

DOMAIN F: PROGRAM SELF-ASSESSMENT AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

F1. The Program, With Appropriate Involvement From Students, Engages in Regular, Ongoing Self-Studies

F1a. and F1b. Ongoing Self-Study

The School Psychology Coordinating Committee has the responsibility for self-assessment and quality enhancement. The Committee consists of program faculty and elected student representatives (one representing the doctoral program and one specialist program student). Ongoing program evaluation and discussions about improvements occur during the bi-monthly meetings as concerns are raised and solutions sought. There are also some special meetings, including day-long retreats held as part of the self-study process (see Appendix C). The Committee periodically reviews program content, designs and implements survey analyses, reviews suggestions from field supervisors and students, reviews results of comprehensive examinations, and makes recommendations for changes in course offerings or course content.

Other committees within the department, college, and university must approve recommendations generated by the program for curriculum change. Changes in policy and operating procedures are the authority of the Coordinating Committee and department chair. Summative evaluations occur as part of the process of national and state accreditation and program review by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois State Board of Education, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), and the self-study process of the American Psychological Association (APA). Recommendations generated by these review bodies give rise to additional self-study and program changes.

The changes, since the last self-study in 2000, that resulted from ongoing program self-assessment and feedback from current students, graduates, intern supervisors and employers are outlined below.

1) Based on feedback from students raised at a School Psychology Coordinating Committee by the student representatives and a study of the relevant courses, Psychology of the Exceptional Child (PSY 346) was eliminated as a required course due to overlap with other courses. Beginning in the fall semester 2004, PSY 346 content that did not represent overlap with other courses (e.g., information about low incidence disabilities) will now be integrated into the seminar portion of the Psychoeducational Assessment and Intervention practicum (PSY 436.04).

2) The title of PSY 472, Theory and Practice of School Psychology, will be changed to Legal, Ethical and Professional Issues in School Psychology, to better reflect course content. This change will become effective with the fall 2005-2006 *Graduate Catalog*.

3) Changes in curriculum include integrating academic interventions into courses, requiring Teaching Diverse Learners (SED 422) and an assistive technology course, including an introduction to assessment as an objective of Psychodiagnostics I (PSY 432), and having culminating projects in each of the diagnostic courses to allow for more developmental assessment (see Appendix C).

4) One integrated practicum (PSY 436.01) was separated into two practica (PSY 436.04 and 436.05 with a grade awarded for each). Within the psychoeducational practicum, students now spend one semester in the Child/Adolescent Psychoeducational Assessment Service and the Multidisciplinary Psychoeducational Assessment Service at the PSC supervised by a university faculty member, and one semester in a Flexible Service Delivery site (in which the school psychologist has a broader role, uses more direct measures of academic behavior such as Curriculum Based Measurement and progress monitoring, and conducts more academic interventions) supervised by both a school-based school psychologist and a program faculty member. The psychosocial practicum is now clinic-based. The PSC provides outreach services to schools, and practicum students rotate through the various services including Autism Service, For Children's Sake, and the Child/Adolescent Intervention Service.

Revisions were also made to the referral procedures for the psychosocial practicum during a retreat held last May (2004). Historically, practicum students were assigned to a specific school for their placement. As a result, they have received varied experiences: some very good, some very limited. From year to year, due to changes in staff and student composition, it has been difficult to predict which schools will be needing

services, and whether a particular school will be a relatively good or limited placement. In an effort to provide a more consistent experience for the practicum students and to utilize their expertise to meet the varied mental health needs of the schools, the process in which student clients are referred for services was changed effective in the fall semester 2004.

Rather than having practicum students placed at certain schools for four hours per week, child/adolescent clients are referred directly to the one of the PSC's services through a new referral process identified to as "school-linked mental health services." An advanced graduate assistant conducts a phone intake and serve as a liaison to the psychosocial practicum students. Cases are assigned to practicum clinicians primarily based on training needs and fit with individual case requirements, but a school's request for specific clinicians is taken into consideration. Perceived benefits for this restructuring of the psychosocial practicum include the following: (a) practicum students will get a more consistent experience in the practicum course; (b) practicum students will have more opportunities to conduct co-therapy; and (c) schools will have the option of seeking services that meet the needs of the schools, rather than being limited to one student for four hours per week.

5) Working with the Graduate School and Financial Aid, one credit hour of internship is now equivalent to full-time status so students can keep health insurance and defer student loans.

6) Dr. Adena Meyers assumed responsibility for PSY 590 advanced practicum placement coordination.

7) To facilitate selection of GAs and better meet student interest/needs, doctoral students were asked to rank order their interest in various graduate assistantships.

8) The practicum evaluation was revised to be more performance-based (see Appendix H).

9) Beginning fall 2003, a Web-based system (ILS-Internet Logging System) is being used for all field experiences/practica.

10) A form was developed to document the mid-year feedback conference with all first-year doctoral students was developed.

11) The process of providing annual feedback to all doctoral students was refined. These revised policies include:

- a) annual feedback meetings, including written documentation, for all doctoral students. During the meeting a review of the student's progress in the program, student strengths/weaknesses and dissertation progress are discussed.
- b) a revised Academic Professional Development Information Form to better assess development related to program objectives. Students also complete annually a Dissertation Progress Monitoring Form. This information provided by the student is then reviewed by the student's Advisory Committee chair/advisor, who shares it with the full School Psychology Coordinating Committee, which discusses each doctoral student individually prior to the advisor scheduling a feedback conference with their advisee.

12) A portfolio review process was implemented for students at the end of their fourth year in the program.

13) The program assumed a major role in the development of the Illinois School Psychology Internship Consortium (ISPIC), which is currently housed at Illinois State. A graduate of the school psychology doctoral program serves as the director of ISPIC (see Appendix S).

14) The doctoral Research Seminar in School Psychology (PSY 480.19) was extended to a full year rather than just one semester. The goal is to facilitate first-year doctoral students' initiating their research apprenticeship in a more timely fashion.

15) The estimate of the number of years from enrollment (with a Bachelor's degree) to program completion was revised from five to six years.

16) Students must now successfully complete their comprehensive exams in the fall (rather than spring) prior to participating in the “Match process” for APPIC internships.

17) Doctoral student supervisors, as part of the required Advanced Practicum Supervision (PSY 590.03) course, now provide individual supervision of fall semester fieldwork activities and mentoring of first-year students during this critical transition period to graduate school. Doctoral student supervisors receive metasupervision from a school psychology faculty member who teaches the supervision course, which all of the doctoral supervisors had enrolled in the previous spring.

18) In order for students to be approved to seek doctoral internships, they must complete the apprenticeship experience (including both the colloquium and brief report) by the end of the summer of their third year in the program. If not, they will not be able to complete their internship during their fifth year, as it will be postponed until their sixth year in the program.

19) The student’s Advisory Committee must now be selected by the end of the spring semester of the student’s second year of enrollment in the doctoral program.

20) Compared to the program’s last self-study (2000) when there were no students beyond their seventh year in the program, there are now six students. The faculty has discussed this unwelcome increase. What follows is a summary of factors that have contributed to this situation and program revisions made to reduce these numbers in the future (see Table 7).

Two tenured (Drs. Laurent and Horton) and one non-tenured (Dr. Bucy) school psychology faculty members left the university in July, 2001. This particular class of ABDs beyond their seventh year were particularly impacted as they were all students working with these faculty members. Many of these students were in the beginning of the dissertation proposal development stage (they had completed their apprenticeships with these faculty members) but not far enough along to have another faculty member assume the chair duties, so they essentially had to start over. The program is also addressing the ABD issue in the following ways:

- (a) The first-year research seminar was restructured to include only doctoral students and to make the exit requirement an IRB proposal (for their apprenticeship).
- (b) The use of a Dissertation Progress Monitoring Form (see Appendix B, p. 40) was implemented. Each doctoral student must complete it annually, and it is reviewed as part of the annual student evaluation discussed by the SPCC and it is discussed with the student at the annual advising meeting.
- (c) The program is still considering the requirement of a successful dissertation proposal prior to being able to apply for internship. With the hiring of two new faculty members with active research programs, we do not anticipate this will remain a concern. We want to monitor the number of ABDs over the next few years prior to implementing any new changes.
- (d) In addition, as a preventive strategy, the program has extended the research seminar for the students’ entire first year in the program. Students also focus on their dissertation proposals as part of research-related assignments in Child Psychopathology (PSY 447) and in Experimental Design (PSY 441).

The program currently relies on the following assessment procedures: course grades, portfolios, comprehensive examinations, course evaluations by students, field supervisors’ ratings of students’ competency, regularly scheduled visits and periodic reviews of practicum sites by program faculty, field supervisors’ solicited feedback about program quality, students’ securing APA-accredited internships, performance of students and graduates on the state certification exam, and periodic surveys of graduates, their intern supervisors, and their employers. In addition, the program is reviewed by various accrediting agencies, and their recommendations serve as input for program changes. The main findings from these assessment sources are summarized below and presented in Table 10.

(1) Within-Program Assessments

Comprehensive Examinations: Towards the end of the program (typically in the fall semester of the student’s fourth year), but prior to the internship, students sit for the written comprehensive examination

(see Appendix B, p. 18; Appendix T for sample exams). The student's advisory committee functions as their comprehensive examination committee. Students are provided with sample questions prior to the exam. The exam includes a common core of questions covering basic foundation areas (e.g., professional practices). The examination also covers required core areas (biological, cognitive, social, and individual behavior, scientific and professional ethics and standards, measurement, statistics, research design, program evaluation, and educational foundations) and the skill sequence in the student's program (i.e., assessment, intervention, consultation and program evaluation, supervision and administration, or the open individualized sequence). To date, all but four current students or graduates who have taken their comprehensive examinations have passed on the first administration. In three cases, students failed one or more questions on the initial administration and passed the oral retake exam related to those questions. In one case, a student failed the entire exam and passed the written retake. All students have also passed the state certification exam, which supports the validity of the comprehensive exam and the standards used in grading it (see chart below).

Portfolios: Students prepare portfolios at the end of their first semester in the program, prior to the end of their second-year entry-level practicum, and at the end of the program prior to their internship (see Appendix H for portfolio evaluation form). Portfolios contain students' permanent products, such as psychological reports, treatment plans, statements of philosophy, and vita (see Appendix B, pp. 13). Portfolios enable program faculty to review students' work at different points in their training and provide students with a vehicle to demonstrate their competency for potential internship supervisors and employers. Portfolios are also reviewed by faculty as part of several courses, including Theory and Practice of School Psychology (PSY 472) and Psychoeducational Assessment and Intervention practicum (PSY 436.04). Inadequate portfolios are returned to students until they are judged adequate by the faculty.

Evaluation of Practicum Performance: Practicum supervisors rate and provide feedback about students' performance. As part of this evaluation process, faculty supervisors review students' video or audio taped sessions with clients and their written psychological reports. All of this information provides valuable input about program strengths and weaknesses.

(2) Post-Program Surveys

The Coordinating Committee solicits feedback from intern supervisors and employers of program graduates. These surveys provide quantitative evaluations of the perceived quality of academic and practicum activities and their sufficiency in achieving competencies targeted as objectives of the program. The surveys also provide qualitative evaluations and recommendations on how to improve the program. The results of these surveys are contained in Appendix N. A summary of the results follows.

Surveys of Intern Supervisors and Employers: Nine intern supervisors/employers representing diverse settings including public school districts (33%), college/universities (33%), hospitals/clinics (22%) and mental health agency (11%) completed surveys. The knowledge base and skills levels of interns and graduates were all evaluated as excellent or near excellent: means were all 3.4 or above with most mean scores above 3.7 (3 = good and 4 = excellent). The school psychology doctoral program would be recommended to other potential students by all intern supervisors/employers (with one "No Response"). Seventy-eight percent of the intern supervisors/employers would "Definitely Hire" another graduate while 22% would "Probably Hire" another. Open-ended comments from both the intern supervisors and employers provided very favorable impressions of the school psychology doctoral program and its students. These results indicate that the program is succeeding in meeting its objectives, as presented in Domain B and laid out systematically in Table 10.

Graduate/Alumni Survey: Seven of the 10 graduates (70%) since the last self-study (fall 2000) completed the survey (see Appendix N). All program graduates are employed (including those three that did not complete the survey). Respondents were initially satisfied with their position (mean = 3.4 with #4 being a very high level of satisfaction and #3 a high level of satisfaction), as shown on the survey. Most had little difficulty obtaining their first position after graduation (mean = 1.4 with #1 being a low level of difficulty, #2 a moderate level, #3 a high level and #4 a very high level of difficulty). Consistent with the program's

training model, graduates (since 2000) are employed in a variety of settings: three in schools, four in universities with one part-time as the internship supervisor, one (part-time) in a school psychology internship consortium program (as director), one in a medical setting, and one in an independent practice of psychology. Also consistent with the program's training model, graduates have assumed a variety of primary roles including direct service provider, administrator/supervisor, which includes a program evaluation role, and trainer/educator of future school psychologists which includes a researcher role (see Table 9).

Similar to the survey results of intern supervisors and employers, students perceived their training favorably. Their comments have helped to guide changes in the curriculum. Overall, graduates felt that the doctoral program prepared them well for their current position (mean = 3.3 using a scale of 1-4 from #4 Very High to #1 Low). Related to specific knowledge and skills, respondents felt adequately prepared in all areas rating themselves above 3.0 in all areas using a scale of 1-4 with #4 Excellent and #3 Good. Mean scores for 79% ($n = 15$) of the 19 knowledge/skill areas rated were 3.5 or above. Specific ratings related to perceptions of areas of knowledge/skill preparation are presented in Table 10.

Relatively weaker areas of perceived competence were in the areas of statistics and related computer applications (3.0) and understanding various research methodologies, including applied approaches such as program evaluation of school-based programs (3.2). These areas have been recently strengthened (since the respondents graduated from the program) with a reorganization of the statistics sequence. PSY 341, Statistics II was reconceptualized as PSY 440, Statistics: Data Analysis and Methodology with a greater emphasis on computer applications using our Department's new Statistics Lab. In addition, doctoral students have the option of taking a new elective course, Single Subject Research. Doctoral students (beginning fall 2004) also spend a full year in the Doctoral Research Seminar and the seminar enrolls only doctoral students (previously specialist students also enrolled), allowing more time to focus on relevant research/apprenticeship process issues. Further, program evaluation is now taught by the Department of Special Education (SED 513, Seminar in Evaluation of Special Education Programs) and includes a more applied focus.

Graduates continue to be engaged in professional development. All are members of professional associations and subscribers to professional publications. Most are not engaged in conducting research, which is consistent with their job expectations in school systems while those in academic settings are likely engaged in research (29% have conducted research and 43% have authored manuscripts since receiving their degree). However, several are involved in program evaluations, and most (86%, all but one respondent) are presenting papers at professional conferences, usually related to practice issues.

Related to their perceptions of program components and the degree of preparation they provided for their present occupation, graduates were generally satisfied. More specifically, using a rating scale of 1-4 with #4 Very Well, #3 Moderately Well, #2 Not Very Well, and #1 Not at All, the following program components were rated: Courses (3.6), Clinical Experiences (3.7), Internship (3.7), and Research Opportunities (3.1). Consistent with the graduates' lower ratings in perceived competence related to research, efforts are being made to provide students with more research opportunities. Since the last self-study (2000) over half of the program faculty are new and a large percentage of the department faculty have been hired within the last four years. New faculty members are implementing active research programs in which they can mentor students (see Appendix M).

(3) Objective Indicators:

Doctoral Student #	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean	Median	Median, State*
Total Test	95	90	85	90	88	93	90.17	90	87
Area 1	100	86	77	91	77	95	87.67	89	84
Area 2	89	92	77	89	89	77	85.5	89	84
Area 3	86	82	91	77	82	100	86.33	84	86
Area 4	100	95	92	97	97	97	96.33	97	91

*Median from 2000 was the last time the State of Illinois reported Median scores state-wide. However, the Subject Test in School Psychology had not been revised since 2000. The test is currently under revision.

State Exam: Graduates of the doctoral program must take the Illinois State Board of Education Subject Test in School Psychology in order to receive state certification. Since the last self-study (2000), six of the nine graduates took this exam. The exam is comprehensive and broad in its coverage, including an assessment of the student's understanding of ethical and other professional issues, standards of practice, and professional competencies. As the table above shows, all doctoral graduates have passed the test (passing score is 70%). Their mean and median total and area scores are all above 85%, and three of the four areas median scale are above the state median. Listed in the table above are nine graduates' percentage of items passed for the total test and four areas tested: (1) Human Development and Learning Theory, (2) Identification and Intervention, (3) Assessment, (4) Pupil Services and Professional Knowledge.

Obtaining APA-Accredited Internships: Three of ten graduates (30%) have accepted APA-accredited internships (see Tables 4 and 8), a slight increase from 28% reported in the last self-study (2000). The program would like this percentage to increase, but currently in Illinois there are no APA-accredited school-based internships or other sites that target school psychology doctoral students. Many of our doctoral students are "place-bound," which limits their ability to seek APA-accredited internships in other states. To address this challenge, since the last self-study and led by ISU faculty, a school psychology internship consortium has been developed. This consortium, the Illinois school Psychology Internship Consortium (ISPIC) is modeled after those in Nebraska and Tennessee and under the direction of one of the program's graduates (Dr. Brenda Huber), has recently completed its self-study for APA accreditation. This consortium consists of school-based and other sites (e.g., hospitals, counseling centers, and private residential treatment settings) that provide school psychological services. See Appendix S).