



UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

**PSYCHOLOGY PH.D. PROGRAM
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY CONCENTRATION**

**GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK
2023-2024**

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COLUMBIA, SC**

Table of Contents

<u>GENERAL INFORMATION</u>	5
Department and Concentration Information.....	5
Policies and Procedures.....	6
Location.....	6
<u>HISTORY AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL</u>	
<u>PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM</u>	7
The Mission of the School Psychology Program.....	7
<u>DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY FACULTY & STAFF</u>	9
School Psychology Faculty.....	9
Emeritus Faculty.....	9
Other Important Departmental Personnel.....	10
<u>TRAINING RESOURCES</u>	12
<u>SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY CONCENTRATION</u>	13
<u>TRAINING IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY</u>	14
Goals and Philosophy.....	14
<u>PROGRAM CURRICULUM</u>	19
M.A. Requirements.....	19
Ph.D. Requirements.....	20
Clinical Practicum Electives.....	21
Quantitative Electives.....	23
Schedule and Sequence of Courses.....	23
Recommended Course Sequence.....	24
<u>APPLIED COURSE WORK</u>	27
General Professional Development.....	27
Assessment Sequence.....	27
Intervention Sequence.....	28
<u>SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICUM</u>	29
Overview.....	29
Additional Practica Experiences.....	31

<u>MENTORING AND EVALUATION OF STUDENTS</u>	31
<u>PROGRAMS OF STUDY</u>	33
<u>MASTER’S DEGREE AND RELATED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS</u>	34
The Master’s Degree	34
Requirements for Master’s Degree	34
The Master’s Thesis	34
Guide for Students Entering with Master’s Degree	36
Research Project (for Students Entering with Master’s Degree)	36
Waiver of the Research Project	36
Master’s Oral Comprehensive Examination	37
<u>WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAM</u>	38
Option A: General Comprehensive Examination (‘Comps Paper’)	38
Option B: Integrated Portfolio of Peer-Reviewed Work	40
Evaluation of Written Comprehensive Examination	40
Policies for Comps Paper Completion	41
<u>DOCTORAL ORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAM</u>	42
<u>PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES FOR THE DISSERTATION</u>	43
Developing a Committee	43
Preparing a Prospectus	43
The Prospectus Meeting	45
Data Collection	45
Preparation of the Document	45
Dissertation Defense	46
Publication	47
<u>SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIPS</u>	48
Applying for Internships	48
Prerequisites for Beginning the Internship	49
Course Enrollment	49
2017 CDSPP Doctoral Internship Guidelines	50
<u>ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES</u>	52
Graduate Student Computer Lab	52
Office Space	52
Psychological Service Center	52
Psychological Services Test Center Library	52
Thomas Cooper Library	53
Colloquium Series	53
Professional Involvement	53
Financial Support	54
Teaching Undergraduate Courses as Instructor-of-Record	54

<u>ADDITIONAL POLICIES</u>	55
Academic Policies	55
Plagiarism	55
Cheating	55
Falsification	56
Complicity	56
Grievances, Appeals, and Petitions	56
USC System Policy on Discrimination, Harassment & Sexual Misconduct.....	57
Residence Requirements.....	57
Liability Requirements	57
Engaging in Additional Professional or Academic Activities for Compensation.....	58
Change of Concentration Area	58
Leave of Absence	58
Family Leave Policy	58
Continuous Enrollment.....	58
Revalidation of Out-of-Date Course Work	59
Concentration Policy on Grades Less than B	59
Student Remediation Process: Performance Improvement Plans.....	59
Dismissal from the Program	60
<u>STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS</u>	61
Psychology Student Advisory Board (PSAB)	61
Psi Chi.....	61
USC Graduate Student Association (GSA)	62
PSYC Dept Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee	62
Mental Health and Well-Being Committee	62
Student Feedback Forum Facilitation.....	62
Student Representation at Faculty Meetings	63
<u>APPENDIX</u>	64

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Department of Psychology PhD Program welcomes you to graduate study at the University of South Carolina (USC). We are pleased that you have decided to join us for your doctoral training. The School Psychology Concentration has a long and celebrated history and is accredited by both the American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). During your years in our program, you will acquire expertise in research methodologies and clinical practice and will leave well-prepared for your future career as a health service psychologist.

While all of us will assist you to the greatest possible extent, **you have primary responsibility for success of your graduate education.** Among the major resources available to you are the faculty, fellow graduate students, research laboratories, clinical training facilities (e.g., clinics, schools, hospitals), libraries, coursework, and professional organizations. If you use these resources well and work diligently, your graduate education will be excellent.

This School Psychology Concentration Student Handbook provides a comprehensive summary of the rules, regulations, and guidelines for your doctoral training at USC. The handbook is updated annually; it is specific to the incoming year of students. Generally, the policies herein should be applicable throughout your graduate training. However, policies are subject to change when necessary to provide students with high quality, up-to-date instructional experiences. You will be informed promptly of any changes in policies, rules, or regulations.

Department and Concentration Information

The Department of Psychology offers four PhD concentrations: Clinical-Community Psychology, Cognitive and Neural Sciences, Quantitative Psychology, and School Psychology. Students in each of these concentrations also receive a Master's (MA) degree during their time in the program.

Upon admission to the School Psychology Concentration, you will be assigned an academic/research mentor who is typically a core faculty member of the School Psychology Concentration. Your mentor will be an important resource for you. Your mentor is responsible for guiding your course selection and your research training. Along with the Graduate Director, Graduate Program Coordinator, and Concentration Director, your mentor will also assist you with the processes and paperwork necessary for the orderly administration of your graduate studies. Strive to get to know your mentor and other School Psychology faculty as soon as possible. It is expected you will take the initiative in seeking out your mentor when necessary.

School Psychology faculty meet monthly, at a minimum, to discuss programmatic matters, monitor students' progress, and engage in short- and long-term planning for the School Psychology Concentration. Student representatives, elected by the students enrolled in the School Psychology Concentration, are invited to monthly faculty meetings and serve as a liaison between the student body and faculty. Students are encouraged to contact their student representatives with comments, questions, and concerns about matters related to the concentration or department.

Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures facilitate smooth operations, help provide transparency, and promote fairness and equity in the program. School Psychology concentration policies are generally adopted by majority vote

of the faculty. In addition to this handbook, you should become well acquainted with all relevant policies and regulations contained in the official **USC Graduate Bulletin**, which can be found at: <https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/graduate/>. Much like the School Psychology Student Handbook, the Graduate Student Bulletin is updated annually. Ensure you consult the correct bulletin for information relevant to your academic year.

Location

The School Psychology Concentration is based in the Barnwell Building on the USC main campus in Columbia, SC. Physical mail can be directed to:

Department of Psychology

Barnwell College 224
1512 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29208

For the location of faculty offices, consult the faculty directory on the department website (https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/psychology/our_people/index.php) or the Directory on the second floor of Barnwell Building. You may also check with the administrative assistant for offices located in other buildings. The Main Office for the Psychology Department is in Room 224 Barnwell.

The [Psychology Services Center \(PSC\)](#) is the clinical training hub for graduate students in the School Psychology and Clinical-Community concentrations. The PSC is located at:

Psychology Services Center

1331 Elmwood Avenue, Suite 140
Columbia, SC 29201

Mailboxes for graduate students are located in the Mail Room on the 2nd floor of Barnwell, next to the Walsh conference room. Student e-mail addresses are assigned after admission. **Students are advised to check their mailboxes regularly and e-mail daily.** Students should create a professional email signature following university guidance and should adhere to professional practices in email communication: https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/communications/toolbox/resources/email_signature_generator/index.php

Electronic files documenting your graduate education are managed by the Graduate Program Coordinator in the Psychology Department. As you proceed with your studies here, your record file should reflect all completed milestones and 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.* **This especially applies to substitution of required courses and any other exemptions from general or specific requirements.** The maintenance of this file is the responsibility of the graduate student with the cooperation of the student's mentor.

During and after your graduate training, it is important that we maintain an accurate address, telephone number, and email address for you. These should be given to both the Concentration Director and the Graduate Program Coordinator. You should also keep your contact information updated in Self Service Carolina (my.sc.edu) so that you receive all university correspondence in a timely manner. Students are

also encouraged to sign up for the Carolina Alert system to receive important campus safety messages: https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/law_enforcement_and_safety/carolina-alert/index.php.

HISTORY AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM

The Mission of the School Psychology Concentration

The USC School Psychology PhD Program prepares students for the practice of Health Service Psychology (HSP). The goal HSP is to facilitate human functioning and development through the integration of psychological science and practice (Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology [SAHSP], 2015). As a program accredited by APA, all USC School Psychology trainees receive training, supervision, and evaluation in competencies consistent with the profession of HSP and the discipline of School Psychology. Competencies represent the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are shared across disciplines within HSP. Training and student expectations follow a developmental process wherein students incrementally demonstrate competencies of increasing complexity with level-appropriate independence and supervision. Within USC's School Psychology Program, students are trained in APA's tripartite model of evidence-based practice, which includes the integration of 1) the best available scientific evidence; 2) clinical expertise; and 3) the preferences of characteristics of individuals or organizations being served. Our program is built on the foundation of the scientist-practitioner model, emphasizing practice that is informed by science and science that is informed by practice.

Students are trained for careers in academic settings and effective research in practice along the continuum of prevention, assessment, early intervention and intervention for youth and their families, in schools and other community settings. Notable program and training themes are: 1) interdisciplinary research and theoretical perspectives (e.g., collaboration with school, clinical/community psychology; general and special education; social work; public health; medicine); 2) close faculty-student mentoring; and 3) commitment to life-long learning.

The School Psychology Program was established in 1964 under the first Director, Dr. Ralph Tindall, a clinical psychologist and Director of Psychological Services in Milwaukee, WI. Dr. Tindall had served as president of the Division of School Psychology (Division 16) of APA. The program was located in the Department of Psychology not only for administrative purposes, but to acknowledge our firm belief that School Psychology rests on a strong grounding in basic Psychology. We maintain strong cooperative efforts with the USC's College of Education and are part of the College's Professional Educator Program for accreditation of school personnel. Following Dr. Tindall, the program has been directed by Ann Engin, Kathleen Paget, Frederic J. Medway, Richard J. Nagle, E. Scott Huebner, Jane Roberts, Mark Weist, Scott Decker, Samuel McQuillin (current Co-Director) and Sayward Harrison (current Co-Director).

Although a specialist-level degree is considered the entry-level degree in school psychology and is generally accepted for certification or licensure to provide full professional practice within schools or other related education settings, the USC School Psychology Concentration is a doctoral (PhD) program.

The expected length of the program for someone entering with a BA degree is five years plus a one-year clinical pre-doctoral internship (i.e., six years total).

The School Psychology PhD training at USC is designed to meet minimum requirements for both educator certification for school psychologists who practice in SC educational settings, as well as doctoral requirements for licensure as a psychologist in SC. If a student has prior knowledge of the state in which they desire to be employed and/or licensed, it is advisable to consult with their mentor and/or Program Director to obtain a copy of that state's current certification and/or licensure standards to best plan their program of study. Students are also advised to refer to the NASP (<https://www.nasponline.org/>) and APA (<https://www.apa.org/>) websites for additional information about credentialing and licensure.

Doctoral graduates from this program currently serve in many professional roles, including academic faculty, school psychologists, and licensed psychologists. Psychologists who have matriculated from our program work in school systems under a variety of titles, including Coordinator of Psychological Services, Director of Pupil Personnel, Assistant Superintendent in Charge of Special Services, Director of Research and Evaluation, Director of Testing, and Coordinator of School-Clinical Services. Other graduates are engaged in university training programs, medical settings, private practice, community mental health clinics, and state departments of mental health.

The program is directly administered by the Program Co-Director team (a three-year renewable appointment) who handle a variety of administrative functions, including organizing and leading meetings of program faculty; overseeing all committees (such as admissions and faculty search committees); allocating departmental funds for graduate student stipends; developing external contracts for assistantships; monitoring internship students; serving as liaison with the College of Education, State Department of Education and other agencies; developing communications and public relations internally and externally; and assisting with student problems and grievances.

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY FACULTY & STAFF

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Dr. Rich Nagle

Distinguished Professor Emeritus
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OTHER IMPORTANT DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL

Caitlyn Brockington – Undergraduate Student Services Coordinator

Phone: (803) 777-7674 email: brockicl@email.sc.edu

Responsible for advisement, maintenance of undergraduate student files, course scheduling, undergrad late enrollment, independent study courses and all other undergraduate tasks as needed. Oversees work-study students and handles general administrative duties within the Undergraduate Student Office for the Psychology Department.

Miriam Callahan – Administrative Coordinator

Phone: (803) 777-8606 email: callahmi@mailbox.sc.edu

Coordinator for the Institute for Mind and Brain (IMB). For the Psychology Department, responsible for all travel including Travel Authorizations (TA) and Travel Reimbursement Vouchers (TRV). Assists with purchasing requests and processes room reservations.

TBD – Business and Office Manager

Phone: TBD email: TBD

Responsible for any accounting or financial records within the department, i.e. departmental budget, grant tracking, Magellan Awards, SPARC awards, provost incentive funds, Ed Foundation accounts course buyouts, summer salary and account initiation/close-outs. Serves as liaison between the Psychology Department and Grants and Funds Management, the Dean's Office and the SAM Office. Manages staff and overall integration of Psychology Department Administrative duties to ensure efficiency and regulatory compliance.

Robert Heller – IT Manager

Phone: (803) 777-1239 email: hellerre@mailbox.sc.edu

Responsible for any computer related issues such as software updates, purchasing of technical equipment, maintenance of security, maintenance of workstations & drives, etc. Also maintains the Psychology website.

Bonte' Boderick – Human Resources Representative

Phone: (803) 777-4263 email: bonteo@mailbox.sc.edu

Responsible for department level human resources duties including hiring of staff/students, processing any changes to hires, benefits coordination, tenure and promotion, W-2 distribution, and any other HR related tasks.

Connie Outen – Undergraduate Program Coordinator

Phone: (803) 777-2483

email: couten@mailbox.sc.edu

Responsible for semester scheduling, independent studies, grade changes, undergraduate student advising, curriculum content. Main contact for Registrar and undergraduate event planning within the department.

Christine Clark – Graduate Program Coordinator

Phone: (803) 777-2312

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Responsible for assisting the Graduate Directors, assisting with graduate admissions, tracking graduates throughout their progress in their degree programs, assists two programs with maintaining their APA accreditations, hiring of graduate students as employees and serves as liaison between students and The Graduate School.

TRAINING RESOURCES

The University of South Carolina (USC) was established in 1801 and is a full-service, state-supported research university that includes the 358-acre Columbia main campus and seven regional campuses with a total student body population of >45,000. USC is ranked by the Carnegie Foundation as within the highest tier of US research institutions. Columbia is the state capital with a metropolitan population of >800,000. Nearly every state agency relevant to the training of school psychologists is located in the city (e.g., Departments of Education, Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, Juvenile Justice, Governor's Office, etc.) and many are located within walking distance of the campus. The university and community provide numerous social and cultural benefits which enhance the overall quality of life. These include many theaters offering live productions, Southeastern Conference (SEC) sports, minor league baseball, one of the nation's top zoos and botanical gardens, multiple state museums, Richland County library, Fort Jackson and its on-base school district (one of the US Army's largest training facilities), and affordable off-campus housing and services.

The Psychology Department is housed in the USC College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). Psychology has remained one of the college's top majors and the department is the only department on the campus to offer a full-service undergraduate assistance office. The Psychology Department also shares a Neuroscience Program with the Biology Department, offering a major, minor, and research experience to undergraduate and graduate students. The university offers multiple computer and printing labs available to all faculty and graduate students. The department maintains a computer lab for student use, with more than 20 terminals. These computers have software and network capabilities to aid in word processing, data analysis, research (e.g., PsycInfo, direct access to library holdings, etc.), Internet access, and email. Students use these facilities extensively for a broad range of academic and assistantship responsibilities. The program shares a clinical training hub with the Clinical-Community concentration, which houses approximately \$100,000 in assessment equipment and is located in the Psychology Services Center (PSC) off campus. The program spends between \$5,000 and \$10,000 a year to order new tests and update old ones. These tests are used for teaching, practica, and assistantship duties. The program also has video and audio recording equipment. The department operates the PSC, which provides opportunities for supervised experience in direct therapeutic intervention with children, adults, and families as well as assessment services available to the community. PSC activities are coordinated with practicum courses in child and family therapy and assessment. The School Psychology program also enjoys a collegial, working relationship with the USC School of Medicine, including the Department of Pediatrics, Department of Internal Medicine, and Department of Family Medicine, as well as the USC College of Education, and PRISMA Health.

The program has had an excellent relationship with the school districts in the state since its inception. The first director, Dr. Ralph Tindall, had an appointment with the largest school district in Columbia (Richland One). The local schools provide a broad range of training options based on size, racial and ethnic composition, rural-urban composition, and socio-economic (SES) status. Within a 20-minute drive of the university are schools with majority minority student populations, Department of Defense schools, rural schools, and unique magnet schools (e.g., Montessori, language immersion). The majority of school-based practicum activities are carried out in these local schools under the supervision of university faculty and field supervisors. Many school-based supervisors are graduates of the School Psychology PhD program. These schools also provide research opportunities and assistantship sites. A variety of private schools and federal independent schools at Fort Jackson have been used for field training in the assessment courses.

The region has numerous practicum and assistantship sites in mental health and social service delivery agencies. These include child inpatient and outpatient programs, community mental health centers, juvenile justice facilities, residential programs for Autistic children, shelters for unhoused children, and community-based programs for children and adults with developmental disabilities. The following is a sample of sites used in recent years: (1) South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice; (2) PRISMA Developmental Pediatrics Clinic; (3) Unumb Center; (4) William. S. Hall Psychiatric Institute; (5) Lexington-Richland Five School District; (6) Pinegrove School; (7) USC Athletics Department (8) PRISMA Hospital - Children's Immunology Clinic and Brain Tumor Clinic and Children's Oncology Unit; (9) Center for Developmental Disabilities of USC School of Medicine; and (10) Institute for Families in Society.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY CONCENTRATION

The School Psychology Program at the University of South Carolina is accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA)'s Commission on Accreditation and approved by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) through a partnership with the National Council on the Accreditation of Teacher Evaluation (NCATE). The last APA site visit was in December 2015. A self-study was completed in 2023, and the next site visit is scheduled for 2024.

The program is considered one of the premier school psychology PhD programs in the US. It has a long history and recognition for excellence. It was the third school psychology training program in the US to receive APA accreditation (1974). It has been commended for excellence by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and recognized as a model program by APA Division 16. It has been ranked third nationally in *U.S. News and World Report* magazine rankings of graduate programs. Faculty productivity research has demonstrated the program to be among the top programs in the country over a 40-year period (Kranzler et al., 2012; Skrutski & Williams, 2001).

Program faculty have always been committed to the teaching of psychology as a generic base for understanding human behavior, integrated with training in specific skills and knowledge necessary for the practice of psychology in school, healthcare, and community settings. The program is built on a "scientist-practitioner" model, which provides the framework for training in basic science and its application to real-world problems. Scientific and professional course work is viewed as interactive and complementary in developing a knowledge base in the theory and practice of school psychology.

The integration of the scientific and professional model of training is reflected in the sequence of required course work, which involves basic psychology courses and professional courses in school psychology. Students receive extensive training in research through coursework and individualized experiences with program faculty. Students also receive extensive training in psychoeducational assessment and comprehensive psychological evaluation, mental health, behavioral, and academic intervention, and consultation. Most core professional courses involve a fieldwork component. Beginning in the 2nd year, students are placed in practicum sites to refine their skill development. In the 6th year of the program, students complete a full-time predoctoral internship, with most students participating in the National Match Program and matching to internships through the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC)

The School Psychology faculty is committed to training students from diverse backgrounds, including supporting students who are minoritized by race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender identity. We are proud of the diversity of our graduate students in the Psychology Department and at USC more broadly. Students are drawn from across the country and world and represent a variety of backgrounds. Many have strong interests in issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the program provides multiple opportunities to work with diverse students, families, and communities.

The following list of activities indicates the major areas of training in our multifaceted approach to the theory and practice of school psychology:

- Orientation to the culture and organization of the school;
- Assessment of the individual child;
- Consultation and in-service training with school personnel and parents;
- Classroom intervention/management;
- Interviewing and individual and family therapy/intervention;
- Group intervention;
- Systems intervention;
- Initiation and conduct of research in the schools and other community settings;
- Consultation and program evaluation; and
- School administrative activities

TRAINING IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

Goals and Philosophy

School Psychology is a discipline of psychology, composed of scientific-practitioner psychologists who engage in the delivery of comprehensive psychological services to children, adolescents, and families in school and applied settings. School psychologists apply their expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior to help children and families succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. School psychologists hold knowledge in data-based decision making; consultation and collaboration; mental and behavioral health; academic interventions and supports; school-wide practices to promote student learning and to create safe, supportive schools; family, school, and community collaboration; equitable practices for diverse student populations; research and evidence-based practice; and legal, ethical, and professional practice.

The philosophy of the School Psychology program is to train students in the practice of Health Service Psychology with the foundations and methods common to all professional psychologists as well as the advanced skills that distinguish School Psychology from other disciplines. The School Psychology Program seeks to develop professional psychologists to work in schools, community settings, and higher education settings and prepare students to be flexible enough to play a variety of roles and assume positions of leadership in the development of necessary psychological services to learners. The program also seeks to develop students who are able to supervise, coordinate, and direct the activities of others, and have a broad and eclectic knowledge of psychological and educational theory and research. Our students look to the science of psychology to provide answers to practical problems and promote the health and wellbeing of all children and families.

The program is guided by the following assumptions:

1. Science and practice are integrated across both core and specialty training. All professional skill courses are taught from a strong theoretical and research orientation combined with relevant clinical field experiences.
2. Training must emphasize not only individual factors but also the multiple systems and environmental influences that affect learning and adjustment. This program places a great emphasis on the contexts and social worlds in which children and families function. This emphasis on interconnected ecological systems and social-organizational factors remains a hallmark of the program.
3. Training must emphasize indirect and direct services to promote competence and coping and prevent psychoeducational and mental health problems.
4. School psychology practice is grounded firmly in empirically tested practice. Research and evaluation, both basic and applied, is a central component of student training. Faculty and student evaluation rests heavily on research competence. The faculty's aim is to serve as excellent role models of scientist-practitioners for students.
5. Training occurs best in a nurturing environment in which students feel accepted, committed, involved, and well mentored. Beyond the low faculty-to-student ratio, there are many program processes which seek to both welcome and empower students. These include the accessibility of all faculty in terms of on-campus time and supervision/advisement hours, social activities, student involvement in decision-making and program management, and support of student activities such as theses, dissertations, conference travel, malpractice insurance, and assistantship funding. The atmosphere is supportive; once a student is admitted, every effort is made to ensure that the student will successfully complete their doctoral training in a timely manner.
6. School psychology training must stress diversity and inclusion considerations. Situated in an urban area, in a state with a 27% African-American population, a small but growing Latino population, a large military presence, and a 15% rural population, the program is in an excellent position to provide training in service delivery to diverse populations, including historically marginalized and excluded populations.
7. School psychology training must be organized, systematic, and sequential. This program's model stresses the development of basic psychological skills, orientation to the culture and organization of the school, and professional identity in early training. This is succeeded by opportunities to practice skills, and subsequently, to acquire and practice more advanced skills. Practica begin in the 2nd year and involve progressively more complex skills during the training sequence. Courses from the 3rd year and beyond serve to consolidate and integrate these skills and provide more advanced training in indirect service delivery and intervention. Training is further refined in the fourth year, when specialty courses can also be taken. Research training is organized similarly in a developmental fashion.

Doctoral training in the USC School Psychology program provides students with knowledge and skills to provide comprehensive and integrated school psychological services, as reflected in the NASP Practice Model (<https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/nasp-practice-model>). Beyond these

competencies, this program is also built to meet standards of accreditation for Health Service Psychologists (<https://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/about/policies/standards-of-accreditation.pdf>) capable of providing a broad range of psychological services in school, health, and community settings. Another goal of the doctoral program is to train students to supervise other professionals and paraprofessionals, as well as to work on interdisciplinary, integrated care teams. and coordinate the efforts of professionals, paraprofessionals, clerks, administrative assistants, and others.

Within school settings, our doctoral trainees gain expertise in direct and indirect school psychological services. These include: assessment of children (e.g., test administration and interpretation; observation; interpretation of records and reports of other specialists; child, parent, and teacher interviews); consultation with school personnel (e.g., teachers, speech therapists, school counselors, school nurses, administrators.); consultation with parents/caregivers and personnel from community agencies; participation in joint decision-making procedures with interdisciplinary teams; implementation and evaluation of academic and behavioral interventions; and the interpretation of psychological science to the school community. While doctoral-level psychologists may hold positions in the schools where they rarely perform some of the activities listed, they need to be thoroughly familiar with them because they may be responsible for the efforts of others in these and similar tasks.

All students in the program are expected to demonstrate high levels of competence in the following areas:

Goal 1: Prepare students who have demonstrated knowledge and skill in the practice of psychology.

Objective 1: Identity, Function, and Ethics

(a) to understand the roles and functions of school psychologists in school and non-school settings; (b) to understand the legal and ethical standards that relate to the practice of professional psychology and school practice; (c) to understand the various employment contexts for school psychologists, with a particular emphasis on the culture and organization of schools.

Objective 2: Psychoeducational Assessment

(a) to obtain information through behavioral observations, interviews, records, and community resources that relates to the development of intervention programs for children with learning and/or behavioral difficulties; (b) to select, administer, score, and interpret tests of intellectual ability, educational achievement, personality, social-emotional functioning, perceptual-motor abilities, adaptive behavior, and other relevant skills and abilities; (c) to interpret and integrate information from a variety of sources (test and non-test data) to make appropriate diagnostic and intervention decisions with individuals of different ages, cultural backgrounds, and exceptionalities; (d) to seek consultation and supervision from other professional psychologists when necessary; (e) understand the conceptual and statistical underpinning of psychometric testing, including issues of reliability and validity.

Objective 3: Direct and Indirect Intervention

(a) to develop and evaluate appropriate intervention plans for individuals with learning, behavioral, and/or mental health challenges; (b) to consult in a collaborative fashion and demonstrate effective communication and interpersonal skills with teachers, parents, and others related to the education and mental health of children; (c) to provide and evaluate direct counseling and therapy treatments in individual and group formats and for particular diagnostic issues; (d) to formulate, implement, and evaluate systems-level assessment and intervention

programs; (e) develop knowledge and methods of supervision; (f) exhibit professional values, behaviors, and attitudes in all settings.

Objective 4: Research skills

(a) To develop the capacity to consume, critique, and synthesize research literature; (b) to demonstrate knowledge of and ability to apply research methods (e.g. sampling, measurement, design) appropriate for research questions; (c) to demonstrate empirical skills during recruitment and data collection; (d) to demonstrate basic to advanced quantitative skills, including those appropriate for conducted research in complex systems like schools; (e) to demonstrate ability to present research ideas and results in a written or oral format; (f) to demonstrate awareness of how one's biases influence interpretation of the results of one's own and others' research; (g) to apply a systems perspective through the research process; (h) to seek and provide feedback effectively as a member of a research team; (i) to demonstrate effective interpersonal and communication skills with participants, community members, and team members; (j) to use and interpret statistical analyses to describe data, test hypotheses, evaluate measures, and explore data.

Goal 2: Prepare students who have ability to integrate basic psychological science theory, findings, and practice.

Objective 1: Basic Psychological Science

In accordance with the APA Standards of Accreditation, the USC School Psychology concentration is designed to develop in students a comprehensive foundation of knowledge in Discipline-Specific Knowledge, or the core areas of psychological science and human services psychology practice. These areas include Developmental Psychology, Social Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Behaviorism and Learning Theory, Biological Basis of Behavior, Affective Basis of Behavior, Psychological Problems and Disorders, Diversity Issues in Psychology, History and Systems of Psychology, and Psychological Interventions.

It should be noted that this list of goals and competencies represents the minimum set of competencies expected of all school psychology students. All students in the program are also encouraged to pursue additional competencies to develop specialized areas of expertise related to their unique interests. For example, many students acquire additional competencies in such areas as family therapy, neuropsychology, and applied behavior analysis. Individualized experiences provide students with the opportunity to extend their range of training and/or develop specializations that maximize their opportunities to pursue future training (e.g., internships, postdoctoral fellowships) and career paths. All students are also encouraged to begin the process of continuing professional development through joining and participating as student members in relevant professional organizations (e.g., APA, APA Division 16, NASP, South Carolina Association of School Psychologists [SCASP]).

Many school psychology core courses (e.g., Cognitive Assessment, Behavioral/Affective Assessment, , Consultation & Systems Intervention) combine a solid grounding in theory and research in the various skill/content areas with the opportunity to apply these skills in actual school and other applied settings. Following these combined didactic/practice courses are highly structured practicum placements that allow for the application and refinement of the previously learned skills. Similarly, research skills related to the various content areas and professional practice skills in school psychology are developmentally phased in through course-related activities and practicum assignments, as well as through formal independent research projects (e.g., master's thesis and dissertation research). Because students are expected to develop the skills to contribute to the knowledge base in psychology, as well as to become competent

practitioners, considerable emphasis is placed on involving students in scientific research throughout their training. The combination of a rich research environment at USC along with an unusually diverse array of school and community field placements in the Columbia metropolitan area facilitates the realization of the scientist-practitioner model.

After completing approximately three years of course work, and a minimum of a two-semester statistical sequence, all students conduct at least two major research projects--a master's thesis or research project and a doctoral dissertation. An oral defense of the doctoral dissertation is required for graduation. No formal oral defense of the master's thesis or research project is required, however, both readers of the master's thesis must determine that the thesis product is acceptable as a pass. Moreover, students should be prepared to discuss their master's thesis at their Master's Oral Examination. These research experiences serve to initiate and refine students' abilities to conceptualize, conduct, and report research through mentoring relationships with faculty members.

Regarding practicum training, school psychology students participate in extensive school and school-related practicum experiences under the direct supervision of school psychology faculty and on-site supervisors. Practicum experiences are provided as part of most school psychology core courses as well as independent practica courses (e.g., PSYC 832B). Practicum experiences begin in the first semester as part of PSYC 714 (Psychoeducational Assessment of Children I) and PSYC 832A (Practicum in School Psychology). Additional school psychology courses that include a practicum component include PSYC 715 (Psychoeducational Assessment of Children II), PSYC 701 (Behavioral Assessment and Intervention with Children), and PSYC 742 (Consultation and Systems Interventions). Beginning in the 2nd year and continuing in the 3rd year, students enroll in a year-long practicum course (PSYC 832B and PSYC 832C). The field-based practica are completed in a variety of local schools and related settings. During their course of training, students gain experiences at various educational levels with diverse student populations with respect to racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds, as well as disabilities and socioeconomic levels. The PSYC 832B and PSYC 832C sequence involves a one day per week commitment in the schools or related setting, along with a weekly group seminar meeting and individual supervision meetings. Many students choose to participate in additional, optional practicum experiences during their training as well. In general, practicum experiences progress from direct individual psychological assessment and intervention activities to more indirect systems-level change and supervisory activities. Moreover, students are routinely assessed on their performance of required practicum objectives.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The PhD in Psychology at USC consists of four concentrations: School Psychology, Clinical-Community Psychology, Cognitive and Neural Sciences, and Quantitative Psychology. The School Psychology curriculum is designed in accordance with various requirements of licensing and national credentialing agencies, and students may enter the School Psychology concentration at either the post-baccalaureate (requires ≥ 93 total hours) or post-master's stage (requires ≥ 75 hours).

M.A. REQUIREMENTS

All concentrations, including School Psychology, require 30 hours for post-baccalaureate students to achieve the M.A. in Psychology. In addition, the School Psychology concentration requires successful completion of the master's thesis and successful completion of the master's oral comprehensive examination for the M.A. degree. Courses required for the M.A. include:

CORE (6 hours)

PSYC 709 Basic Quantitative Methods in the Analysis of Behavioral Data I
PSYC 710 Basic Quantitative Methods in the Analysis of Behavioral Data II

THESIS PREPARATION (3 hours)

PSYC 799 Thesis Preparation (3 hours total)

ELECTIVE COURSES FOR M.A. DEGREE (need 21 hours)

PSYC 832A Intro to School Psychology
PSYC 832B School Practicum
PSYC 701 Behavioral Assessment and Intervention with Children and Youth
PSYC 702A Basics of Neuroscience
PSYC 702B Basics of Cognitive Psychology
PSYC 714 Psychoeducational Assessment of Children I
PSYC 715 Psychoeducational Assessment of Children II
PSYC 725 Systems and Theories of Psychological Intervention
PSYC 726 Psychological Problems and Resilience
PSYC 742 Consultation and Systems Intervention
PSYC 749 Principles of Human Diversity
PSYC 772 Research Approaches to Human Behavior
PSYC 820 Seminar in Developmental Psychology
PSYC 850 Academic Interventions
PSYC 889 Individual Advanced Research (variable credit hours available)

PH.D. REQUIREMENTS

To achieve the Ph.D. in Psychology, all concentrations require the following 24 hours for post-baccalaureate students. A concentration-specific committee will determine which courses are required for students entering the program post-master's. Courses required for the PhD include:

CORE (6 hours) (also required for MA)

PSYC 709 Basic Quantitative Methods in the Analysis of Behavioral Data I
PSYC 710 Basic Quantitative Methods in the Analysis of Behavioral Data II

RESEARCH METHODS (6 hours)

Varies by student focus area and must be approved by a concentration advisory committee

DISSERTATION PREPARATION (12 hours)

PSYC 899 Doctoral Research and Dissertation Preparation (12 hours)

In addition, School Psychology students must complete between 51 and 69 additional hours of coursework to be awarded the PhD, as well as pass a written comprehensive examination, pass a doctoral orals examination, successfully defend a dissertation, and complete a doctoral internship. Students who enter post-baccalaureate require an additional 69 hours of total coursework. Students who enter post-master's require an additional 51 hours of total coursework, including:

CLINICAL PRACTICUM COURSEWORK (13 hours)

REMAINING COURSEWORK (38 if entering post-master's; 56 hours if entering post-baccalaureate)

Remaining coursework must be approved by a concentration advisory committee. These courses may include elective courses in School Psychology listed above, as well as advanced elective courses, such as:

PSYC 782 Child/Family Therapy Practicum
PSYC 830 Advanced Child/Family Practicum (1-2 credits)
PSYC 782 Child, Adolescent, & Family Therapy Practicum
PSYC 832B Practicum in School Psychology (2 semesters; 6 credit hours total)
PSYC 832C Practicum in School Psychology (2 semesters; 6 credit hours total)
PSYC 840 Seminar in Professional School Psychology
PSYC 865 Internship in School Psychology (1 credit hour each semester)

*As students and mentors plan their program of study, all students should ensure they have taken courses to address foundational areas of psychology, including:

History and Systems of Psychology (6 hours)

PSYC 726 Psychological Problems and Resilience
PSYC 840 Seminar in Professional School Psychology

Affective Aspects of Behavior (3 hours)

PSYC 888 Affective & Cognitive Neuroscience

Biological Aspects of Behavior (3 hours)

PSYC 507 Cognitive Neuroscience (School section only)

OR

PSYC 702A Basics of Neuroscience

Cognitive Aspects of Behavior (3 hours)

PSYC 888 Affective & Cognitive Neuroscience

OR

PSYC 702D Basics of Learning & Motivation

Developmental Aspects of Behavior (3 hours)

PSYC 820 Developmental Psychology

Social Aspects of Behavior (6 hours)

PSYC 749 Principles of Human Diversity

PSYC 742 Consultation and Systems Intervention

Advanced Integrative Knowledge of Basic Discipline-Specific Content Areas (6 hours)

PSYC 820 Seminar in Developmental Psychology

PSYC 701 Behavioral Assessment and Intervention with Children and Youth

Research Methods (6 hours)

PSYC 772 Research Approaches to Human Behavior

RESEARCH ELECTIVE

Statistics (6 hours)

PSYC 709 Basic Quantitative Methods in the Analysis of Behavioral Data I

PSYC 710 Basic Quantitative Methods in the Analysis of Behavioral Data II

Psychometrics (9 hours)

PSYC 714 Psychoeducational Assessment of Children I

PSYC 715 Psychoeducational Assessment of Children II

PSYC 701 Behavioral Assessment and Intervention with Children and Youth

Psychological Problems and Resilience (3 hours)

PSYC 726 Lifespan Psychopathology and Resilience

Developmental (3 hours)

PSYC 820 Seminar in Developmental Psychology

Finally, students should complete their coursework sequence with elective courses. A list of suggestive elective courses is available in the “**Recommended Course Sequencing**” section.

Clinical Practicum Electives

It is strongly recommended that students have at least one additional 3-hour clinical practicum experience. Courses that qualify for this option consist of (a) applied work in areas such as child and family therapy, psychotherapy, health psychology, or neuropsychology with (b) regular supervision by a psychology faculty member. The purpose is to provide students with applied, supervised experience in a specialized area. The faculty supervisor must be qualified in the particular area of assessment/intervention. Examples of practicum courses include:

PSYC 784 Clinical Health Psychology Practicum

(Prerequisites: PSYC 762 - Practice of Clinical Psychology II and PSYC 783 - Health Psychology/Behavioral Medicine)

PSYC 830 Advanced Practicum in Child and Family Therapy (additional credits)

(Prerequisite: PSYC 782 - Child and Family Therapy Practicum)

Some advanced graduate students may wish to seek additional practicum experiences external to formal practicum coursework due to their specific training goals and internship/career plans (e.g., pediatric psychology, neuropsychology).

Advanced graduate students interested in this should talk with their mentor and clinical supervisors about their interests and opportunities that might be available in the community. Program faculty support for this type of external placement is typically dependent on many different factors and is not guaranteed. This type of placement is also subject to availability of supervision, skill set of the graduate student and availability of opportunities in community settings.

Upon speaking with their mentor and other relevant faculty, advanced school psychology graduate students who wish to obtain practicum experiences outside practicum-related coursework must submit a request to the program faculty prior to committing to and/or beginning an external practicum.

Generally, the following initial criteria must be met in order to start an external practicum:

- Students must be in their 2nd year of training, at minimum
- Students must be in good standing (on-track regarding program requirements)
- Students must obtain approval from their mentor
- The department must have an active Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place with the organization for the work you will be doing
- External practica should typically be no more than 5 hours per week during academic year and 10 hours per week during summer

Additional Comments about Requirements:

All Graduate School requirements must be satisfied. Specifically, each student will meet residency requirements, maintain a 3.00 grade point average or better, and enroll in approved graduate courses.

Procedure for Modifying Program Requirements:

A student entering with previous graduate-level coursework may waive core courses if they have previously completed similar coursework. However, any waived course must be substituted with another course so that total course credit requirements are met. If a student wants to waive a course, they should:

- Seek a meeting concerning waivers of course requirements as early as the summer prior to their 1st semester. Petitions for course waivers should be made before the student takes the course.
- Petitions for waiving or transferring credit for program requirements will be initiated by the student and endorsed by the student's mentor using the "Individual Course Waiver" form before submission to the Program Director.
- Prior to consideration, the student will provide their mentor with the appropriate paperwork from the following: a) specific requests for program alterations; b) a record of previous coursework, including a syllabus with a list of readings; and c) a letter or other written documentation from a USC instructor who typically teaches an equivalent course that documents the students' minimal level of achievement of course content, including any areas of discipline-specific knowledge and/or profession-wide competencies.
- The student then petitions the Program Director for course waiver, using an "Individual Course Waiver" form, which can be found online at:
 - https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/psychology/my_psych/current_grad_students/school_program/schoolprogram_handbooks/schindividualcoursewaiver.pdf.

In order to effectively plan and sequence the student's overall program, all course waivers MUST be applied for during the student's 1st semester of enrollment. The instructor who typically teaches the course to be waived may require either an oral or written examination and/or demonstration of skills before recommending the waiver. Course waiver decisions are made **only** by the instructor who is currently teaching the course, or in the case of courses which are not currently being taught, by the instructor who has taught the course most recently.

Practicum courses are rarely granted waivers as there is a strong need for developmentally sequenced clinical training and faculty must directly observe the student's applied work in order to write appropriate letters for internship.

Quantitative Electives

It is strongly recommended that students take one or more advanced quantitative courses (e.g., Hierarchical Linear Models [HLM], Structural Equation Modeling [SEM], multivariate analysis, etc.) beyond the requirements to further develop their research skills within their chosen specialty area. These courses are usually open to students, provided you have met any prerequisites set by the instructor.

Students have the option of declaring a concentration in Quantitative Methods in Psychology. Concentration requirements are:

- a. Must be accepted to a University of South Carolina Psychology Department Doctoral Program (Clinical-Community, School, or Cognitive and Neural Sciences).
- b. Make a B or better in four courses (12 hours) that have 710 as a pre-requisite (i.e., advanced quantitative courses).
 1. PSYC 709 and PSYC 710 do not count, nor do assessment or methods classes. Courses must be at the 700 level or higher.
 2. Two of the four courses (6 credit hours) are required to be taught *in the department*.
 3. The third and fourth courses (6 credit hours) can optionally be taught in another department, contingent upon approval from the Concentration Program Director.

Schedule and Sequence of Courses

A working document illustrating a *sample* 6-year Ph.D. curriculum (5-years of course work and practica plus a 1-year internship) appears on the following page. This document is given to students and mentors to assist in the choice of courses each semester. The document includes required and elective courses. It should be noted that practicum courses (832B and 832C) are designed to provide complementary experiences to the content of skill courses taken during the prior or same year. This document is unique to each cohort and subject to change due to timing of courses offered.

University of South Carolina
Recommended Course Sequence: School Psychology Concentration

Year 1:

Fall	Hrs	Spring	Hrs
Quantitative Methods I (709)	3	Quantitative Methods II (710)	3
Intro to School Psychology (832A)	3	Research Methods (772)	3
Assessment: Cognitive/Academic Assessment I (714)	3	Assessment: Cognitive/Academic Assessment II (715)	3
Developmental Psychology (820)	3	Systems of Psychotherapy (725)	3
		Thesis hours (799)	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>15</i>

Note: First years in 2023 (2023-2024 cohort) will take a slightly different Year 1 load (701 and 820 are swapped, thesis hours in fall not spring) and then join this plan.

Year 2:

Fall	Hrs	Spring	Hrs
Practicum (832 B)	3	Practicum (832B)	3
Child Family (782)	3	Child/Family (830)	1-2
Behavioral Assessment/Intervention (701)	3	Psych Problems and Resilience (726)	3
Academic Intervention Psych (850)	3	Diversity (749)	3
		College Teaching (790)	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>11-12</i>

Year 3:

Fall	Hrs	Spring	Hrs
Practicum (832 C)	3	Practicum (832 C)	3
Basics of Neuroscience (507 or 702A)	3	Cognitive & Affective Neuroscience (888)	3
Elective of Choice	3	Consultation/Systems (742)	3
		Elective of Choice (optional)*	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>9-12</i>

*Note: Electives that have "(optional)" listed are not required in order to meet the minimum 92 credits needed. However, if a student is planning on reducing practicum electives in later years, they may need to take electives in years 2 and/or 3.

Advisory for Years 4 and 5: This time is meant to support increased research engagement. Students and advisors should be mindful of what kind of funding they would like to have. Some research assistantships (e.g., advisors' grants) and community externships cannot support more than a few credit hours per semester. In this case, the necessary dissertation and/or practicum credits must be taken in another semester.

Year 4:

Fall	Hrs	Spring	Hrs
Dissertation research (899)**	3	Dissertation research (899)	3
Practicum Elective (830)***	2	Practicum Elective	1
Elective of Choice (optional)	3	Seminar in School Psych (840)	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>5-8</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>7</i>

**Note: Students can only take dissertation research (899) credits AFTER comps paper is passed. 11 of 12 total hours of dissertation research need to be completed BEFORE internship. Students need to register for 1 dissertation credit during the summer that they graduate.

***Note: If student is continuing to see CAF therapy clients at PSC or elsewhere that requires clinical faculty supervision, plan on enrolling in PSYC 830. If you were planning on taking an additional elective **and also** continuing to see CAF therapy clients, discuss that with Dr. Hills at your ICTP meeting.

Year 5: (on [Z status**](#) both semesters)**

Fall	Hrs	Spring	Hrs
Dissertation research (899)	3	Dissertation research (899)	2
Practicum Elective	2	Practicum Elective	1
Total	5	Total	3

****Note: Students can be on z-status with 6 or less credits, as long as they are 1) done with all coursework other than dissertation research and 2) have written a memo to the dean about practicum, if taking practicum credits.

Note: We STRONGLY recommend that you do NOT defend your dissertation during the summer semester before internship; otherwise, you are required to pay out of pocket for this credit.

Year 6: Internship (you are required to register for 1 credit each semester while on internship)

Fall	Hrs	Spring	Hrs
Internship (PSYC 865)	1	Internship (PSYC 865)	1

The summer you graduate (you are required to register for 1 credit the semester you graduate)

Summer	Hrs
Dissertation research	1

Recommended Electives:

General:

- PSYC 702B Cognitive Psychology
- PSYC 760 Issues and Ethics in Clinical Comm Psych
- PSYC 727 Foundations of Community Psychology
- PSYC 841 Autism Assessment
- COMD 706 Preschool Language Development and Disorders

Scientific writing:

- EXSC 802 Predoctoral Fellowship Writing Course, emphasis on NIH F31 (ideal for 1st or 2nd years who want to submit F31 grants)
- PUBH 791 Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis

Education-focused:

- EDEX 784 Instruction of students with emotional and behavioral disorders
- EDEX 809 Single-Case Research Designs in Special Education
- EDEX 710 Legal Issues in Special Education

Qualitative methods:

- EDFI 731 Qualitative Inquiry
- WGST 796 Special Topics in Women's and Gender Studies - Qualitative Methods
- PSYC 841 Qualitative Methods in Mixed Methods Research

Quantitative methods:

Fall, Odd Years

- PSYC 824 Structural Equation Modeling
- PSYC 824 Innovative Design and Analysis of Behavioral Interventions
- PSYC 825 Introduction to Statistical Mediation Analysis
- PSYC 824 Advanced Structural Equation Modeling

Fall, Even Years

- PSYC 821 Theory of Psychological Measurement
- PSYC 823 Multivariate Analysis of Behavioral Data
- PSYC 826 Longitudinal Data Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences

Spring, Odd Years

- PSYC 824 Multilevel Modeling in Intervention Research
- PSYC 815 Introduction to Causal Inference

APPLIED COURSE WORK

Applied courses provide both didactic and applied clinical experiences. These courses are viewed as cumulative experiences with the student acquiring additional knowledge and skills each semester. Particular topics, assignments, and experiences may vary according to the particular instructor and opportunities available in a given semester. The descriptions included below are intended as examples of the types of experience made available to students.

I. General Professional Development

PSYC 832A Practicum in School Psychology

In this first- or second-year course (depending on course availability), seminar time is initially centered on discussion of the history of School Psychology and current legal, ethical, and professional issues. Defining and clarifying the roles and functions of school psychologists in school and non-school settings. Students become familiar with the major literature and journals pertinent to the field (e.g., *School Psychology Quarterly*, *School Psychology Review*, *Journal of School Psychology*). In addition to weekly class meetings, students are expected to spend several hours per week involved in the following experiences: observation of classrooms across the school-age spectrum, observation of pupil personnel services, attending state conference, etc.

II. Assessment Sequence

The required assessment sequence is a series of two courses, PSYC 714 and 715.

PSYC 714 Psychoeducational Assessment of Children I

Psychology 714 is a combination of lectures and practicum experiences (e.g., role play, mock assessments, mock report writing) related to cognitive assessment. Emphasis is placed on attaining proficiency in the administration, scoring, and interpretation of cognitive tests and measures of adaptive behavior.

PSYC 715 Psychoeducational Assessment of Children II

Psychology 715 extends students' knowledge of psychoeducational assessment with a focus on assessment of academic achievement testing. Students also learn a variety of processing-related measures (e.g., visual-motor tests, attention measures, etc.). This course builds on the skills acquired in Psychology 714. Each student will administer, score, and interpret psychoeducational tests and acquire knowledge on the current research base on the use and interpretation of such tests. Other approaches to educational evaluation (e.g., curriculum-based assessment) are also addressed.

Other Assessment Courses (optional)

Occasionally, departmental faculty offer advanced courses in assessment. Some courses have addressed special topics, such as assessment of young children, neuropsychological assessment, and autism assessment. Such courses are typically appropriate after the completion of the core sequence of required courses.

III. Intervention Sequence

PSYC 701 Behavioral Assessment and Intervention with Children and Youth

This course exposes the student to basic principles and techniques of behavioral approaches to intervention. Major topics include functional behavioral assessment, behavioral observation, procedures for maintaining and decreasing behaviors, and training for generalization and maintenance. The course focuses on the use of behavioral procedures within the school, family, and community settings. A field component may be included.

PSYC 850 Academic Interventions

This course consists of in-depth study of the identification, implementation, and evaluation of academic interventions at the individual and group levels. Application of interventions in multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) and Response to Intervention (RTI) frameworks is emphasized.

PSYC 742 Consultation and Systems Intervention

This course consists of an intensive exploration of consultation theory and practice. It reviews mental health, behavioral, and organizational consultation. Simulated and real consultation experiences will be provided.

PSYC 840 Seminar in Professional School Psychology

This course is a capstone seminar designed for the advanced graduate student prior to internship. The course is organized on the basis of two major components, which together reflect an integrated approach to the science and practice of professional school psychology. The first component of the course relates to an overview of history and systems of psychology. The second component relates to specific topics in school psychology, jointly determined by the instructor and students on the basis of their individual needs. The purpose of the second component of the seminar is to fill in perceived gaps in knowledge, skills, and awareness to prepare for (1) written and oral comprehensive examinations and completion of remaining program requirements, (2) pre-doctoral internships, and (3) the transition to post-graduate work and life.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICUM

Overview

From its inception, the training program in School Psychology at USC has prioritized integrating classroom learning with actual experience in school and clinical settings. In addition to academic course work, students participate in extensive practica and other field experiences under the direction of school psychology faculty members and community-based supervisors. These supervisors provide a variety of services to the community, local school systems, and other agencies across South Carolina, as well as providing supervised applied training experiences. Practica have traditionally been associated with most of the major core courses. Practica requirements give the student an opportunity to practice applied skills and to become familiar with the role of the school psychologist. The latter is stressed in the 1st semester course, 832A, "Practicum in School Psychology." Beginning in the 2nd year and continuing into the 3rd year, students enroll in a year-long field practicum courses (832B and 832C). These year-long field placements require at least one day per week in the field. These field practicum courses are completed in local schools and related settings. Through these experiences, students gain experience working directly with children across ages and educational levels, as well as gain experience working with youth from diverse backgrounds. Practicum experiences are integrated with relevant course work.

Following is an outline of objectives and activities for 832B and 832C. Timing of objectives and activities are developmentally sequenced and depend on students' field placement and previous experiences. For example, some students may complete a specific objective during the fall semester of 832B whereas others might complete that same objective during spring semester of 832B given the nature of their placement. Some objectives must coincide with other specific courses, which means they can only be completed during a specific year. Please be advised that the pace at which you move through the practicum sequence will depend, in part, upon your successful completion of research requirements in the program.

Some students elect to enroll in additional, advanced practica. Such field experiences may take place in schools, hospitals, healthcare systems, and/or other community service settings.

Because of the nature of practica and other course requirements, all students are expected to be full-time (i.e., enrolled in at least 9 graduate credit hours per semester) at least through the first three years of study.

With regards to all practicum activities, all students are covered under the university liability insurance for activities completed with the direct approval of the program (i.e., those in which a Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] is in place). Students are also strongly encouraged to obtain their own individual professional liability insurance from an external source that insures psychologists, such as The Trust (<https://www.trustinsurance.com/Insurance-Programs/Professional-Liability>).

PSYC 782/PSYC 830 Child and Family Therapy

This course exposes the student to empirically based treatment modalities and clinical skills in treating common mental health and developmental challenges children, youth, and their families face. This course consists of didactics and a practicum component where students begin to see child and family therapy cases at our training clinic (i.e., the PSC).

Objectives and Performance Standards

1. To introduce counseling and therapy skills. Student works with three cases in individual child/family therapy.

PSYC 832B - Practicum in School Psychology

One day per week (8 hours).

Psychology course prerequisites: PSYC 716 (co-requisite, at minimum)

Objectives and Performance Standards

1. To orient the student to school district special services policies affecting the profession and school curriculum. Student is expected to develop familiarity with relevant school policies and laws. Student will attend parent meetings and conferences and are required to submit reflections on their experiences of policies/procedures affecting the profession.
2. To integrate intellectual and educational assessment skills. Student completes six evaluations/reevaluations of LD, ADHD/OHI, ED and/or ID, including 2 assessments of emotional/behavioral concerns.
3. To familiarize student with techniques of academic intervention.
4. To provide opportunities for practice of behavioral intervention. Student completes one behavioral intervention and submits written report.

PSYC 832C: Practicum in School Psychology

One day per week (8 hours)

Psychology course prerequisites: PSYC 832B, PSYC 782

Objectives and Performance Standards

1. To provide opportunities for further practice of counseling and therapy skills. Student will have experience with group therapy.
2. To provide practice in low incidence and preschool assessment. Student will complete one evaluation of a student with a low-incidence disability and one evaluation of a preschool child.
3. To provide further practice in advanced assessment techniques. Student completes two evaluations of students referred for emotional/behavioral concerns and two evaluations for any referral concern.
4. To provide opportunities for practice of administrative and managerial skills. Student will complete an administrative project with the assistance of a school district or agency administrator.
5. To provide opportunities for practice of supervision skills. Student will supervise 1st or 2nd year student in beginning practicum activities.

Additional Practica Experiences

Some advanced graduate students may wish to seek additional practicum experiences external to formal practicum coursework due to their specific training goals, internship/career plans (e.g., pediatric psychology, neuropsychology).

Advanced graduate students interested in this should talk with their mentor and other relevant faculty (e.g., practicum supervisors) about their interest and the opportunities that might be available in the community. Program faculty support for this type of external placement is typically dependent on many different factors and is not guaranteed. This type of placement is also subject to availability of supervision, skill set of the graduate student and availability of opportunities in community settings.

Upon speaking with their mentor and other relevant faculty, advanced school psychology graduate students who wish to obtain practicum experiences outside practicum-related coursework must receive approval from their clinical supervisor.

Generally, the following initial criteria must be met in order to be approved for an externship:

- Students must be in their 2nd year of training at minimum
- Students must be in good standing (on track regarding program requirements)
- Students must obtain approval (including signature) from their primary mentor
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be signed

External practica (non-course related) typically can be no more than 5 hours per week during academic year and 10 hours per week during summer.

MENTORING AND EVALUATION OF STUDENTS

Student evaluation and individual feedback are an integral part of the graduate experience. To facilitate this process, each student is assigned a primary faculty mentor upon entrance to the program. Generally, the mentor serves as the student's academic advisor and research mentor, including directing the thesis and dissertation. Typically, the mentor is identified prior to admission. However, students have the option of changing mentors with program faculty approval.

The general function of mentoring is to provide support and monitoring of your professional and personal development as a doctoral student in school psychology. Specific functions are to:

- (a) Support your development of research-related skills and provide mentoring/support to achieve research milestones;
- (b) Provide guidance and feedback on thesis and dissertation, at the appropriate level of independence;
- (c) Monitor your progress toward completion of degree requirements;
- (d) Provide feedback regarding your overall performance and contribution to the program;

- (e) Compile information for input to the faculty as a whole during student evaluations;

Assist you in the timing and selection of courses and milestone events (e.g., written and oral exams); and
- (h) Assist you in the development and attainment of personal goals that pertain to your functioning as a student and your eventual functioning as a health service psychologist.

Mentors are expected to hold a formal meeting with their students each Fall semester to set professional goals and review expected milestones for the year ahead. At the end of each Spring semester, the full faculty reviews the progress of every student in the program. Detailed feedback is then provided to students by their respective mentors. Students can find evaluation criteria detailed on the Student Annual Progress and Evaluation summary forms (see Appendix). Following the review, the Program Director provides written feedback to each student indicating whether adequate progress has been made. If adequate progress has not been made or any student issues are noted, a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) may be required (see Policies for more information). Students should note that the Graduate School requires students to maintain a 3.0 GPA. Also, a grade lower than a B in a course is subject to review by the faculty and may result in a PIP, which may require the student to retake all or a portion of the course. Students should set up frequent appointments with their mentor to discuss their goals and progress. The School Program considers additional criteria beyond grade point average to assess adequate progress, including timeliness of milestone completion, performance in practica, and professional behavior.

Student Annual Progress and Evaluation Summary forms can be found in the **Appendix**, as well as on the School Psychology website.

Records Retention

All student records, including annual evaluations, programs of study, records of milestones, competency evaluations, and formal correspondence between the concentration/department and student are stored in the office of the Graduate Program Coordinator. Records may not be removed from this room, but students may request copies of their records at any time before or after graduation.

In addition to formal record retention on the part of the department, students should save extra copies of all formal documentation, as well as papers, projects, and other evidence reflecting progress toward completion of the degree. Such documentation may be needed in the future when applying for licensure.

PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Every degree student must file a “Program of Study” in the Graduate School for approval by the graduate dean. A program of study is a list of courses that satisfy degree requirements and should be used by the student and advisor to plan the sequence of courses that the student will complete for each degree. Students who enter the program with only a bachelor’s degree must file separate programs of study for the master’s degree and the doctoral degree. Those who enter with a master’s degree will file a program of study only for the doctoral degree.

Students pursuing a **Master’s degree** must have an approved program of study (MPOS form) on file in The Graduate School by the end of their first year, or they will not be permitted to register further (see Appendix for an example of the MPOS. A fillable pdf of the MA Program of Study (MPOS form) can be found on the department or Graduate School website at:

https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/documents/mastersprogramofstudy.pdf

Students pursuing a **Doctoral degree** must have an approved program of study (DPOS form) on file in The Graduate School by the end of their second year, or they will not be permitted to register further (see Appendix for an example of the DPOS. A fillable pdf of the DPOS can be found on the department or Graduate School website at:

https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/documents/doctoralprogramofstudy.pdf

It is the student’s responsibility to obtain the correct forms from the website and complete it with the mentor. It must be signed by the student, the mentor, the graduate director, and the dean of The Graduate School. The Graduate Program Coordinator will submit the completed form to The Graduate School. Students are advised to keep a copy of the Program of Study and to provide one to their mentor.

Please see the Graduate Studies Bulletin at (<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/graduate/>) for additional information related to the Program of Study and other degree requirements.

MASTER'S DEGREE AND RELATED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

The Master's (MA) Degree

Students who enter the program with only a bachelor's degree must complete all program and Graduate School (TGS) requirements for the completion of the Master of Arts (MA) degree. Information on TGS requirements may be found at <http://www.gradschool.sc.edu/>, where the Graduate Studies Bulletin can be found online. Students are encouraged to consult the bulletin for their year of entry and to maintain up-to-date information about all university and program requirements. At the start of the semester in which you will receive your MA degree, you must submit a form requesting concurrent enrollment in the Master's Program. It is called the G-CON form and can be found on the Graduate School website. (See Appendix)

Requirements for the Master's degree include:

- 30 hours of course work, as specified in the above Program Curriculum section;
- Master's Program of Study (MPOS);
- Successful completion of the master's thesis;
- Successful completion of the master's oral comprehensive examination

Students are expected to complete all requirements for the master's degree by the end of the 4th semester (Spring, Year 2) and to complete and submit all relevant paperwork to the Graduate School in a timely manner, as specified in timelines published by the Graduate School.

The Master's Thesis (PSYC 799 - 3 credits)

USC requires a thesis of all graduate students seeking the Master of Arts degree. As indicated in the Graduate Studies Bulletin, students should obtain a copy of the general thesis regulations from The Graduate School (see Appendix). The thesis should be written to meet all graduate school requirements. Later in this Handbook is a detailed description of the steps and requirements for the doctoral dissertation (see "Psychology Department Guidelines for the Dissertation"). Information in that section will also be very helpful in preparing your thesis.

General Purpose: Completion of the master's thesis is designed to assist students in becoming competent research scientists. There are three specific objectives for this project: (1) provide an introduction to research methodology and research applications; (2) provide experience and knowledge that will help in the preparation and completion of a doctoral dissertation; and (3) demonstrate the role of school psychologists in the discovery of new knowledge.

Description of the Project: This research requirement will involve a completed empirical research study conducted in conjunction with a faculty committee and written following the guidelines of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). The thesis must also meet all Graduate School requirements.

Scope of the Project: A variety of research approaches are acceptable for this project, including but not limited to:

- applied and basic experimental designs
- quasi-experimental designs
- survey data and methods
- archival data analysis
- meta-analysis of an area of research
- program evaluation
- qualitative analysis
- single-subject and small-sample designs

Implementation: New students will be oriented to thesis and dissertation research requirements within their research labs and by their mentor(s). Students are encouraged to select their thesis and dissertation chairs and committees based on their individual research interests and career plans.

Regardless of the goal or the content of the thesis, the nature and scope of the project should be such that the student completes the project before the beginning of the 3rd year. The student should develop a concise project prospectus (including a brief overview and description of the methodology; see below) no later than the beginning of the 3rd semester (Fall, Year 2) so that the thesis committee can evaluate in a timely fashion whether the proposed project is appropriate.

The student should recognize that progression from lower to higher level courses, practica, assistantships, and other requirements is contingent upon satisfactory progress in research activities, including the thesis.

Composition of the Thesis Committee: The thesis committee must have at least two faculty members. At least one member must be from the core School Psychology Program faculty. The second member of the committee can be either another School Psychology faculty member, another Psychology faculty member, a faculty member from another USC department, or a professional with relevant applied experience (e.g., from a school, hospital, community agency, etc.), provided that they has been approved by the Graduate School in advance. Generally, students choose a thesis chairperson with whom they wish to conduct their research; together, the student and chairperson then select the second committee member.

The Thesis Prospectus: All students must submit a written proposal, describing the research they plan to conduct (see Dissertation Guidelines for further description of the components). The proposal must be approved by the student's committee before the student may proceed with the study. In addition, approval to conduct research with either human participants or animal subjects must also be secured from the USC Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the student may begin the study approved by the committee. Your committee will decide if a formal prospectus meeting should be held.

Evaluation of the Thesis: A thesis passes when both research committee members rate the project as acceptable. The global rating of each committee member is based on the criteria listed in the rubric (see Appendix). The Master's thesis needs to be completed no later than February of 3rd year in order for students to be considered "in good standing".

Guide for Students Entering with a Master's Degree

Students who enter the program with an existing Master's Degree in School Psychology or a closely related field and pursuing second Master's Degree at USC:

The general rule is that any USC requirement for the Master's Degree in School Psychology must be equivalent to prior training in order to be waived. Requirements are dependent on the nature of the previous Master's Degree as follows:

- MA degree w/Thesis & Orals- Approval of waivers based upon review of previous thesis/orals.
- MA degree w/o Thesis & Orals- Thesis and Orals must be done at USC.
- MA degree w/ Thesis but without Orals- Student must have prior thesis reviewed by advisor and concentration director and complete the MA Oral exam at USC.
- MA degree w/ Orals but without Thesis- Student must complete Thesis at USC and provide explanation of the orals which were completed at the previous institution to mentor & concentration director.

Students who enter the program with a Master's Degree in another field

Must get MA in School Psychology from USC and may only get coursework waived, pending instructor approval.

Students who enter the program with a Master's Degree in School Psychology or related field and do not wish to get a second MA from USC. – Follow the guide for Research Project as outlined below. A Master's Oral Exam is not necessary.

Research Project (for Students entering with a Master's Degree):

Students who enter with an advanced degree in school psychology (master's degree or specialist level degree) but without having completed a master's thesis in their previous graduate program will complete a Research Project as one of the requirements for the PhD. This project is designed to assist students in becoming competent research scientists and meets three related objectives: 1) to provide an early introduction to research methodology and research applications in laboratory and/or applied settings, 2) to provide support and knowledge that will help in the preparation and completion of the doctoral dissertation, and 3) to demonstrate the role of school psychologists in the discovery of new knowledge.

Completing the research project will follow the same steps as those for the master's thesis, with the following exceptions: 1) the written project will not be submitted to the Graduate School; and 2) the completed project will be written in an article format, using APA publication style. Students completing a research project should read all requirements for the master's thesis and the dissertation for further guidelines.

Waiver of the Research Project:

Any student with a completed master's thesis or an equivalent social science-focused graduate research product may be eligible for waiver consideration subject to the approval of the student's primary mentor and the School Psychology faculty. Waivers are granted only in cases in which it is clear that the student had primary responsibility for the completion of the project and the product is of equivalent scope of a typical master's thesis. *Primary responsibility* is defined as evidence that the student had principal responsibilities in problem conceptualization, data collection, data analysis and write-up of the project.

Students who submit a waiver may be asked to give an oral defense of the project or may be asked to provide the name of a person who can be contacted about their involvement in the project.

Students requesting a waiver from the research project should submit a copy of their previously approved thesis or other evidence of research competency to their advisor and a second School Psychology Program faculty member. These two faculty members will review the thesis and grant approval and submit to the full program faculty for final approval. Requests for waivers must be completed during the student's first semester in the program.

MASTER'S ORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

After completing all requirements for the master's thesis and all course work for the master's degree, the student will complete a master's oral comprehensive examination. The committee for the oral examination consists of three faculty members and is typically chaired by the student's primary mentor. At least two committee members must be faculty from the School Psychology concentration. The third may be a faculty member from the broader Psychology Department, or under special circumstances, an approved USC faculty member from outside of the Department.

The MA Oral Comprehensive Exam assesses basic knowledge across foundational areas of the School Psychology training (e.g., developmental psychology, behavior and learning) and focuses on prior course work, applied school psychology, and research competencies at the master's level. Students are evaluated across 10 areas (see *Discipline Specific Knowledge Objectives* rating form). Student responses are rated as Excellent, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory, and their overall performance on the master's orals examination is rated as pass/fail by each committee member. Evaluation is based on quality of oral communication (e.g., responds directly to questions, composed in answering questions, clear in speech and presentation) and quality of knowledge and skills relevant to completed coursework and practica experiences (e.g., responses reflect knowledge of psychological science relevant to completed coursework, responses reflect basic knowledge of school-based psychological practice, responses show ability to apply science to practice).

Students typically use study materials from graduate coursework to prepare for the MA orals exam. The exam usually is ~1 hour in length, with the last 10 minutes allotted for the committee to convene privately to discuss and evaluate the student's performance, followed by feedback to the student. Each competency of the MA orals is assessed on a pass/fail system. Students must pass all 10 competencies in order to pass the MA orals. If a student fails one or more areas, they are allowed up to one opportunity to retake the area(s). Retaking the orals should occur within one semester of the initial failure. Failure to pass a second attempt at the orals constitutes unsatisfactory progress toward the MA degree and the School Psychology faculty would then vote on possible dismissal from the program.

WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

All doctoral candidates at USC must pass a written and oral comprehensive examination conducted by the student's academic program under the direction of a Written and Oral Comprehensive Examination committee. The comprehensive examination may not be given less than 60 days before the student receives their degree.

Students in the School Psychology concentration typically complete their doctoral written comprehensive exam ('comps paper') during the summer following the third year of graduate study. Advanced students entering the program with an earned Master's degree in School Psychology may choose to take the written comprehensive exam earlier upon consultation with the mentor. It is recommended that decisions about timing of the comps paper for students entering with a master's degree in School Psychology be made during the first year of study and conveyed to the program director. All requirements for the master's degree must be completed before taking the exam. There are two options for the fulfillment of the Written Comprehensive Exam:

OPTION A: General Comprehensive Examination ("Comps Paper")

The written comprehensive exam is a demonstration of the student's ability to integrate information and critically review a body of empirical research. Each student is expected to write a Psychological Review / Psychological Bulletin-type paper involving a critical review and evaluation of the literature in a specific area of psychological research or theory. It is important to note that the writing of the paper must be an independent effort. Because this is an examination, once the outline has been approved, students are not allowed to consult with other students/faculty, nor have other students/faculty read the paper, nor utilize other students/faculty as sources of feedback on the comps paper.

Students are not allowed to accept internship offers before they have passed the general comprehensive examination. Students should not register for dissertation credits until the comps paper is completed.

General Comprehensive Paper Procedures:

A. Selection and Approval of Paper Topic

Students should select a topic for the comps paper in consultation with their primary mentor. The paper is designed to demonstrate a student's ability to integrate psychological theory and research findings from several areas of psychology and focus them on a single problem or set of problems. Committee members can be active in helping a student define a problem clearly prior to the point at which an outline is approved by the committee. It is recommended that the student's comps paper focus on the area of literature in which they will be doing their dissertation work.

The primary mentor will work with their mentee to develop an appropriate comps paper topic and outline. It is the responsibility of the student to approach proposed members of the comps paper committee and solicit their willingness to serve prior to contacting the Program Director. **A topic for the comps paper and a four-person committee must be selected.** Three of the committee members should come from the Department of Psychology, with at least two of these faculty from the School Psychology program. The fourth committee member must come from outside the Department (e.g., from the College of Education, College of Social Work, School of Public Health, School of Medicine). The function of the comps paper committee is to help the student refine a topic for study, review the proposed outline, and review and

evaluate the quality of the final paper. Once the committee has been chosen, the GS-48 form (Doctoral Committee Appointment Request Form) should be downloaded from the Graduate School Website and submitted to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

The General Comprehensive Title Form which indicates approval of the general topic and committee membership should be signed by the Program Director and placed in the student's file. If the topic is not approved, the student may appeal the decision and request a review by an ad hoc School Psychology Program Committee.

B. Outline Approval and Form of the Paper

If a recent review (e.g., within the past 5 years) has been conducted on the topic, the student needs to clearly state how their planned review differs from the previous review and what new contributions will be made by their review. This issue should be discussed with the student's comps committee. It is important to critically evaluate the research and to integrate findings rather than to treat the studies as an annotated bibliography. The readers of the paper should be able to understand through critical analysis which studies should be weighted more heavily in the conclusions and how the findings can be integrated. The topic chosen should have a body of empirical research sufficient to warrant a comprehensive review. Final decision regarding the appropriateness of the breadth of the specific topic focus shall be determined by the comps paper committee.

Following approval of the topic and committee, the student should prepare an outline of the proposed paper in consultation with committee members. The student may consult with individual committee members with regard to the outline prior to a formal meeting. Comps paper outlines are typically 5-10 pages in length. Once an outline is developed, the student will schedule a meeting of the comps committee to approve the outline. The student will send to committee members a well-developed outline of the paper at least one week in advance of the meeting. The outline meeting is a process meeting and the student should expect changes in the outline. Pessimism by the committee regarding the viability of the idea, availability of relevant literature, etc., are issues which should be resolved before the outline is approved. Thus, more than one meeting can be required by the committee prior to approval of the outline.

After approval, the General Comp Outline Approval Form and approved outline must be placed in the student's file. **An outline of the paper should be approved by the Comps Committee no later than May 31st of the student's third year. Once the outline is approved, the student has three months to complete the paper. The paper should be finalized by August 15th (see timeline below).**

The student will complete the paper without consultation or feedback from committee members or other students. However, if the student, upon delving deeper into the subject area determines that a major revision of the outline is required, the student may consult the faculty and possibly even reconvene the committee to approve the major revision. A separate decision regarding appropriateness of the topic will be made by each committee member. After approval of the outline, no collaboration is allowed and students may not receive any suggestions, feedback, help with organization or proofreading, etc. Students will have **no more than three months** to complete their comps paper, at which time, the paper must be emailed to all members of the committee.

Option B: Integrated Portfolio of Peer-reviewed Work

The portfolio consists of two or more peer-reviewed written products (i.e., manuscripts and/or peer-reviewed grant applications) for which the student was the primary author (for manuscripts) or principal investigator (for grants). The peer-reviewed written products must have a closely-related topic. The student will independently produce an integrated introduction and discussion section to synthesize the works together for the committee and to describe the importance of the program of work and the future directions. In addition, (a) the place the work was submitted for peer review should be described (e.g., journal, funding agency), (b) the status of the work should be clearly indicated (e.g., “funded”, “in-press”), and (c) all peer-reviewed feedback from the submitted works should be included (e.g., peer-review comments in appendices).

Benefits: The portfolio option has the advantage of rewarding students who have been highly active in publishing and/or grant writing and have begun to develop a cohesive program of research relatively early in their graduate career. The portfolio introduction can be in the format of an article, a brief, or a personal statement, all of which could be useful in meeting academic career milestones (e.g., for job applications). Alternatively, the focus of the new writing can be to better articulate the student’s developing program of research, similar to what applicants for faculty positions are asked to do in research statements and job talks. These statements are longer and more detailed statements than are provided in publications and grant applications and are related to the conceptual foundations, relevance to health, and potential longer-term implications if the work is successful. The peer-reviewed written products are not expected to be independent efforts; however, it is expected that the student is the primary author. Students who want to complete Option B for their comps requirement should consult with their mentor early to develop a plan for what will comprise the portfolio. Option B students will follow the same committee composition requirements and prepare the portfolio of at minimum two written products and an outline of the integrated introduction/personal statement for their “outline meeting.” The integrated written product will serve as the independent effort under Option B and will follow the same timeline requirements as Option A (i.e., outline due by May 31st of 3rd year, complete portfolio due by August 15th of the same calendar year). Typically students will need to complete their peer-reviewed products prior to the comps outline meeting; however, this is at the discretion of their committee. The purpose of the “outline” meeting for Option B is for the committee to review the students plan, peer-reviewed written products, and outline of their personal statement.

Evaluation of Written Comprehensive Examination

Each committee member will independently review and evaluate the final written product using the Written Comprehensive Examination Rubric as a guide (see Appendix) before convening as a group to make a final determination. If it is agreed that the student received a mark of a 1 (“poor”) on two or more areas, the student will not pass the examination and remediation is required. Committee members each vote as to whether or not the student passed the examination. Upon successful completion of the written comps examination, the Graduate Program Coordinator will submit a copy of the results to the Graduate School.

Policies for Comps Paper Completion

1. If the student has failed the comps paper (either because of a vote to fail by the committee or because of not turning a paper in by August 15th following the third year), then the student will be required to pass their comps paper by the end of their fourth year or be dropped from the Program. The end of the fourth year is designated as May 15th.

Summary Timetable for Completion of Comps Paper:

Task	Deadline
Committee Meeting to Approve Outline.....	May 31 st of third year
Completed Paper Submitted to Committee Members	August 15 th of 4 th year
Feedback Meeting	2-4 weeks after submission
Signed Approval Forms Entered in Students Records File	After feedback meeting

DOCTORAL ORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

All doctoral candidates at USC must pass an oral comprehensive examination conducted by the student's academic program under the direction of a Written and Oral Comprehensive Examination committee. The comprehensive examination may not be given less than 60 days before the student receives their degree. Students in the School Psychology concentration complete the oral examination at the time of their oral dissertation prospectus meeting.

Purpose:

The purpose of the oral examination is to show that the student is competent in general knowledge of psychology and in the student's area of expertise (i.e., dissertation focus). Specifically, the doctoral oral comprehensive exam assesses: (1) knowledge in general psychology; (2) the student's ability to integrate knowledge from diverse areas; and (3) the student's ability to perform as an expert in psychology in a conversational and interrogatory setting. This last purpose has direct transfer to participation in professional meetings, to dealing with professionals other than psychologists, and to similar types of occasions.

Committee:

The oral committee is composed of the same membership as a student's dissertation committee. This Committee must be comprised of no fewer than four members, at least one of whom must be from *outside* of the USC Department of Psychology. Prior to the oral examination, a copy of the student's approved doctoral program of study (DPOS) will be attached to the request to form a committee and sent to all committee members.

Evaluation:

A student's performance on the doctoral oral examination is evaluated using the 'Results of the PhD Orals Exam' and 'Doctoral Orals Scoring Rubric' forms. Ultimately the evaluation of performance is pass/fail. However, students are allowed one attempt at being re-examined in areas deemed deficient. As such, a student can be graded on three levels.

Pass – A positive vote by at least three members of the Committee constitutes a 'pass'

Incomplete – The student's success (that is a pass) will be established only after re-examination in a specific area or areas which were deemed deficient. Only 1 attempt at re-examination is allowed.

Fail*

*Failure to pass with two attempts constitutes unsatisfactory progress toward the PhD and the student's Graduate Program Committee may recommend that the student be terminated from the program.

Note: The Orals Examination / Dissertation Committee chair records the scores from the four committee members on the rubric form and submits it to the Graduate Program Coordinator. A copy must be put in the student's record.

(See Appendices Q & R for forms and notices related to the results of the Oral Examination or go to the School Psychology forms page [here.](#))

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES

FOR THE DISSERTATION

The Graduate School has specific requirements and guidelines for the dissertation. Students should review the Graduate Studies Bulletin in addition to becoming familiar with the below concentration-specific guidelines (see Appendix).

The dissertation is both a process and a product, and serves as the culmination of a graduate student's career and signals the student's emergence as a full-fledged colleague and psychologist. The seeds of a strong dissertation are germinated during a student's course work, research experiences, and clinical training. Students should begin to identify a dissertation focus early in their training and in close coordination with their primary mentor. It is helpful, but not required, for the dissertation to 'build on' earlier research milestones, including the student's thesis and written comprehensive exam ('comps' paper).

Developing a Committee

After successful completion of the written comprehension examination (i.e., 'comps paper'), the student is ready to begin work on their dissertation. The student's primary research mentor typically serves as *dissertation director*. The dissertation director and student should work together collaboratively to develop a strong dissertation committee. The dissertation committee must consist of no fewer than four members, including:

- The primary mentor / dissertation director;
- Two faculty members from the Psychology Department, at least one of whom has substantial knowledge in the research area or methodologies being proposed;
- One outside member, which may be a graduate faculty member from another department/program at USC, a faculty member from another institution, or a qualified professional from a private or government sector. Please refer to the Graduate Bulletin for additional information about approvals required for outside members.

Changing a committee. Once a dissertation committee is approved, only exceptional circumstances would result in a change of committee membership. A faculty member unable to carry out committee duties (e.g., due to illness, sabbatical leave, etc.) may, with approval by the student, ask for permission to be removed from the committee. A substitute member would then be obtained in keeping with procedures for original selection of the committee. A student changing the dissertation topic substantially may, with approval of the committee members, ask for dissolution of the committee. Under such circumstances, a new committee would be formed, and the process would resume from the beginning.

If the dissertation director or member of the committee retires or leaves USC after the committee has been formed, refer to policies in the Graduate Bulletin to determine the course of action. Any changes in committee must always be approved by the department chair and by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Preparing A Prospectus

Students should consult closely with their primary mentor when preparing the dissertation prospectus. The prospectus should follow APA style guidelines (see the 7th edition, 2020: <http://www.apastyle.org>).

Sections of the Prospectus. There are four major sections: Introduction, Methods, Handling of Results, and References.

The **Introduction** should contain a concise but thorough review of literature pertaining to the research question(s) and/or specific aims. The question(s) should be clearly articulated within this section, and specific rationales given for the project. Literature cited should indicate what has been done and why the proposed project follows logically from previous scientific research in this area. The prospectus usually explicitly states specific hypotheses to be tested.

The **Methods** section should include the following subsections, as appropriate to the project: participants, setting, study design, treatment conditions, measures, and procedure. (These are the commonly included, but depend upon the type of research being conducted.) The Methods section should have sufficient detail so as to allow the committee members to understand and critique all aspects of the proposed project, including participant recruitment. If there are supporting documents (e.g., consent forms, recruitment strategies, copies of measures), these can be included as **Appendices**.

The **Handling of Results** section is typically shorter than the previous two sections, and is discarded when the final dissertation is written. This section details the methods of **statistical analysis** and the **potential interpretation** of the results. This section should give a detailed account of all statistical analyses that are planned, including specifications of planned and post hoc analyses. Finally, the significance and implications of expected results should be discussed. This section is typically three to ten pages in length. The aim should be to have a thorough description of all planned analyses for committee review.

A **Reference** section is required and should contain a complete list of literature which is cited, prepared in proper APA format.

The Written Draft. The prospectus can vary in length depending upon the complexity of the study. The final prospectus draft should be double spaced and carefully proofread. Following all formatting requirements from the Graduate School for the final dissertation is recommended to save time later.

The dissertation committee should not be convened until the dissertation director and the student determine that the prospectus is in proper form, and the prospectus should be shared with all committee members in advance of any committee meeting being called. The prospectus should demonstrate that the student has full command of the area under investigation, the basis for the project is sound, and the procedures have been carefully thought out. A rushed prospectus is likely to engender reluctance and skepticism from committee members.

The candidate may have a reasonable expectation that the dissertation will ultimately be approved if the research is conducted in the manner specified in the approved prospectus. It is important, therefore, for the committee to reach agreement on the study design and methodological approach.

Funding. Students should begin early to identify sources of funding for their dissertation research, such as internal grants (e.g., USC SPARC program) and external grants (e.g., NIH, NSH, foundations). Students may also make requests for financial support from the department or graduate school though there is no guarantee these will be funded. Summer dissertation fellowships are sometimes available and

have been awarded by the Graduate School in the past to deserving psychology graduate students. Support may also be available through the Psychology Department's Tindall Research Award.

The Prospectus Meeting

The student arranges for a prospectus meeting and the announcement of this meeting is posted at least one week ahead of time (see Appendix). The student should work with the Graduate Program Coordinator to schedule this meeting and post an announcement. Any faculty member or graduate student in the department may attend the prospectus meeting. The dissertation committee will review the prospectus with the candidate. A copy of the final prospectus, with the written approval of all committee members, is filed in the student's folder (see Appendix). **Students planning to apply for APPIC internships must have an approved prospectus by October 15th of the academic year in which they plan to submit their internship applications.**

Data Collection

The prospectus should clearly describe all sites where data collection will occur, and the committee will help the candidate to assess the feasibility of data collection within the planned timeframe. Dissertations in the Department of Psychology typically involve collection of original data, though sometimes dissertations of secondary data (i.e., existing data sets) are completed when research questions and planned analyses are of high rigor and scientific interest. The site for data collection (or use of an existing data set) must be approved by the dissertation committee. When data are being collected at an off-campus site (e.g., school district, healthcare system), approval will require the specification of an on-site research supervisor, as well as that potential supervisor's agreement to assume responsibility equivalent to that of a department faculty member serving as supervisor. *All research (both on and off-campus) may require approval by the USC Institutional Review Board (IRB), as well as any similar body for the setting in which the research is to be conducted prior to data collection.

Review of Progress. No later than two years after the prospectus meeting, the student's dissertation committee must have a formal committee meeting to review the progress of the research. If no meeting is held within two years after the prospectus meeting, the student will be required to start anew. It is the responsibility of the student to see that the meeting is convened. If, during the course of the research, the student encounters difficulties so that the student is not able to continue in the manner approved at the prospectus meeting, the student should obtain written approval of the dissertation committee to amend the prospectus. This amended prospectus must be placed in the student's file.

Regular Consultation with the Dissertation Director

Consultation with the dissertation director is permitted and encouraged. During the analysis and writing phases of the dissertation, students are permitted to seek feedback on all aspects of the project. Typically, several drafts of the final dissertation are reviewed by the dissertation director and given back to the student for revision. It is also permissible and highly recommended to get feedback from committee members on various aspects of the study as the dissertation progresses.

Preparation of the Document

The final document, after having been reviewed and approved of by the dissertation director, may be submitted at least once to the other committee members for their feedback. After feedback from

committee members, the final version of the document can be prepared. This final version should be consistent with the guidelines published by the graduate school (type size, margins, paper weight and other such rules), and in APA style. Committee members should have a completed document **two full weeks prior** to the date of the defense.

Dissertation Defense

A dissertation must be successfully defended before the Dissertation Committee. The dissertation should be defended **no fewer than 30 days before the date of graduation**.

The defense of the dissertation is the culmination of a student's doctoral studies. While the defense has traditionally been seen as an examination, if all aspects of the dissertation (as outlined in the prospectus) have been thoroughly completed, then students should have the expectation of success. All faculty and students of the Psychology Department are encouraged to come to dissertation defenses. Each student's culmination of work should be seen as a success not only for the student, but also for the department, the university, and the academic body as a whole.

The dissertation defense should not be scheduled until (1) the dissertation director is satisfied with the final draft; (2) all other work and department or university requirements are completed; and (3) the dissertation committee members have had sufficient time to read the final draft (a **minimum of two weeks**).

Students should work with the Graduate Program Coordinator to schedule the day/time and location of the defense and to announce the upcoming defense to the department. The defense of the dissertation must be announced in the department at least **one week in advance** by submitting the Dissertation Defense Announcement form to the Graduate Program Coordinator (see Appendix for an example; the Dissertation Defense Announcement form can be found in the 'Forms' section on the School Psychology website).

The dissertation defense typically takes ~1-2 hours. Initially, the dissertation director introduces the student to those assembled. The student then makes an oral presentation (typically ~30 minutes) of their research. The presentation is followed by questions from general attendees (e.g., other students or faculty). General attendees are then dismissed, and substantive questions are then asked by the dissertation committee. The nature of these questions deal with implications of the study to theory and practice, application to the broader field of psychology, challenges and how they were overcome, study limitations, future directions, etc. Questions and comments on proofreading and technical errors are not appropriate for the defense and should be dealt with in advance. As the conclusion of the examination, the dissertation committee will ask the student to leave so they may deliberate.

The defense has four possible outcomes. (1) The student can successfully pass the dissertation defense and signatures are placed on the cover sheet to the dissertation; (2) the student can pass the defense, but a signature of the dissertation director might be withheld until the student has made certain necessary changes in the document, as deemed appropriate by the committee; (3) the student can be told that major changes need to be incorporated into the dissertation, that the defense meeting is being broken into two parts, and that the committee will reconvene to consider the changes that the student makes; or (4) the student fails - failure would come about because of gross incompetence, plagiarism, unethical behavior, or some other major unforeseen situation which, in the eyes of the faculty, nullifies the process and

product of the dissertation. This is a highly unusual circumstance which would occur only in quite exceptional cases (see Appendix).

Publication

Students are encouraged to publish their dissertation research. Except in extraordinary cases, the student should be the sole or senior author of publications resulting from the dissertation. The student may assign secondary authorship to others who have made substantive contributions to the work.

NOTE: Graduate Research Competency and Doctoral Dissertations

(Approved by General Faculty: 10-05-82)

A doctoral dissertation should show a student's competence in research. Accordingly, the student should understand and be able to discuss and defend all parts of the dissertation including, and especially, the research methods employed. While students may obtain assistance, each student shall be responsible for informing the dissertation committee concerning the nature and extent of such resources. Furthermore, it is incumbent upon the student (even at the prospectus meeting) to understand why a particular design or analysis has been employed, and how this design or analysis addresses research questions and is an appropriate design for analysis. Of course, additional and/or different analyses may become necessary as a result of the outcome of the research.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIPS

All School Psychology PhD students are required to complete a supervised doctoral internship. The internship is the capstone clinical experience of a doctoral student's graduate training and serves as a 'gatekeeper' for entering the field of professional psychology. School psychology students go on internship after the completion of all course work, usually during the 6th year of graduate study. The internship prepares students to function broadly, competently, and responsibly as professional psychologists. During the internship, students establish and refine general skills fundamental to the practice of health service psychology and applicable to a wide range of professional settings, including assessment, consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills, clinical interventions across therapeutic modalities, and supervision. In addition, the internship enhances students' professional attitudes, responsibility, communication skills, critical judgment, and technical skills.

Most USC School Psychology students participate in the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) Match process (<http://www.appic.org/>) to obtain an APA-approved internship. The APPIC Match is a computer-based, structured process designed to help match students and APA-approved internship sites. Similar matching programs are used for the placement of medical residents, as well as other health professions, including dentistry, pharmacy, optometry, and others.

Some students elect to complete their internships with local school districts or other sites. Students who take this route should ensure that their internship fulfills all APA requirements and meets any relevant state requirements for professional licensure. The doctoral internship consists of a minimum of 1500 hours. For students who complete non-APA-approved internships in a local school district, one school year will adequately cover this time requirement. The USC School Psychology program endorses the internship criteria set adopted by The Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs (see following section). For students without a prior internship in a school setting, at least 600 internship hours must be in a school setting, or deal with school-related issues, as required by NASP standards.

Recent student internship placements include:

- Florida State University Multidisciplinary Center (APPIC)
- Pediatric Neuropsychology track at University of Minnesota Medical School (APPIC)
- University of Miami Miller School of Medicine (APPIC)
- Nationwide Children's Hospital (APPIC)
- Centerstone Consortium (APPIC)
- Medical University of South Carolina (APPIC)
- Duke Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences (APPIC)
- Richland School District Two

Applying for Internships

Before applying for internships, students must have the formal approval of the School Psychology Program Director. Students must request permission to apply for internships by the beginning of the fall semester of the 5th year (or the fall semester the year *before* they plan to begin internship).

When considering a student's request for permission to apply for an APPIC internship, the faculty will evaluate the following: a) progress in completion of course work; b) successful completion of the written comprehensive examination; c) research progress, including the completion of the master's thesis; d) dissertation prospectus and doctoral oral exam approved/completed by October 15th; and e) assessment of clinical and professional skills. All students should discuss their interests and possible internship sites with their primary mentor.

Students seeking non-APA-approved, school-based internships should meet with the Program Director to discuss the process for contacting and interviewing with school districts. It is the student's responsibility to follow through with the application process of the individual school districts. Individually-arranged school internships will require a contract between the school district and USC, arranged and signed by the Program Director.

Students seeking an APA-approved internship will complete the uniform application required by APPIC. A list of APA-approved internships can be found at: <http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/intern.html>. Information about APA-approved internships and the application process, including a copy of the application, can be found on the APPIC website at: <http://appic.org/>.

To assist in completing internship applications, students are strongly encouraged to maintain detailed logs of the professional experiences and clinical hours they accrue, beginning in the very first semester of training. Reviewing the APPIC application will help you to determine the types of information to record. A spreadsheet of relevant information, based on the uniform application for APA internships, has been developed and is available on Blackboard. Most students use the Time2Track program to keep up with clinical hours (<https://time2track.com/solutions/students/>).

Prerequisites for Beginning the Internship

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all criteria have been met prior to the internship year. In addition to meeting all prerequisites for applying for an internship (see above), students must meet the following criteria before they will be permitted to begin the internship: a) endorsement of the school psychology faculty, b) completion of all course work, c) approval of dissertation prospectus and successful completion of the doctoral oral exam. Students are encouraged to complete their dissertation prior to leaving on internship. Although some internship sites provide time for dissertation research, not all do, and some students have found it very difficult, sometimes impossible, to make progress on their dissertation during the internship year.

Course Enrollment

While on internship, students must be registered for one course credit in PSYC 865 each semester. Students must submit Internship Supervisor Rating Forms (see Appendix) at the mid-point and end-point of the internship to the Program Director (available from the Program Director). Students who complete all course work and internship requirements but have not successfully defended their dissertation will need to maintain enrollment in at least one course credit per semester until their dissertation is defended. Students must also be enrolled in at least one course credit (any course is acceptable) **during the semester in which they graduate.**

Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs (CDSPP) –
2017 CDSPP Doctoral Internship Guidelines –
<https://www.hofstra.edu/sites/default/files/2022-03/cdspp-internship-guidelines.pdf>

The USC School Psychology Concentration supports and adheres to the 2017 CDSPP Doctoral Internship Guidelines (current guidelines approved by the membership in June 2017). These guidelines can be found at the website above, and define the doctoral internship as “the culminating professional practice experience in doctoral-level health service psychology.” The 2017 CDSPP guidelines set forth basic quality standards that characterize high quality doctoral school psychology internship experiences, consistent with American Psychological Association (APA) Standards for Accreditation for Health Service Psychology and the School Psychology Specialty. These guidelines are summed here, but students should review the full guidelines.

1. A school psychology doctoral internship is an organized training program designed to provide an intern with a planned sequence of training experiences that will develop the intern’s profession wide competencies in health service psychology and the specialty of school psychology. The internship is the culminating (i.e., completed after a programmed sequence of coursework, practica, and field experiences), supervised training experience prior to the granting of a degree by a doctoral program. Consistent with the definition of health service psychology (i.e., the integration of psychological science and practice in order to facilitate human development and functioning), the internship consists of a range of activities promoting the development of the profession-wide competencies.
2. The intern, whether full-time or part-time, spends at least 25% of their time in providing direct (face-to-face) psychological services to clients, patients or consultees, such as teachers or other mental health service providers, which translates to a minimum of 375 hours out of 1500 doctoral internship hours. The intern engages in research activity which includes the evaluation of services delivered and the effectiveness of the intern’s own training.
3. The internship program must provide prospective interns with a dated written statement, brochure, or website that clearly states the aims, activities, and any requirements of the doctoral internship program, the supervision and supplemental training activities (e.g., learning experiences) provided, and clear expectations for the quality of interns’ work.
4. Interns will minimally receive a formal, written evaluation at the end of the doctoral program’s semester, trimester, or quarter course grading period. The internship program and doctoral program will agree in advance upon the format of the internship evaluation, which should in part be based on direct observation. Although the internship supervisor evaluates student performance during the internship year, the doctoral program is ultimately responsible for the determination of the student’s readiness for graduation and entrance into the profession.
5. Full-time internships are completed in no less than 10 months; part-time internships may extend to no more than 24 months. The internship includes a minimum of 1,500 hours in activities described above. Interns should consult relevant credentialing (e.g., state licensure and certification) requirements to determine the number of internship hours required for licensure and other desired credentials. In addition, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has established requirements for internship (e.g., completion of at least 600 hours in a school setting). For more information, consult the relevant NASP standards and credentialing documents.

6. The doctoral internship program issues to the intern written documentation (e.g., a certificate or letter) reflecting successful completion of a doctoral level internship in health service psychology.
7. The internship program employs a clearly designated doctoral-level psychologist, who: (a) is currently licensed by the state regulatory board of psychology to practice at the independent level and (b) is responsible for the integrity and quality of the internship program. The internship program has at least two psychologists on staff available as supervisors for the intern. The intern's primary supervisor must be actively licensed as a psychologist by the state regulatory board of psychology.
8. The full-time internship includes at least two hours per week of regularly scheduled individual supervision by a doctoral level psychologist licensed for practice at the independent level. The primary supervisor must directly observe the intern with the specific intent of evaluating the intern's clinical department and skills in psychological service delivery, and providing formative and summative feedback to the intern and university program. An internship program that does not permit live observation or audio-video recording by policy should not be approved under these guidelines.
9. In addition to the individual supervision (as described in #8 above), the intern spends at least two additional hours per week in scheduled group or individual supervision conducted by an appropriately credentialed health service provider (e.g., doctoral level psychologist, credentialed school psychologist, etc.). The intern has regularly scheduled, supervised, and documented training activities with other doctoral psychology interns such as professional development/in-service training; case conferences involving a case in which an intern is actively involved; seminars dealing with professional issues; or observing delivery of health, educational, and/or child/adolescent services.
10. The internship program has two or more interns engaged in training at the same time. However, agencies having the capacity for only one intern may meet the spirit of this criterion (i.e., the socialization of doctoral-level psychology interns) by having regularly scheduled and documented training activities with psychology interns at other sites in the immediate geographic area or, when internship sites are at a significant distance from each other, by making arrangements for regularly scheduled meetings of interns for several hours on at least a monthly basis.
11. Internship supervision may be provided through synchronous audio and video format where the supervisor is not in the same physical facility as the intern. Supervision through electronic means may not account for more than one hour (50%) of the minimum required two weekly hours of individual supervision (as described in # 8 above), and two hours (50%) of the minimum required four total weekly hours of supervision (as described in #8 and #9 above).
12. Reports and documents prepared by the doctoral intern for consumers, other agency or school personnel, or other relevant publics are co-signed by the licensed psychologist supervisor for the intern.
13. The intern has a title such as "intern," "resident," or other designation of trainee status regardless of pay grade or temporary licensure status, etc. Interns who hold other relevant credentials (e.g., National Certified School Psychologist, NCSP) may include this information as long as it is accompanied by recognition of his or her doctoral intern status.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Graduate Student Computer Lab

The Department maintains a computer lab on the second floor of Barnwell. Computers are available to all graduate students for their course, practicum, assistantship, and other training and professional responsibilities. These computers have word processing, statistical, and other packages necessary for students' work. They also provide access to the University's "network" of programs and to the worldwide web. Although each student is assigned an individual university account, the computers are used by multiple students and therefore, confidential information (e.g., information about clients) must not be saved to hard drives or network accounts.

Office Space

Students should consult with their primary mentor to determine their office space. Many psychology graduate students are assigned shared offices in the Barnwell or Hamilton buildings. Some have offices at other sites across the university, such as the IMB building. Priority for office space is given to students with departmental work assignments and those who are in years 1-5 of the program. The Department Chair is responsible for making student office assignments. A large graduate student lounge available to all graduate students is housed on the first floor of Barnwell College.

Psychology Services Center (PSC)

https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/psychology/research_clinical_facilities/institutes_centers/psc/index.php/welcome-psychology-services-center

The Psychology Service Center (PSC), located at 1331 Elmwood Ave., Suite 140, Columbia, SC 29201, is a mental health clinic serving children families, and adults of the Midlands region. The PSC serves as the clinical training hub for the Department of Psychology and is a training facility for students in the Clinical-Community and School Psychology programs. Students enrolled in specific practica provide therapeutic intervention and psychological assessment services for children, families, and adults. Services are provided by graduate students, supervised by departmental faculty. School Psychology students are involved with the PSC through course assignments, participation in clinic "staffing," and enrollment in clinical practica.

Psychology Services Center (PSC) Test Library

The department operates a test center for students to check out psychological and educational tests, as needed, for courses, practica, etc. It is expected that all tests will be returned no later than the end of the semester in which they are checked out. Any tests not returned will be charged to the student at the new replacement cost. Do not check out tests in the name of other students. No student will be allowed to enroll in courses or receive financial support unless these charges are paid or, if the charges have been waived due to unavoidable circumstances (e.g., theft), at the discretion of the Psychology Services Center Director.

Thomas Cooper Library (<http://www.sc.edu/library/>)

Graduate students have full access to the Thomas Cooper Library, located on the campus. All students are encouraged to become familiar with the full range of services and resources of the library. Tours are provided by the library staff and training sessions, focusing on library research (including electronic searching), are offered by the reference librarians. In the course of your graduate work, you will be expected to make full use of multiple databases relevant to the study of psychology, including those in medicine, sociology, public health, nursing, social work, etc. A wide array of databases is available through the library's computers and many are available from other university library systems. The library is continually expanding the range of resources that can be accessed from personal computers, so students are encouraged to keep abreast of library developments.

Colloquium Series

Several times a semester, distinguished psychologists and researchers from outside the university make scholarly presentations through the departmental colloquium series. This provides an excellent opportunity for learning, regardless of the area of the psychologist. Graduate students are expected to attend these colloquia, which are typically held on Mondays at 12:00 p.m.

Professional Involvement

Students are encouraged to become professionally involved through organizations such as:

American Psychological Association (APA)

<http://www.apa.org/>

American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS)

www.apa.org/apags/

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)

<https://www.nasponline.org/>

South Carolina Psychological Association (SCPA)

<https://scpsychologists.net/>

South Carolina Association of School Psychologists (SCASP)

<http://scaspweb.org/>

Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA)

<https://www.sepaonline.com/>

Participation in the student programs of these organizations and attendance at annual meetings will facilitate growth as a psychologist. Graduate students are encouraged to take part in professional meetings through the presentation of papers and posters or as a part of a division, interest group, discussion group, etc. Whenever possible, students should attempt to publish the results of their research in peer-reviewed journals. Students should work with their primary mentor to prepare their work for presentation and/or publication.

Financial Support

Students accepted into the School Psychology PhD concentration receive funding (i.e., graduate student stipend) that is provided through a departmental assistantship. These assistantships require (20) hours of work per week as a research assistant (RA) or graduate assistant/teaching assistant (GA/TA). In addition to departmental positions, there are several external assistantships available, which include placements in local schools and agencies. Final assignments are made by the Graduate Program Director. The 2023-2024 stipend for a 9-month assistantship for an incoming student is \$20,000. Tuition and health insurance are also covered for all full-time graduate students who have assistantships. A number of opportunities also exist for advanced students to teach undergraduate psychology courses. To qualify, students must have taken Psychology 790 (Teaching of Psychology) and the Instructional Development Project's workshop in teaching (see further details below). Advanced students sometimes teach courses during the summer for additional income and experience. Students must declare to the IRS monies received from assistantships and all other sources of financial support.

Students are encouraged to pursue additional grants, fellowships, and research support for which they might qualify. These are generally available through various funding sources, including the Graduate School, the Department, and professional organizations. For example, the individual divisions of APA frequently support dissertation research related to the division's topical area of interest. Students should discuss potential sources of funding with their primary mentor.

Teaching Undergraduate Courses as Instructor-Of-Record

1. No graduate student in the Department will be assigned to teach a course independently until the student has taken the USC Instructional Development Project's workshop on teaching, which is offered in August each year, and has demonstrated teaching competency by satisfactory performance in Psychology 790. A student who has presented to the Chair of the Department evidence of previous successful independent teaching experience on the college level may ask for exemption from the above requirements.
2. Each graduate student teaching independently will be mentored by their primary mentor, the department undergraduate director, and graduate director. Their mentor will be responsible for assisting the student with selecting a textbook, preparing a course outline, selecting teaching techniques, and grading students.
3. Each graduate student teaching independently must be evaluated on at least one occasion in each course which they teach by a faculty member selected by the Chair of the Department.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Academic Policies

Graduate students should become familiar with academic policies and requirements enforced by The Graduate School. These are available at <https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/graduate/policies-regulations/graduate-academic-regulations/>.

Importantly, degree-seeking graduate students must maintain at least a B (3.00 on 4.00 scale) cumulative grade point average (GPA). Graduate students whose cumulative GPA drops below 3.00 will be placed on academic probation and allowed one calendar year to raise the GPA to at least 3.00. See the Graduate School Bulletin for further details. Additional considerations specific to the School Psychology program can be found in Appendix and on page 60 under “Dismissal from the Program” of this handbook.

A grade of **I** (incomplete) may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, in the instructor’s judgment, a student is prevented from completing a portion of the assigned work in a course because of an illness, accident, verified disability, family emergency, or other unforeseen circumstance. A request for an Incomplete must be made to the instructor before the end of the term. No more than 12 months will be allowed to complete the work before a permanent grade is assigned. Re-enrolling in a course will not make up an incomplete grade.

USC Honor Code Violations

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined by USC as "Use of work or ideas without proper acknowledgment of source. Other prohibited behaviors include:

1. Partial or incomplete citation of work or ideas.
2. Improperly paraphrasing by acknowledging the source but failing to present the material in one’s own words.
3. Paraphrasing without acknowledgment of the source.
4. Multiple submissions of the same or substantially the same academic work for academic credit.
5. Copying, partially or entirely, any material without acknowledgement of the source.

Cheating

Cheating is defined by USC as “Improper collaboration or unauthorized assistance in connection with any academic work.”

Other prohibited behaviors include:

1. Requesting unauthorized assistance.
2. Providing aid or assistance to or receiving aid or assistance from another individual or source without permission (including improper collaboration), in conjunction with academic work.
3. Copying another individual’s or group’s academic work
4. Allowing others to complete an assignment or portion of an assignment for you (e.g., having an online tutor complete your work, buying a paper, having another person complete a test for you).

5. Using any material or aid that are not authorized by the person giving the test, project or other assignment (e.g., websites, cell phone, calculator, notes, previous testing materials) for an unfair academic advantage.
6. Using, possessing or distributing the contents of any examination (e.g., unauthorized access to test/quiz information, unauthorized duplication of test/quiz materials) without authorization.
7. Engaging in an act of bribery or coercion. Bribery refers to offering, receiving or giving an item of value in exchange for academic work.
8. Taking, misplacing, or damaging property if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained.

Falsification

Falsification is defined by USC as: “Misrepresenting or misleading others with respect to academic work or misrepresenting facts for an academic advantage.”

Other prohibited behaviors include:

1. Signing in for another student who is not in attendance, requesting this action of others, or signing into class and not attending the entire class period.
2. Violation of Classroom rule and/or failing to comply with instructions given by the person administering a test, project, or other assignment, or given in conjunction with the completion of course requirements (i.e., placement exams, licensure exams, or graduation requirements).
3. Interfering with an instructor’s ability to evaluate accurately a student’s competency or performance on any academic work.
4. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any document submitted in connection with academic work.

Complicity

Complicity is defined by USC as “Assisting or attempting to assist (through intentional or unintentional action) another in any violation of the Honor Code.”

Other prohibited behaviors include:

1. Sharing academic work with another student (either in person or electronically) without the permission of the instructor.
2. Communicating (either in person or electronically) with another student(s) or other individual(s) during an examination without the permission of the instructor.

All allegations of plagiarism, cheating, falsification, and complicity must be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity for investigation. For additional information, please review the USC Honor Code and Policy STAF 6.25 (<http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf625.pdf>).

Grievances, Appeals, and Petitions

Graduate students sometimes face an academic issue or problem that requires assistance to resolve. These issues or problems are categorized as grievances, appeals and petitions. In general, **Grievances** are alleged violations of the teaching responsibilities of the faculty, free expression policies, or other violations of responsibilities as stated in the USC Faculty Manual or of the official policies or procedures of the University. **Appeals** are requests to reconsider decisions that have been rendered. **Petitions** are requests to

make individual exceptions to written requirements imposed by the department/program, the College of Arts & Sciences, or by the Graduate School. For further discussion, refer to the USC Graduate Bulletin concerning Academic Exception Petitions and Appeal of Academic Decisions

Students in the Department of Psychology may direct questions and complaints to the Program Director, Psychology Ombudsperson, or the Psychology Department Chair, preferably in that order. Most student complaints can be resolved informally. In most cases, a grievance should be filed only following an informal attempt to resolve the situation with the individuals involved, including the Program Director, Ombudsperson, and/or Department Chair. If the situation cannot be resolved informally, the student should submit a written grievance to the School Program Director. The Director will then call a meeting with the student and relevant parties, if appropriate, to discuss and attempt to resolve the complaint. If successful, the relevant individuals will be informed of the outcome of the meeting in writing and steps will be implemented to monitor the subsequent efforts to resolve the complaint. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the meeting with the Program Director, the Program Director will send all information related to the grievance to the Department Ombudsperson or Department Chair. Subsequently, the procedures specified by the USC Graduate School Bulletin should be consulted.

Resources related to grievances:

Graduate Academic Regulations: <https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/graduate/policies-regulations/graduate-academic-regulations/>

Academic Grievance Policy: <http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf630.pdf>

Non-Academic Grievance Policy: <http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf627.pdf>

USC System Policy on Discrimination, Harassment, & Sexual Misconduct

The University of South Carolina is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, and related retaliation. This commitment helps realize the university's primary mission and aligns with institutional values and to complying with all requirements set forth by civil rights laws, including Title IX, and related federal and state authority

Resources related to discrimination, harassment, & sexual misconduct:

USC System Policy: <https://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/cr100.pdf>

USC Procedures for Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct Resolution:

https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/civil_rights_title_ix/documents/octix_resolution_procedures.pdf

Residence Requirements

At the University of South Carolina, residency requirements may be met through: 1) two consecutive semesters of full-time enrollment; or 2) program-specific alternative residency plans. Additional information can be found on the Graduate Studies Bulletin.

Liability Requirements

Students working in the various practicum placements, or as part of other courses, are normally covered by the University's tort liability insurance for work required by the course or practicum. Students who have community-based paid assistantships, sponsored by the University, are employees of the University

and, therefore, also covered by the University's insurance and Workers' Compensation for work required for the assistantship. Students enrolled in internships for University credit are also covered by the University's tort liability insurance. However, in most professional training programs, students purchase additional, individual liability insurance through professional organizations such as APA or NASP. For information regarding APA insurance for students call 800-852-9987 or check the APA website. For information regarding insurance through NASP call 800-256-9366 or check the NASP website.

Engaging in Additional Professional or Academic Activities for Compensation

Doctoral training in the PhD program at USC is, in essence, a full time job, and students are cautioned against having any outside employment, particularly during the fall and spring semesters. Resources from the department and the Psychology Services Center (PSC) may not be used for other employment or other sources of pay. This includes test kits, test manuals, test protocols, and provision of clinical supervision. Students are *strongly* encouraged to discuss any other professional employment opportunities (e.g., working outside the department as psychometricians) with their mentor and concentration director to ensure there are no conflicts of interest or concerns related to licensure / supervision.

Change of Concentration Area

A change in program area may come about by a student's choice or at the suggestion of the School Psychology faculty. If a student wishes to withdraw from the School Psychology concentration and enroll in a different concentration, a letter of release must be obtained from the School faculty. Then the student must submit a formal application to the new concentration area and be formally accepted by the faculty in that program area. Acceptance by one graduate concentration does not guarantee acceptance by any other.

Leave of Absence

In rare circumstances, a student may submit a written request to the School Psychology Faculty for a leave of absence. Except in exceptional circumstances, a leave of absence should not exceed one academic year. If a student is on an approved leave of absence, February 1st is the deadline to notifying the Program Director if they wish to return for the following fall semester. Failure to meet this deadline may result in program termination and/or inability to receive a departmental stipend.

Family Leave Policy

A graduate student who is the primary child-care provider is eligible to take a one major term of family leave from graduate study the major term during or following the event for the birth of a child or adoption of a child less than 6 years old. The graduate student taking family leave will receive a one year extension of all academic responsibilities, including time to degree, removal of incomplete grades, and course in-date time. During family leave the graduate student will be on special enrollment (Z-status) status and must have health coverage. Please refer to The Graduate Studies Bulletin for more information.

Continuous Enrollment

The School Psychology program is designed to be completed in continuous enrollment. Continuous enrollment is needed in order to assure that students make continual, systematic progress in their program. All students must enroll each semester for an appropriate number of credit hours until the completion of all program requirements (including internship and dissertation). The minimal acceptable registration is one (1) credit hour. The enrollment should, in all cases, adequately reflect the use of faculty time and

university facilities. **Failure to enroll constitutes self-dismissal from the School Psychology Program.** This requirement means that students need to stay informed of university registration procedures at all times.

Revalidation of Out-of-Date Course Work

Doctoral students may, with permission of the School Psychology program, request revalidation of any USC graduate courses which are more than 10 years old for inclusion on the doctoral program of study (DPOS). Each course that requires revalidation will incur a fee, paid for by the student. It is strongly advised that all students complete their degree within this 10-year period to avoid the costs and difficulties of revalidation. Consult the Graduate Studies Bulletin for further information.

Concentration Policy on Grades Less than B (<3.00)

The School Psychology Program strives for excellence in academic and professional work. The faculty expects this from every student. Grades of A signify strong performance. Grades of B and B+ signify appropriate performance for doctoral-level work. Grades of C+ or lower indicate unsatisfactory performance. While the Graduate School accepts a limited number of grades less than B, our faculty consider a grade below B as less than satisfactory performance and an indication of deficiency in the content area. Students receiving a grade less than B in any required graduate course in the Department will be expected to submit to the Program Director and primary mentor a plan for remediation of deficiencies. The instructor should also be consulted in developing the remediation plan, as appropriate for the instructor's relationship to the program. Remediation may consist of repeating the course, auditing the course, additional coursework, selected reading in the area, or other strategies proposed by the student in consultation with the course instructor and primary mentor. The written explanation and plan should be submitted before the beginning of the next academic semester following the unsatisfactory grade and will be reviewed by the program faculty for approval by a vote (two-thirds of voting faculty must approve the plan). After the remediation has been completed, the student must obtain the primary mentor's written statement to that fact and a copy should be given to the Program Director. The remediation of the unsatisfactory coursework, however, does not result in a change of grade for that course.

Student Remediation Process: Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs)

If a student is not making adequate progress towards program milestones, demonstrates any unsatisfactory ranking on annual reviews, fails to meet program competency requirements, or is untimely in the completion of program requirements, the program will require the student to complete a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The student will be notified of this requirement in a letter/email from the program director. The student will then meet with the program director and the student's major professor to discuss the areas of underperformance and review a proposed performance improvement plan. The PIP will be developed between the student's mentor and the program director, and the program faculty will review and approve the plan. Performance improvement plans will be explicit, with stated criteria for judging their success or failure as well as a specified timeline for completion. Failure to complete the performance improvement plan in the timeline and manner expected will result in faculty voting to dismiss the student from the program.

Dismissal from the Program

Occasionally, students must be dismissed from the program because of inadequate academic and/or professional performance. Under ordinary circumstances, we allow students to complete at least two semesters in the program, as we want to provide the opportunity for students to rectify any deficiencies. At the end of two semesters, those whose performance is clearly inadequate will be terminated. Faculty consider more than grades in evaluating a student's performance in the program. The faculty will make evaluations based on interpersonal skills, tact and judgment, dependability, work habits, attitude, and professional, ethical conduct. Any student will be automatically dismissed when three school psychology faculty members recommend dismissal and document the specific reasons for the recommendation.

STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

Psychology Student Advisory Board (PSAB)

The Psychology Student Advisory Board (PSAB) is a graduate student organization that was created to provide graduate students with an organized voice within the Department. The first graduate student organization, known as the Psychology Graduate Student Association (PGSA), was founded in 1969 and has evolved into the PSAB of today. The primary goal of PSAB is to provide a formal platform for intra-department advocacy for graduate students.

Student representatives to PSAB come from each of the four concentrations. For the School Psychology and Clinical-Community concentrations, two student representatives are selected, with one student being from the first, second, or third year cohort and one student being from the third, fourth, or fifth year cohort. For the Quantitative and Cognitive Neural Sciences (CNS) concentrations, either one or two student representatives are selected, with no constraint on cohort. The SP representatives for 2023-2024 are **Chandler Knott** and **Bailey Dow**.

PSAB representatives often meet with department leadership to engage in meaningful dialogue related to student training, the promotion of self-care, and various graduate student comments and concerns. Elected members typically serve alongside faculty on relevant committees (e.g., Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Mental Health Taskforce, etc.) to enact department-wide changes to support graduate students. All graduate students in the Department automatically belong to PSAB and are encouraged to attend meetings and provide input to better the department for current and future students.

The PSAB social events coordinator, or *PSAB Party Czar*, is a new position in 2023-2024. The PSAB Party Czar organizes PSAB social events in recognition of the importance of community for student well-being. The Party Czar attends PSAB monthly meetings, or provides notes for discussion during PSAB meetings. The PSAB Party Czar for 2023-2024 is **Miranda Foster**.

PSAB created and maintains a graduate student mentoring program called *Peers Empowering Excellence through Positive Support* (PEEPS). PEEPS is a department-wide peer mentoring program that works to promote a sense of community, increase program engagement, and build student connections. The program is intentionally open-ended to allow students to customize their experience. For example, some PEEPS ‘families’ might choose to occasionally meet over dinner, while others might choose to meet more frequently and focus more on professional development topics. Coordination of this program involves sending interest forms, pairing PEEPS ‘families’, and ensuring that the goals of the program are met through hosting an orientation for PEEPS mentors at the start of the fall semester (as well as other meetings as necessary).

Psi Chi

Psi Chi at USC is a chapter of the national honor society in psychology. Any psychology graduate student may become a member, and membership is open by invitation to scholastically qualified undergraduate majors. Psi Chi has traditionally been the social and service organization of graduate and undergraduate psychology students at the University of South Carolina. Its activities, in which faculty members have usually taken part, have included parties, educational movies in the field of psychology, and providing a coffee hour with refreshments for visiting colloquium speakers.

USC Graduate Student Association (GSA)

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) serves the 7,000-member strong graduate and professional student population at USC through advocacy, collaboration, and engagement. It serves as a forum for graduate students to discuss important issues and participate in relevant committee work. Students are encouraged to become involved. More information is available at:

https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/leadership_and_service_center/student_organizations/graduate_student_association/index.php

Psychology Department Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Committee

The Psychology Department Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Committee addresses important issues related to DEI considerations in clinical training, applied practice, and research. The committee is composed of faculty and students from all concentrations within the department. Student representatives on the DEI committee attend meetings of the committee that occur bi-weekly. Students are selected by the DEI committee faculty representatives through an application process (please reach out to Dr. Suzanne Swan, swansc@mailbox.sc.edu, or Dr. Kim Hills, hillskj@email.sc.edu, for information). Students are selected to serve for 2 year terms. Students work in an advocacy role for student concerns related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. There are two student representatives on the departmental DEI Committee. For the 2023-2024 school year, the student representatives of the DEI committee are **Jingyi Yang** and **TBD**.

Mental Health and Well-Being Committee

The Mental Health and Well-being (MH&W) committee was created as a response to student feedback from the mental health and departmental climate survey. The committee exists to promote the well-being of students and faculty. Student representatives on the MH&W committee attend monthly meetings of the committee. They informally take note of factors of import to students' current mental health (i.e., in their cohort or program). They help develop the annual survey of students' mental health and well-being; perceptions of diversity, equity, and inclusion; and perceptions of departmental climate.

There are 3-4 student representatives of the departmental MH&W Committee, in addition to representatives from the faculty of each concentration. For the 2023-2024 school year, the SP student representative on the MH&W committee is **Jingyi Yang**.

Student Feedback Forum Facilitation

The student feedback forum is an avenue for students to anonymously submit feedback (e.g., praises, suggestions, and concerns) that will be relayed to the department in efforts to make needed change to bolster student wellbeing in recognition of the limits of power that students have to advocate for change in some circumstances. The student feedback forum is facilitated by students who de-identify responses to student feedback. New for the 2023-2024 school year, the concerns will first be brought to PSAB to discuss and prioritize avenues for advocacy. PSAB has also updated their links in their email bio to include alternative methods of self-advocacy or taking action, including Title IX submissions.

The student feedback forum facilitators for the 2023-2024 school year are **Maggie Moskal** (C-C concentration) and **TBD**.

Student Representation at Executive Committee and Departmental Meetings

PSAB's co-chairs act as student representatives to the department's Executive Committee (EC) meetings. The representatives to the Executive Committee must be 3rd year or above. The student is expected to attend the department's fall faculty retreat as well as monthly EC meetings. At these meetings, the student rep reports on student issues/concerns and generally represents the voice of the students to faculty leaders in the department. They also take notes and distribute them to the graduate student body.

For the 2023-2024 school year, the representatives of PSAB to the Executive Committee and departmental faculty meetings are **Sarah Miller** and **Sarah Grace Frary**.

APPENDIX

(Copies of all Forms listed in this Appendix are hyperlinked below, can be found in the Department of Psychology Graduate Program Coordinator office, and are available on the School Psychology website: https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/psychology/my_psych/current_grad_students/school_program/schoolhandbks_forms.php)

1. **Forms for Student Degrees**
2. **Travel Request Form**
3. **School Psychology Assistantship Student Evaluation Form**
4. **Individual Course Waiver Form**
5. **Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit (G-RTC)**
6. **Master's Degree or Certification Program of Study (MPOS)**
7. **Application for Degree or Certificate**
8. **Request for Concurrent Enrollment Within Same Discipline (G-CON)**
9. **Master's Degree Committee Approval**
10. **MA Oral Comp Exam and Thesis Defense Announcement**
11. **MA Thesis Defense Rubric & Approval**
12. **MA Oral Comprehensive Exam Rubric & Approval**
13. **Thesis Signature and Approval Form (G-TSF) - complete in duplicate**
14. **Doctoral Committee Appointment Request Form (G-DCA)**
15. **General Comprehensive Paper Form**
16. **General Comprehensive Paper Outline Approval Form**
17. **Results of the General Comprehensive Paper**
18. **Qualifying Exam (Admission to Candidacy)**
19. **Doctoral Degree Program of Study (DPOS)**
20. **Doctoral Committee Appointment Request (G-DCA)**
21. **Ph.D. Oral Comp Exam Announcement**
22. **Results of Ph.D. Oral Comprehensive Exam**
23. **Doctoral Orals Scoring Rubric**
24. **Doctoral Written Exam Scoring Rubric**
25. **Dissertation Startup Topic and Committee Approval**
26. **Prospectus Meeting Announcement**
27. **Dissertation Prospectus Action Form**
28. **Endorsement of Internship Application**
29. **Dissertation Defense Announcement - Department**
30. **Dissertation Defense - Results**
31. **Dissertation Signature and Approval Form (G-DSF) - complete in duplicate**
32. **Scoring Rubric - Thesis or Dissertation or Research Project**
33. **Practicum Evaluation Form for PSC**
34. **First Year Annual Review Form**
35. **Second Year Annual Review Form**
36. **Third Year Annual Review Form**
37. **Fourth Year Annual Review Form**
38. **Special Enrollment (Z-Status) Request Form**