Western Kentucky University

Department of Psychology

M.A. and Psy.D. Graduate Programs Common Policies and Information

Effective: August 22, 2019

Contents

Introduction

This Common Policy Handbook will detail policies shared by the M.A. and Psy.D. programs in the Psychology Department of Western Kentucky University.

Policy Priority

University and Psychology Department policies also apply to graduate students and have precedence over graduate program policies. Anyone discovering a conflict between these various policies should notify the appropriate coordinator immediately. Students are responsible for meeting all Western Kentucky University policies and requirements including the WKU Student Handbook (https://www.wku.edu/handbook/), Academic Affairs policies (https://www.wku.edu/policies/academic-affairs/) especially if you are a Graduate Teaching Assistant, and WKU Human Resources policies (https://www.wku.edu/policies/) for those employed on campus.

Student Rights, Responsibilities,

Nondiscrimination, Due Process, and

Grievance Procedures

The program supports the university statement on Student Rights and Responsibilities (http://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/student-conduct/) as well as on Nondiscrimination (https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf). The program follows procedures as outlined by the university in the WKU Student Handbook

(https://www.wku.edu/handbook/student-complaint.php).

Student Diversity

As a means to deepening the educational experience, broadening individual outlooks, and serving diverse populations, we are especially encouraging of applications from individuals of diverse backgrounds and life experiences.

Advisement

Students receive advisement from the coordinator of their program. Advising includes selecting coursework, help for ways to progress successfully in the program, addressing capstone project challenges, general applied experience issues and may include other topics as students need the support. Specific practica and internship issues should be addressed by the respective supervisor. The program coordinators notify students of coursework needs through email or face-to-face depending on the complexity of the issue and are happy to schedule meetings with students as they need help. It is recommended that students schedule a meeting with their program coordinator at least once a year to personally discuss professional goals.

Student Records

A record of student progress in the program, including feedback from each semester review and capstone performance/progress, will be maintained by the advisor. Other information, as needed, may also be kept. These records will be secured against unauthorized access.

Background Check

Students will be required to undergo a criminal background check, possibly at their own expense. For those with assistantships the background check is a requirement of the position and may be cause to revoke an assistantship and possibly admissions.

Administrative Assistance

The Department provides a group office for use by graduate students and a Psychology Clinic for practice cases. The University provides access to free or low-cost software including anti-virus software, Microsoft Office, SPSS, and survey software (Visit https://www.wku.edu/its/ and scroll down to the New Student Guide as well as Discounts and Purchasing). Call 270-745-7000 for help with technology questions and to find out about your budget for copying. Students can check out laptops for short-term use (www.wku.edu/its/trc) and have access to a computer lab in Gary Ransdell Hall where the Department of Psychology is located (https://www.wku.edu/edtech/) Every student has a Toppermail email address (Follow the tasks at: https://www.wku.edu/its/students/). Students have access to Library resources, including many online collections (https://www.wku.edu/library/), a Writing Center (https://www.wku.edu/writingcenter/), The Office of Research & Creative Activity (https://www.wku.edu/research/), and The Center for Career & Professional Development (https://www.wku.edu/career/).

Financial Assistance

This section includes general information about financial assistance at WKU. University support for students come in several flavors. Some money is provided directly to academic departments (e.g., Psychology) to support graduate students in Graduate Assistantship positions or for tuition. Other money comes from the Graduate School or other units, including some outside of the university (such as loans). **This section will primarily focus on departmental support**. Check the manual for your program to identify policies specific to students at your level. Availability of assistance from the department varies from year to year. Also consult with the Financial Aid Office (https://www.wku.edu/financialaid/) for information on assistance.

Graduate assistantships. Assigning assistantships is a complex task that must consider the needs of the position, the expectations of the faculty supervisor, the desires and abilities of the graduate student, the style mix of faculty and graduate student, and the limited availability of options. We do our best but cannot satisfy everyone. Student applications for admission to the program contain the application for assistantships. After the first year, student performance in the program constitutes the basis for assigning assistantships. Students will be in subsequent years queried as to whether they wish an assistantship if one is available.

The minimum course load for a student with a graduate assistantship is 6 credit hours per semester, while the maximum course load for a student with a graduate assistantship is 12 credit hours per semester. **Once appointed, graduate assistants must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 to retain the assistantship.**

Assistantships are awarded, not bequeathed. In other words, they are earned and not a right. If students do not fulfill the professional expectations of the assistantship, they will find they will not be awarded another assistantship. Professional

expectations for those in assistantships include, but are not limited to,

- being on time for appointments,
- informing supervisors when you will be late or not able to attend,
- completing work in a timely manner, and
- displaying a professional attitude during the assistantship.

Students will be evaluated on their performance of graduate assistantship duties during the semester evaluation process.

Expectations for faculty supervisors are that they will communicate effectively and provide useful and effective feedback to students enabling them to improve and develop professionally. If a graduate student encounters difficulty in an assistantship please consult with one of the program advisors.

The assistantships may require either 10 or 20 hours work per week, depending on the available funding for the person(s) and/or office(s) to which they are assigned. They come with out-of-state (nonresident) tuition waiver. (Students still have to pay in-state tuition, however.)

When scheduling assistantship hours or other activities, students enrolled in practica are advised to retain several three-hour segments of time for working with clients.

It is permissible for supervisors and graduate assistants to arrange flexible schedules that average 20 hours per week and that include work (e.g., grading papers, etc.) that may be performed off campus.

However, just because flexibility may be possible for some assistantships does not mean it can be done for all; some supervisors will want graduate assistants to perform their work on campus (and, sometimes, in specified areas on campus during specific times). Graduate assistants have a responsibility to perform assigned tasks in a professional and timely manner

and should take the initiative to meet with their supervisor(s) on a regular basis.

Tuition support. The department may be able to provide some tuition support, but it varies by year. Even if you receive a certain dollar amount one year, we cannot guarantee that same amount for the next year although we will try to achieve that.

Professional Development

Everyday opportunities. At each orientation advanced students are invited to share information with those starting the programs. The faculty encourage students at all stages to communicate with one another as this interaction is the foundation of your professional network and provides resources for facing challenges as professionals.

In addition, there are often programs on campus or in the community relevant to clinical work and faculty will inform students of these workshops in email. Students are also encouraged to seek out other opportunities relevant to their professional interests.

Institution-level opportunities. The Department of Psychology has a history of offering continuing education/professional development sessions for the public. Recent offerings include a workshop on Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment by one of our doctoral students, Mary Foley, who is director of Merryman House Domestic Crisis Center. Other offerings include the WISC-V Training by Gloria Maccow (Pearson) and a two-day mental health conference in Bowling Green (Promoting Positive Mental Health in Schools and Communities).

Professional organizations.

The American Psychological Association (APA) – The APA is a national organization representing all disciplines of

psychology. Division 12 of APA represents clinical psychology and Division 16 represents school psychology. Student affiliate membership is available. Membership includes the journals, *American Psychologist*, *Clinical Psychology: Research & Practice* (for Division 12 members), *School Psychology Quarterly* (for Division 16 members), and newsletters, *Monitor on Psychology* and *The School Psychologist* (for Division 16 members).

Of special interest to clinical psychologists.

Bowling Green Mental Health Professionals (BGMHP) - A local organization, BGMHP is an excellent opportunity to meet practicing clinicians. It meets quarterly on a Friday around noon for an educational session and often a free lunch from a local mental health institution. Dues have been five dollars for the year.

The Kentucky Psychological Association (KPA) – Graduate students in Clinical Psychology are urged to join the KPA and become active participants in the organization. KPA is the organizational body for applied psychology in Kentucky, and as such, has a significant bearing on the role and function of psychologists in Kentucky, job opportunities, and Continuing Professional Development opportunities. The state licensing laws are strongly influenced by KPA. Students can volunteer at the conference, meet other professionals and receive a discount on conference costs. The conference is usually the end of October or first of November in either Louisville or Lexington, KY. As part of KPA, the Central Region interest group has a few meetings during the year. Contact Jon Urey. drjonurey@gmail.com.

The Indiana Psychological Association (IPA): Southwest Indiana Regional Meeting – IPA Southwest may be more convenient for some doctoral students. Early registration ends in early July. Regular registration ends in mid-July. The annual conference is held at the end of July in Evansville, Indiana.

The Tennessee Psychological Association (TPA) – may be more convenient for some students. Their conference is in late October or early November.

Of special interest to school psychologists.

The Kentucky Association of Psychology in the Schools (KAPS) – Graduate students in the School Psychology Psy.D. concentration are urged to join the Kentucky Association of Psychology in the Schools (KAPS) and become active participants in the organization. KAPS has a significant bearing on the role and function of school psychologists in Kentucky, job opportunities, and Continuing Professional Development opportunities. This organization influences the scope of school psychology in the state; therefore, students should be deeply involved and committed to playing a part in determining the destiny of the profession of school psychology. KAPS has a fall conference.

The Indiana Association of School Psychologists (IASP) – IASP may be of interest to some doctoral students.

The Tennessee Association of School Psychologists (TASP) – TASP may be of interest to some doctoral students.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) – NASP is an organization that students are required to join (to obtain liability insurance, among other reasons). This organization is representative of school psychology interests nationwide. Members receive the journal

School Psychology Review, the newsletter *Communique*, convention discounts, and other publications at a discount. Attendance at the annual national conventions is also encouraged. (Some travel money is typically available for those attending the conference.)

M.A.-level expectations for professional development. Joining a professional organization as a student is a good idea for M.A. students but we do not require it. Consider carefully, as membership will never be as inexpensive and you will build connections that can help you in your career, keep you informed on the latest developments in the field, and teach you the language and professional values of the field. M.A.-level students will also need a doctoral level supervisor to practice. Networking through professional organizations will give you connections to possible supervisors. The M.A. Advisor will forward local events that can help develop your interests and skills. At least read them to help you develop your awareness of current trends in the field.

Doctoral-level requirements for professional development. Doctoral students are expected to attend at least one continuing education activity per year and provide proof of attendance to the Director of the Doctor of Psychology in Applied Psychology program. Attendance at such trainings provides opportunities to become acquainted with professional colleagues across the state and nation and expand upon professional skills.

Doctoral students are required to maintain active memberships in at least two different professional organizations. It is expected that students will join the American Psychological Association as one of these organizations. The second organization that students join can be a state organization or it can be a specialty area organization. Students will be expected to

provide proof that they are members of said organizations.

Research Presentation and Publication

Graduate students are supported in the pursuit of their individual research interests. The Psychology faculty will sponsor students in the development and presentation of research. Annual meetings of the [Kentucky Psychological Association (KPA)](#), [WKU REACH Week](#), [WKU Student Research Conference](#), [Kentucky Association of School Psychologists](#), [University of Louisville Graduate Student Regional Research Conference](#), and other conferences provide opportunities for students to present and receive external feedback on their work.

WKU requires student researchers to complete the CITI Institution Review Board training. Visit https://www.wku.edu/compliance/training.php for directions.

The department also offers an option of obtaining subjects through the Study Board, a system that gives credit to undergraduates for participating in your research. Visit https://www.wku.edu/psychological-sciences/studyboard/index.php

Evaluation of Students

Applied psychology is a very demanding profession that requires individuals to have above average intellectual abilities, broad knowledge in human behavior, excellent interpersonal skills, integration skills, and advanced skills in the areas of assessment and problem solving. Thus, psychology faculty members engage in ongoing informal evaluations of graduate students to help students meet the ethical, legal and professional demands of the profession.

Supervision

Students in the programs give consent to supervision of their clinical work by those with more experience. In the second year a doctoral student will provide supervision for a few cases by the MA student. This provides the MA student with a chance to observe more variety in supervisory styles, useful for identifying professional preferences, and also gives them contact with a supervisor who was recently "in their shoes." We expect supervisees at every level to do their best to learn from their supervisor and to be respectful of the direction they are given by a supervisor, commensurate with their personal experience in the field.

Formal summative evaluations. Formal summative evaluations of the status and progress of the students are conducted by psychology faculty at the end of each semester. Program faculty members act as a review committee and conduct student evaluations in consultation with other faculty members directly involved with the student's activities. Faculty understand that students are "in process" and consider a student's developmental trajectory. Traditional examinations over coursework are only one element of the total evaluation. The practice of applied psychology requires more than simply demonstrating knowledge of academic facts. Consequently, students are evaluated broadly on aspects of behavior that are essential to the functioning of an applied psychologist. Faculty also review such factors as time management, professional demeanor, social skills, emotional stability, attitudes and values appropriate for clinical work, response to supervision, adherence to ethical and legal standards, and relationships with peers and faculty. The review includes observation in classes, clinical work, assistantships, capstone project progress, and performance in other settings, including significant events outside of WKU. For example, a felony conviction will make the student un-

licensable or a freely available web picture may undercut their professionalism with a client.

The results of this summative evaluation are communicated to the students following the completion of the review. See the appendices for the Semester Evaluation form. Students may discuss this feedback with their advisor by arranging an appointment. Most students progress as expected with occasional need for remediation in a particular area and occasional need to re-evaluate career paths. Our desire is for the student to learn from the experience and not repeat the error.

Remediation overview. If a student is considered to be making less than satisfactory progress (see following section on Expectations of Students to review levels of performance), a plan to deal with the areas of concern will be developed by the student in consultation with their advisor and other faculty mentors as appropriate (see Growth Plan template in appendices.) Examples of possible remediation may include, but are not limited to, additional applied work, readings, and/or receiving psychotherapy. Students who do not complete the program of remediation and fail to achieve acceptable performance after remediation will not be allowed to continue in the program. Our first ethical obligation is to protect potential clients from malpractice.

Grades. Students pursuing a graduate degree must maintain a "B" (3.0) average and this is also required to continue in an assistantship.

For the M.A. in Psychology, professional (clinical psychology) courses (PSY 541, PSY 560, PSY 562, PSY 640, PSY 641, PSY 660, and PSY 662) with a grade of "C" or lower do not count toward completion of the program and will need to be re-taken until such a time as the student earns a B or higher grade.

For the Doctor of Psychology in Applied Psychology a grade of "C" or lower within a Core program course does not count toward completion of the program and will need to be re-taken until such a time as the student earns a B or higher grade. Core courses include courses in the following areas: Statistics/Research Methods, History and Systems, Psychopharmacology, Family Systems, and Basic Supervision.

Outstanding Graduate Student Award. Each year, a committee of the faculty reviews all the graduate students in a program and may select the outstanding graduate based on scholarship, research, citizenship, and other factors of relevance. The awardee is recognized at a banquet.

Expectations of Students

As described in the Evaluation of Students section above, professional behavior is a part of adequate performance as a graduate student and is expected of students in the Psychology graduate programs. Students' demonstrated professionalism will be considered in their semester evaluations, in recommendations for internship placements, and in letters of recommendation for licensure, employment, or further graduate study. While a student might manage to just pass in their coursework, faculty may be unwilling to write a letter of recommendation for licensure if the overall behavior of the student is not reliable.

Graduate training is an exciting endeavor that requires significant work and learning at a level that may stretch cognitive and emotional capacities. The faculty recognize that training can be a stress-inducing experience and adjusting to new demands at each level of training can create difficulties for students. This is a natural consequence of developing a new professional identity and being part of a smaller pool of more talented students. is the

payoff is achieving more than was possible in the past and developing your skills and abilities to a greater degree than ever before. The stress of growth is worthwhile.

Desirable behavior. Some specific expectations for professional behavior are listed below, although this is not an exhaustive list.

Ethical and legal behavior. Graduate students shall adhere to the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct as well as any Department or University policy on ethical behavior for faculty, staff, and students. In addition, they will adhere to government legal standards. When in doubt about appropriate behavior, defer to the ethical code. Failure to adhere to ethical or legal standards is adequate cause for dismissing a student from the graduate programs, following procedures outlined in University publications.

The student is expected to keep all professional materials confidential from others, including significant others such as spouses or parents. Those others are not in the program and, while welcome when specifically invited to social events, are not allowed to be part of graduate program activities, to view clinical resources, or be in clinical work areas.

Independent learning. Graduate students will take responsibility for their own education. The program provides a multitude of resources, such as instructors, textbooks, journals, and other tools. The student is responsible for mining those resources for lessons to be used in professional work. The student is expected to do his/her own work and to not plagiarize, defined as inappropriate citation and/or use of more than three consecutive words from another source without quotation marks. The faculty may submit any student product to plagiarism evaluation software.

Punctuality, attendance and engagement. Demonstration of responsible attendance, punctuality, and engagement in an academic setting suggests that a student possesses adequate personal management and organizational skills to operate appropriately in future professional roles.

Graduate students are expected to engage in active learning of the material and accomplish this by

• Attending all scheduled classes in their entirety. Missing classes, regularly arriving late or scheduling other activities (e.g., clients or assistantships) during class time is unprofessional and unacceptable.

• Being prepared to start class at the scheduled time, by arriving early and noticing when direction or instruction begins.

• Giving their full attention to the course and course materials during class. (It is obvious to the instructor when a student is checking a cell phone or email or doing some activity other than attending to the class.)

• Completing all of the reading, and have thought critically about it, for each class prior to when the reading is to be discussed. Such preparation is demonstrated by active class participation, responding to inquiries from the professor, etc., and

• Meeting deadlines and accepting the course consequences of a failure to meet those deadlines.

Attire. When you are engaged in professional situations, such as when interacting with clients in any way (including working casually in the Psychology Training Clinic), meeting other professionals, or doing a class presentation you will be expected to wear business casual. You might keep a change of clothing in the student office, just in case.

Professional dress is designed to keep attention focused on the task to be accomplished. You may be crawling around on the floor with a child client or walking a person up the hill for suicide intervention. Dress so you can accomplish either task and easily retain your dignity and mobility. When working with children be aware that items such as hoop earrings or ties may be grabbed and yanked.

Public behavior.

Conduct in the community/online. Students are encouraged to be mindful that, while they lead private lives, they are engaged in a public profession. Applied psychologists must monitor the appropriateness of their conduct at all times and across situations, and exercise discerning judgment in both professional and leisure pursuits. Remember, you do not cease to be a therapist or psychologist when clients see you in public or online outside of the therapeutic setting.

Electronic tools and social media. **You may not share your logins and passwords for professional software** with anyone else, as that is a violation of client privacy and grounds for dismissal from the program. If you have done so in the past, change the password and do not share it.

Faculty will use the assigned WKU email address for communication with you. You should check your email daily. Faculty have various personal approaches to using social media with students (e.g., LinkedIn or Facebook) but, at a minimum, faculty only connect with students if they initiate the connection. There are myriad issues in using e-mail, a cell phone or texting with clients or researching clients online. The area is new enough that norms are still forming and legal issues are still being explored as of this writing. Supervisors have differing opinions about how much risk to take and these sorts of differences are a normal part of "big changes." Reflecting on the differences can help inform the development of your own policy. Until your current supervisor

discusses his or her policies, do not use those tools with clients.

With regard to other digital accounts that might be used in professional contexts, create usernames and/or email addresses that are dignified and professional in nature. Remember that your email accounts, texts, Facebook and other social media posts will be subject to subpoena in the event of a lawsuit and that they are likely not HIPAA compliant and must not be used for discussion of client issues. Skype is also not HIPAA compliant. Ask yourself how a post would look in a court of law if your professional judgment was being questioned, when a potential employer "googles" you, or when a client is curious about your personal life and what he or she finds begins to influence the process of therapy. Please note that "googling" clients is not ethical and will be discussed in ethics classes.

It is a first step to set up privacy at the highest level on such accounts but for some services it is an ongoing task to keep the information private. Take some time to "clean up" your track record online and keep it clean from this point forward. Closely monitor those who have access to personal information shared privately via social media outlets (e.g., who they "friend" and how their personal information may be shared without their knowledge). Note that behavior online will also fall under the expectations for professionalism that will be considered in faculty semester evaluations of you.

Brief and time-limited personal difficulties. Psychologists are human and will have highs and lows. Faculty prefer to discuss those low moments before they grow out of proportion and become harder for the student to manage. Understanding the patterns of your own behavior when under stress is essential to effective clinical objectivity. Developing effective coping skills through personal experience is important when guiding others through difficulties. Difficulties also generally enhance one's empathy. **Coping challenges are not to be hidden, avoided, or repressed, but to be worked through with peers and faculty**.

Students are generally able to respond effectively to feedback about their reactions to psychological stresses or when their behavior negatively affects others. They are usually able to correct these difficulties in a reasonable length of time. The behavioral problems do not generally become pervasive and they are typically manageable and helpful learning experiences (at least in hindsight).

However, there are degrees of personal difficulty. Sleeping late from studying late, attending a wedding, or wanting to go on a vacation trip during the semester is not a difficulty. Illness with a fever or death of a loved one is a difficulty.

Response from the faculty. The clinical psychology program faculty will try to support students through a short-term challenge while still maintaining program standards.

Significant crises. Occasionally, a student may experience a long-term crisis, or have a series of frequent acute difficulties. Some students are not yet at a place where they can manage their stress or they make choices that fail to support their aspirations (such as trying to work full-time and trying to be a student full-time at the same time—one or the other will suffer). A concern exists when personal difficulties cause any or all of the following situations:

a. The student is unable to attend class regularly and on-time over a period of time;

b. The student is frequently poorly prepared (or unprepared) for class or other learning activities;

c. The student is significantly behind in coursework or other benchmarks for the programs;

d. The student is frequently unable to participate effectively in required learning activities.

Ethics and legal demands come first. Personal crises and difficulties cannot be used as an excuse for unethical or irresponsible behavior. **Psychologists are responsible for monitoring their personal adjustment and removing themselves from doing harm to clients if the difficulties interfere with their judgment or capacity to render service.**

Ethics codes indicate that students should, to the best of their ability, objectively examine the situation and determine whether it is appropriate to take a leave of absence from the program for a semester or year, until the educational experience can be given appropriate attention. **We strongly advise students to consult with the faculty to help them reach a decision**. It is important to know when you need help and it is important to be able to call upon it. This protects the client from your stress.

Response from the faculty. Faculty are interested in student long-term success and advise the student trainee to consult with the faculty to help reach a decision before the faculty has to call the student in for a meeting. The student and a faculty advisor will meet to clarify and evaluate options. If necessary, a leave of absence can be granted. Withdrawal procedures allow the student to withdraw from the university (see https://www.wku.edu/registrar/withdrawal.php). Also send an email to the Graduate School indicating your intent.

If circumstances allow the student to remain active in the program, a Growth Plan will be completed to clarify expectations and student responsibilities as well as a timeline for completion. (See appendices for suggested template). Failure to progress

after reasonable intervention, or a failure to comply with the agreed-upon plan, may result in dismissal from the program. Typically, the level of issue leading to leave of absence, withdrawal or dismissal has been discussed by the program faculty and the advisor is representing their collective wisdom. Keep in mind that the university has time limits for completion of a degree from first enrollment, currently 6 years for an M.A. and 10 years for a Psy.D.

Unprofessional student conduct. When a student has impaired judgment or has difficulty in modifying his or her behavior following feedback, the behavior will require a more formal response from the faculty and student.

Unprofessional conduct includes but is not limited to
• dishonesty, cheating, and/or plagiarism,
• sexual harassment,
• discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation,
• inappropriate interpersonal behavior, or
• repeated attendance and/or punctuality problems.

It is up to students to fulfill their responsibilities in a timely and professional manner, to represent themselves and their work honestly, and to treat others with dignity and respect.

Some of the behaviors, either alone or in combination, that may distinguish between ordinary stress responses and significant professional difficulties include:

a. A failure to acknowledge, understand, or address the problematic behavior when it is identified;

b. Problematic behavior that is not merely a reflection of a skill or knowledge deficit that can be rectified by academic training;

c. The quality of psychological services delivered is frequently negatively affected;

d. Problematic behavior that is not restricted to one area of professional functioning;

e. A disproportionate amount of attention from training personnel is required to address the difficulties;

f. Behavior that does not change in response to feedback or remedial efforts;

g. Behavior that negatively affects the public image of the University, the Program, or an agency providing a practicum or internship placement; or

h. Behavior that is unethical or illegal (including previously unknown difficulties that come to light after admission).

Unprofessional conduct can arise in any of the domains of training including, but not limited to, participation in classes, participation in research groups, interpersonal relationships (with clients, peers, faculty, or non-faculty supervisors), assistantship work, practicum activities, and internship.

Response from the faculty. The student and a faculty advisor will meet and review problems and documentation with behavioral examples. The student and advisor will complete a Growth Plan (see appendices for template) to clarify expectations and student responsibilities. Failure to progress after a reasonable intervention, or a failure to comply with the agreed-upon plan, may result in dismissal from the program. This level of issue has been discussed by the program faculty and the advisor and is representing their collective wisdom.

Additional notes on student expectations. In evaluating the suitability of students for continued study and/or employment as a graduate assistant, the faculty attends to problematic behavior that has been observed and documented.

Problems that reoccur will impact faculty decisions regarding that

• student's annual evaluation,

• faculty willingness to serve on a capstone project committee, or

• faculty judgement regarding student readiness for an internship placement.

• It will also impact a faculty member's willingness to provide letters of recommendation for licensure or references for employment. Letters are not guaranteed by admission or completion of program tasks. They are voluntary faculty offerings.

Neither student nor university nor potential clients are well served when a student is given a degree despite inadequate adoption of the skills and responsibilities of the profession.

Feedback from Students on the Program

Periodically students will be asked to provide feedback on the programs. They are invited to offer suggestions in the end of semester course instructor ratings if they wish to provide more anonymous feedback or to arrange a meeting with an advisor or faculty member for a direct conversation.

Forms to Be Filed

Following are forms to be aware of and complete on time as appropriate to your track.

Program of Study. The [Program of Study Form](#) is your contract with the university. It is filed when you enter the program, and lists all of the courses you need to complete the program. If you successfully complete the program as specified on the Program of Study Form, you will receive the degree. You will complete this form following Orientation to the specific degree program (M.A. or Psy.D.) and return it to your advisor.

If you switch to the nonthesis track you will do a Change of Program of Study form.

Committee Selection Form. This form (https://www.wku.edu/graduate/documents/) is used by **those doing a thesis and/or a dissertation**. It is completed once you know who will be on your committee. It should be completed near the beginning of your second semester.

- M.A. nonthesis track do not complete this form.
- M.A. thesis track students will not be able to enroll in Thesis (Psy 599) until this form is complete.
- Doctoral students should complete it with the first Dissertation (PSY 799) class, as you cannot enroll in your second Dissertation class or other classes until this form is completed.

The Graduate School will also put a hold on your ability to register for classes if you do not complete the form quickly.

Graduation Application. You must file your application to graduate on TopNet **after you have taken 18 hours but before 21 hours are complete**. See TopNet/ Student Services/ Student Records/ Application for Graduation. You complete it regardless of whether you are going to attend commencement. There is some inconsistency about the form deadline in the Graduate School but we have had success if you complete this requirement in the summer after your first year working toward a particular degree.

Thesis or Dissertation Signature Form. This is a form you create for your thesis or dissertation and can be accessed at the Graduate School website under Current Students/ Dissertation Thesis Projects/ Formatting/ scroll down to Signature Page…example documents link (https://www.wku.edu/graduate/students/thesis/sample_theses.php). The faculty sign when you pass and the original must be turned in to the Graduate School with your thesis. They accept only the original one with faculty signatures. They are also rigid about formatting—a single space is enough to send you back to collect signatures again. Print it out and use a ruler to measure the margins.

Comprehensive Examination /Capstone Course. This form is filed by your capstone, thesis or dissertation chair when you have defended your qualifying examination. This is done through TopNet, and you will never see it. Just know that it is out there and remind your chair to file it on time. Remind them several times.

For spring degree completion, the deadline is close to the end of May; for summer graduation the deadline is early July; for fall completion the deadline is early December. All degree requirements must be completed by the last day of the semester… but there are often more steps to finish than you realize. Add at least one month to your completion estimate.

Copyright Permission. This form is filed along with your capstone project, thesis or dissertation, after it has been approved by your committee. Your final document will appear on the TopScholar archive of WKU documents and will be accessible to anyone.

Final approvals. Once you complete the revisions from your committee, the M.A. students will forward required materials to the Graduate School. Doctoral students, however, must have Dr. Rick Grieve review and approve the dissertation before forwarding materials to the Graduate School.

Faculty[1]

Faculty who teach in the M.A. program are designated by a single asterisk, those who teach in the Psy.D. program are designated by two asterisks and those who teach in both programs by three asterisks.

The Core Faculty

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Training: Clinical Psychology
Research/Clinical Interests: Health Psychology, Eating Disorders, Men's Body Image Issues, Sport Psychology, Sport Fan Coping, Personality and Intellectual Assessment.
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Training: Clinical Psychology
Research/Clinical Interests: Gerontology, Technology, Development of Professional Skills, Behavior Change.
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Training: School Psychology
Research/Clinical Interests: Examining educator training and practice. Evidence-based assessment.
Licensed Psychologist

***Carl Myers**, Ph.D., Iowa State University, Ed.S. Coordinator, School Psychology
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Licensed Psychologist, HSP

***Tim Thornberry**, Ph.D., Auburn University
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Training: Clinical Child Psychology
Research/Clinical Interests: rural health, primary care psychology, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, analog behavior observation.
Licensed Psychologist, HSP[2]

[1] *201 KAR 26:210 §1(5).*
[2] *HSP: Health Services Provider*

Program Faculty

Pitt Derryberry, Ph.D., University of Alabama
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Training: Educational Psychology
Research Interests: Moral Development.
Research Laboratory: Research of Ethical and Social Topics Lab

Lisa Duffin, Ph.D., Purdue University
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Research Interests: Factors that influence academic quality in STEM education; the power of beliefs in motivation and learning; teacher quality and training
Research Laboratory: The Academic Quality Lab

*Thomas Gross, Ph.D., Oklahoma State University
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Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor

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License: In progress

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Research Interests: Culture and work behavior; rater agreement in performance appraisal; cross-cultural perceptions of date rape.

Jenni Redifer, Ph.D., University of Florida
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Research Interests: Cognitive control mechanisms related to student learning; strategy use and instruction
Research Laboratory: Attention and Memory Lab

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Research Interests: Motivation and emotion within the contexts of sport, exercise, and education.
Research Laboratory: Motivation Lab

*Qin Zhao, Ph.D., University of Florida
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Training: Educational Psychology
Research Interests: Metacognition and motivation.
Research Laboratory: Metacognition Lab

Affiliated Faculty

Affiliated faculty teach foundation courses or an occasional course, based on need. Some are willing to serve on capstone project committees.

**Sharon Eagles, Ed.S., Ed.D., Alliant International University
Office: GRH 3007
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Training: School Psychology and Educational Leadership and Management
Research/Clinical Interests: Resiliency
License: School Psychology

**Bruce Fane, Ed.D.
Office:
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Training:
Research/Clinical Interests: child and adolescent psychology
Licensed Psychologist

**Grayson Grau, M.D., Bowling Green Medical Center and Psychiatric Associates
Office: Bowling Green Medical Center; Psychiatric Associates
Phone: 270-843-5103
Training: Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine; residency Johns Hopkins University Hospital
Research/Clinical Interests: Head Psychiatrist for psychiatry residency program
Kentucky State Medical License, board certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Karl Laves, Ph.D., University of Missouri-Columbia
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Research/Clinical Interests: Creating Positive Views of Self Despite Harsh Parenting, Jealousy as a Measure of Development, Self-Psychology.
License: Counseling Psychology

***Daniel McBride, Ph.D., Southern Illinois University,
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Research/Clinical Interests: MMPI, Psychopathology, Coping, Personality
Licensed Psychologist.

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Training: Experimental

Appendices

Coping with Stress

What to do when you are not doing homework

We encourage students to have interests outside of graduate school. Many people have found that exercise is a great activity to include in their daily routines. Research has shown that exercise has a number of benefits, not the least of which is mood management. People who exercise are better able to fight depression than people who do not exercise.

Here are some tips to help you get the most out of your activity:

- Select aerobic activities, such as running, biking, or swimming that trigger the release of endorphins (those "feel good" neuro-chemicals). Focus your concentration on diaphragmatic breathing during exercise. This calms the nervous system and delivers the maximum amount of oxygen to your body, both of which help with psychological management. You should try to exercise for at least 30 minutes at least three times per week to get the maximum psychological benefits.

- Take your "emotional temperature" on a scale of 1 (very bad mood) to 10 (very good mood) before and after exercising to see whether or not there is improvement. Do what we tell clients to do: write it down and track the changes. Focus on what happens in your mind during exercise.

- Use your exercise as a distraction from something that might be weighing on your mind—tests, reports, thesis, etc. Exercise can be a way to avoid rumination and increase mindfulness and openness.

Exercise has the same benefits for therapists as it does for clients. Remember to take as good care of yourself as you do your clients.

12 Strategies to Use to Handle Stress*

1) Learn to recognize your own stress responses and things that trigger your particular stressors.

2) Develop a study plan and stick to it. Procrastination causes stress. Study groups work. Attend one or start one.

3) Seek out faculty and discuss your concerns.

4) Find people who have positive energy and who will not drain you. Hang out with them.

5) Avoid listening to program gossip.

6) Draw from your community of support (religious-spiritual and cultural places of comfort and connection).

7) Drop perfectionism. You're in school to learn, so enjoy it. Mistakes happen.

8) Don't overcommit.

9) Use your university's resources, including health and counseling centers.

10) Do things that take your mind off course work (such as going to the movies, reading books, and engaging in hobbies).

11) Play, exercise, relax. Do something physical or meditative. Do it regularly.

12) Get sleep.

*Fletcher, D. L. (2011). The stressful life of students. *Counseling Today, 54* (5), 14-15.

Semester Summative Evaluation

Student Name: _____   Date: ____

Personal & Professional Qualities	Satisfactory Progress	Some Concerns	Significant Concerns
Work ethic			
Time management/prioritizing program work			
Communication skills			
Academic coursework			
Problem-solving skills including capacity to effectively define problems to be addressed.			
Progress on thesis			
Applied skills			
Empathy for and ability to work with diverse individuals including colleagues			
Assumes responsibility for personal and professional actions			
Evidence of growth			
Responds appropriately to feedback/supervision			
Attitudes/values appropriate for clinical work			
Personal stability			
Professionalism			
Adherence to ethical standards			
Other:			
Other:			

Accomplishments this term: _____

_____

_____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Remediation Plan: ___Not needed   ____Needed (Meet with Program Coordinator)

Growth Plan (Template)

Beginning Date:_____ Estimated End Date:_____

Add or subtract space as needed. It is fine to do in paragraph form if the following elements are addressed.

Issue(s) Identified	Plan to Address Issues (s)	Outcome Measure(s) that demonstrate meeting goals

The above plan is mutually discussed and agreed to by the signatories. Revisions can be suggested by either party as long as there is discussion, agreement and a new written plan.

_____   _____
Signature   Signature
[Student name typed]   [Faculty name typed]

_____   _____
Date   Date

Practicum/Internship Competency Evaluation

This evaluation form is designed to evaluate practicum students' level of competency in the program's domains of training. In addition, students' dispositions necessary for effective collaborative

Evaluation of Clinical Competency Development	

Student Name: _____
 	
 Placement: _____
 	
 Supervisor: _____
	Semester, Year: _____
	 Year in Program: 1st Year Master
	          2nd Year Master
	          3rd Year PsyD
	          4th Year PsyD
	          5th Year PsyD
	          PreDoctoral Internship

functioning as a psychologist are assessed.

Supervisors:
1. Please rate each item twice, once for *competency* and once for *acceptability*.
2. If the student has not yet had the opportunity to experience an activity or you have no basis for appraisal, check the "No Opportunity" box and leave the "Competency" and "Acceptability" boxes blank.
3. First, indicate the extent to which the practicum student demonstrates competency for each item using the scale described below.
4. Second, indicate the acceptability of the level of competency demonstrated using the scale below.
5. As appropriate, provide comments in support of your ratings, for both strengths and concerns. *(Note: If the student receives a rating of 1 in the "Acceptability" column, comments are necessary to explain the concern.)*
6. At the end of the evaluation form, provide a recommendation for a course grade.

Level of Competency

Rating	Descriptor	Definition
0	Novice	Beginning to show this knowledge/skill.
1	First Year Master's Student	Demonstrates a consistent basic understanding of concepts/skills. Beginning-level therapist
2	Second Year Master's Student	Demonstrates a consistent competent understanding of concepts/skills.
3	Third Year PsyD Student	Demonstrates a consistent advanced understanding of concepts/skills. Capable of practice with supervision.
4	Fourth Year PsyD Student	Demonstrates consistent proficient understanding of concepts/skills.
5.	Doctoral Internship Ready	Can practice independently with structure.
6.	Private Practice Ready	Can practice independently without supervision.

Acceptability of Student's Level of Competency

Rating	Descriptor	Definition
1	Not Acceptable	Needs further skill development and/or close supervision.
2	Marginally Acceptable	Inconsistent performance or still some gaps in skills.
3	Acceptable/Expected	Development consistent with expectations at this stage.
4	Exceeds Expectations	Above and beyond expectations at this stage.

Domain 1.1. Synthesize principles from the science of psychology and apply them to behavioral health	Competency	Acceptability	No Opportunity

problems in a variety of settings, adapting to issues of cultural and individual diversity, including socioeconomic status and the rural environment.			
Competency 1.1.1: Able to prepare an assessment report with a client who is diverse from the therapist, taking into consideration appropriate concerns for that individual.			
Competency 1.1.2: Able to conceptualize psychotherapy/assessment cases with a population diverse from the therapist.			

Comments:

	Competency	Acceptability	No Opportunity
Domain 1.2. Describe the theories, methods, measurement tools, data analysis, results and development of scientific psychology by studying the subfields that explore human behavior, affect, and cognition and the influences of biology and society.			
Competency 1.2.1: Demonstrates an understanding of the influence of current basic research findings that apply to the student's area of study.			

Comments:

	Competency	Acceptability	No Opportunity
Domain 1.3. Apply to evidence-based practice their knowledge derived from the study of human development, individual differences, maladaptive behavior, and pathology.			
Competency 1.3.1: Creates a culturally sensitive treatment plan to address clients' presenting concerns.			
Competency 1.3.2: Demonstrates an understanding of different appropriate interventions relative to the client's cognitive and developmental levels.			

Comments:

Domain 1.4. Apply legislative, ethical and professional standards to legal and ethical issues of practice such as those involving insurance, technology, and privacy.	Competency	Acceptability	No Opportunity
Competency 1.4.1: Creates legally-defensible documents for the practice of psychology.			

Comments:

Domain 1.5. Apply evidence-based practice to assess and define problems and to develop and implement interventions relying on their knowledge of theories and methods.	Competency	Acceptability	No Opportunity
Competency 1.5.1: Demonstrates an understanding of more than one evidence-based treatment/intervention and discuss the specific mechanisms of change that are responsible for their efficacy.			
Competency 1.5.2: Creates a plan for intervention/treatment that appropriately incorporates evidence-based treatments that have been selected for their efficacy.			

Comments:

Domain 1.6. Effectively communicate their assessment and conceptualization to consumers and other professionals.	Competency	Acceptability	No Opportunity
Competency 1.6.1: Demonstrates clear diagnostic formulations in progress notes and evaluation reports.			
Competency 1.6.2: Modifies writing styles in reports so that the intended audience of the report can clearly understand and utilize the information.			

Comments:

Domain 1.7. Evaluate the outcomes of treatments and practices and modify their practice based on that evaluation.	Competency	Acceptability	No Opportunity
Competency 1.7.1: Appropriately tailors therapeutic interventions and techniques to specific clients and the clients' presenting concerns			
Competency 1.7.2: Utilizes an outcome measure to track therapy progress across session and can describe the benefits of that measure.			

Comments:

Domain 2.1. Describe the research and theories of supervision as well as professional standards for competence.	Competency	Acceptability	No Opportunity
Competency 2.1.1: Describes a supervision case that incorporates the research, multiple theories of supervision and illustrates an understanding of professional standards from the appropriate state licensing board and professional associations.			

Comments:

Domain 2.2. Evaluate the developmental level of a supervisee and appropriately structure a response to enable supervisee growth, based on their knowledge of the research and theories of supervision and sensitivity to cultural and individual differences.	Competency	Acceptability	No Opportunity
Competency 2.2.1: Writes a supervision plan that includes assessment of the developmental level of a supervisee and a professional growth plan that incorporates knowledge of the research and theories of supervision and sensitivity to cultural and individual differences.			

Comments:

Domain 2.3. Behave in a professional manner toward supervisees, supervisors and colleagues and with respect for professional boundaries.	Competency	Acceptability	No Opportunity
Competency 2.3.1: Completes supervision notes and sign-offs/reports within 7 days and appropriately refers supervisees when boundary issues occur. Discusses issues with supervisees and supervisors as they occur.			

Comments:

Domain 3.1. Demonstrate command of contemporary advances in the field with regard to scientific and theoretical advancements in general and those affecting their realm of practice in particular.	Competency	Acceptability	No Opportunity
Competency 3.1.1: The student selects and integrates the current scientific literature and appropriate methods related to their area of practice and be able to describe the theoretical underpinings.			

Comments:

Domain 3.2. Engage in data-based problem-solving when dealing with issues in their respective practice settings, including adherence to American Psychological Association standards for the conduct of research and sensitivity to cultural and individual differences in the formulation of research questions, design, and implementation.	Competency	Acceptability	No Opportunity
Competency 3.2.1: In their practice, students are able to demonstrate a positive impact on clients and/or programs. They can select an area and design a research plan for outcome-based practice or program evaluation based on scholarly references.			

Comments:

Domain 3.3. Design action-research based on the literature that advances the needs of the practice community, and evaluate and communicate the results.	Competency	Acceptability	No Opportunity
Competency 3.3.1: Students will be able to craft a research study that addresses a clinical area.			
Competency 3.3.2: Students will be able to describe research findings to peers and other professionals			

Comments:

Scholarships or Grants

TopDollar Scholarship Portal

https://www.wku.edu/financialaid/scholarships/

Minority Student Funding Opportunities

Distinguished Minority Fellows (DMF) Program. One opportunity for graduate students is the Distinguished Minority Fellowship (DMF; https://www.wku.edu/graduate/aid/map.php). The DMF is designed to help minority students attain graduate degrees by providing tuition as well as employment opportunities. Eligibility criteria for the DMF:

- Must be a member of a minority group as defined by the WKU Diversity Plan: African-American; American Indian/Alaskan native; Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; two or more races; or Hispanic/Latino.
- Must be a United States citizen.
- Must be currently enrolled or must be accepted into a masters or doctoral degree program. Students must be in good standing academically. Students must be fully admitted to a graduate degree program by the DMF application deadline in order to be considered for the award.
- Student is ineligible if he/she has received any previous DMF funding.

Students who receive a DMF award will receive tuition and fees necessary for completion of the primary graduate degree. Courses listed on the Graduate Program of Study form will be considered those necessary for completion of the graduate degree. The student assumes responsibility for payment of all courses not required for completion of the degree. The student also is responsible for payment of all special program and course fees as well any late fees. Students receiving a DMF award are eligible for a stipend of a value no less than $8,000 per academic year. The Dean of the Graduate School reserves the right of adjusting the annual DMF stipend in accordance with budgetary considerations. Students will receive this stipend for 20 hours of work per week for 15 weeks for two semesters during the academic year. Receiving this fellowship requires the student to arrange employment for these hours with a WKU campus entity. Such employment usually occurs within the Department of Psychology. Awardees are also eligible for the WKU Graduate Assistant Health Insurance Program. The DMF award does **not** cover tuition for the winter term (the three-week session in January),summer terms or the Distance Learning fee, so the student is responsible for those costs.

More information about the DMF and application materials can be found at: https://www.wku.edu/graduate/aid/map.php

Multicultural Psychological Foundation Multicultural Award Program. Kentucky Psychological Association Members are eligible for the Multicultural Student Professional Development Award. Qualified applicants are psychology graduate students representing an ethnic/racial diverse group. Award money may be used for a specific multicultural initiative, training, conference, event, or dues to a multicultural national professional organization. Award recipient must be a KPA member in good standing. Recipients can receive up to $350.

An application for the Professional Development Award requires a Letter of Interest specifically stating the goals/purpose for which the funds will be used, the amount requested, and a curriculum vita. Applications will be reviewed by the Kentucky Psychological Foundation Diversity Committee.

Within 12 months of receiving the award, winners will be required to submit a brief letter explaining how the money was used and how the funds contributed to the goals stated in the letter of interest. The winner of the student award will also be required to submit within 12 months a brief statement signed by an academic mentor or advisor verifying the use of the award.

More information about the Multicultural Student Professional Development Award can be found here:

https://kpa.memberclicks.net/ky-psycholgoical-foundation-multicultural-award-program

Psychology Department Scholarships

See http://www.wku.edu/psychology/programs/graduate/scholarships.php

The Jaggers-Cave scholarship is for Kentucky residents. The Dotson is available to persons from anywhere.

Graduate School - Research Grant

Graduate student grant applications have rolling deadlines in mid-September, early November, mid-February and early April. If you are a graduate student who has a strong project, please consider applying.

Find details about the application process at:
https://www.wku.edu/graduate/aid/research_grant.php

WKU Sisterhood Grant

The **WKU Sisterhood** is a group of women affiliated with WKU (alumnae, friends, students, faculty, and staff) who have contributed a gift of $1,000 or more to help fund a WKU project that will be selected by members of the organization at their annual meeting in September.

The deadline for application is **usually in early September or October.**

You may also access the application and further information by going to https://www.wku.edu/sisterhood/.

WKU Center for Citizenship and Social Justice

Occasionally the center has funding for projects available. Visit their website at https://www.wku.edu/ccsj/# and look under "Affordability."

Gender & Women's Studies Awards

Seneca Falls Personal Empowerment Award -- the recipient is a student, undergraduate or graduate, who is currently enrolled at Western Kentucky University. View additional requirements at https://www.wku.edu/womensstudies/scholarships_awards_travel/awards.php.

Catherine Coogan Ward Feminist Action Award -- The recipient is a member of the Western Kentucky University community and actively working to improve quality of life at WKU. Additional information is available at https://www.wku.edu/womensstudies/scholarships_awards_travel/awards.php.

Please note the deadline for applications for undergraduate and graduate scholarships has been the end of March in the past. There is a nomination procedure and if you wish to be nominated, ask a faculty mentor, providing your materials to the mentor.

P.E.O. Projects and Philanthropies for Women

See https://www.peointernational.org/peo-projects-and-philanthropies
They have several types of awards including
- a low interest loan program for those within 6 to 24 months of completing a degree,
- a need-based scholarship for those who had had a 24 month break in education and are within 24 months of completing a program,
- an award for those within 2 years of completing a doctoral degree, and
- a need-based scholarship for those who are citizens of countries other than the USA or Canada.

International Research Award for Graduate Students in Psychology

Division 52, International Psychology, has offered an International Research Award for graduate students in psychology. This award was established to encourage and recognize promising graduate student research in international psychology. For information on how to apply visit https://www.apa.org/about/awards/div-52-student-research The deadline in 2020 was mid-April.