submit typed completed copies of the proposal and the completed form required by the committee for their approval. These forms are available in the departmental office.

On or before the day of the proposal meeting, the student must print the Form for Approval of Master's Thesis Plan which is available on line from the Graduate School. The meeting to approve the proposal is not to be held until the student is admitted to candidacy for the degree.

Oral Defense Examination. Once the data have been collected and the final draft of the thesis completed it shall be presented to the Thesis Committee for their corrections and approval. Written confirmation of the committee's approval will be presented to the Department Head before a date is set for the thesis defense. One copy of the thesis will be presented to each of the thesis committee members, the department head and three copies will be placed on the desk in the departmental office for the perusal of the Departmental Faculty one week prior to the defense date. The thesis will be made available to the faculty as a whole by email and the student will provide a hard copy for any faculty who request one. An oral examination will be conducted at the defense of the thesis. Questions may

cover any material pertaining to the thesis as well as the student's program of study.

Proposal Guidelines. The Non-Thesis Option

Students who decide to complete the non-thesis option must take Special Education Course 595. This course requires the completion of a major research paper. This option is discouraged as it may limit future educational opportunities for the student