

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

---

Educational Policies Committee

Faculty Senate

---

3-20-2008

## Educational Policies Committee Program Proposal, Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services, March 20, 2008 – Education Specialist Degree in Psychology

Utah State University

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/fs\\_edpol](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/fs_edpol)

---

### Recommended Citation

Utah State University, "Educational Policies Committee Program Proposal, Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services, March 20, 2008 – Education Specialist Degree in Psychology" (2008).

*Educational Policies Committee*. Paper 642.

[https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/fs\\_edpol/642](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/fs_edpol/642)

This Program Proposal is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Senate at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Educational Policies Committee by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usu.edu).





UTAH SYSTEM OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION

*Building a Stronger State of Minds*

AGENDA

MEETING OF THE  
UTAH STATE BOARD OF REGENTS  
TO BE HELD AT  
DIXIE STATE COLLEGE,  
ST. GEORGE, UTAH

March 20-21, 2008

Utah State Board of Regents  
Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education  
Board of Regents Building, The Gateway  
60 South 400 West  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101-1284

March 12, 2008

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: State Board of Regents

FROM: David L. Buhler

SUBJECT: Utah State University –Education Specialist Degree in Psychology, Effective Spring 2008 – Action Item

Issue

Utah State University (USU) requests approval to offer an Educational Specialist Degree (Ed.S.) in Psychology with a specialization in School Psychology, effective Spring 2008. This request is to change the final degree granted in this existing School Psychology program from a Master of Science to an Ed.S. Students will receive the M.S. en route to the Education Specialist Degree.

Background

Currently, students in USU's School Psychology program earn the Master of Science Degree. However, the School Psychology program requires over 60 credits while masters' programs typically require 30 credits. To recognize the additional 30+ credits and to be in sync with other graduate programs around the country, USU wants to offer its students both the master's degree and the Education Specialist Degree. USU's School Psychology program is nationally accredited and trains students in child development issues, assessment and treatment of emotional and behavioral disorders, and traditional psychoeducational assessment and consultation appropriate in school settings. Adding the Ed.S. Degree to the existing master's degree actually reflects the number of credits and extensive training required by national accreditation and state approval bodies. Due to the higher number of credits required, the Ed.S. Degree is being offered in universities across the country as the terminal degree for these programs. Of the 13 nationally-accredited, specialist-level school psychology programs in the western states, excluding California, nine grant the Ed.S. (12 of California's 25 programs grant the Ed.S.). If approved, USU's request will allow its School Psychology program to remain competitive in attracting high quality graduate students and will enable graduates to begin on a higher salary schedule in the school districts in which they are employed. Because the School Psychology program involves a more advanced level of training than a traditional master's degree, but less research training than a doctoral program, the Ed.S. Degree is the best fit for an allied, practice-oriented program. It is considered a terminal degree, although recipients can go on for the doctorate.

Faculty are already hired and teaching in the program. No additional faculty or staff will be necessary. All library resources are in place. Student interest is expected to increase with the addition of the Education

Specialist Degree in Psychology.

### Policy Issues

The Program Review Committee expressed concern that the initial USU proposal for an Education Specialist Degree in Psychology did not include a master's degree for students on their way to obtaining the Education Specialist credential. While USU officials were able to identify some institutions around the country that do not require a master's degree while students pursue the Education Specialist Degree, they agreed to include the degree for students who want to earn both. The University of Utah is in the planning stages to develop the Education Specialist Degree and will also offer the master's degree for students in its future program.

Other USHE institutions were supportive of the program.

### Commissioner's Recommendations

The Commissioner recommends that the Regents review the request by Utah State University to offer the Education Specialist Degree in Psychology, raise questions, and, if satisfied, approve the request.

---

David L. Buhler, Interim Commissioner

DLB/PCS  
Attachment

Academic, Career and Technical Education and Student Success Committee

Action Item

Request to Offer the Education Specialist Degree in Psychology  
Utah State University

Prepared for:  
David L. Buhler  
by  
Phyllis C. Safman

March 12, 2008

## **SECTION I: The Request**

Utah State University requests approval to offer an Educational Specialist Degree (Ed.S.) in Psychology with a specialization in School Psychology, effective Spring 2008. This request is not for a new program but for a change in the final degree granted in the existing School Psychology program from an M.S. to an Ed.S. Students will receive the M.S. degree en route to the Education Specialist Degree.

## **SECTION II: Program Description**

### **Complete Program Description**

The program description will remain the same as it is in the Utah State University General Catalog with additional wording to reflect the Ed.S. as the final degree. The description will read as follows:

School Psychology, NASP-accredited USU's nationally accredited program in School Psychology emphasizes child development issues, assessment and treatment of emotional and behavioral disorders, and traditional psychoeducational assessment and consultation activities appropriate to school settings. The program is approved by the Utah State Office of Education for licensure of school psychologists. Students who enter the School Psychology program without a master's degree will earn an M.S. in Psychology following completion of a minimum of 33 semester credits. Following the completion of all program requirements, including an additional 30 credits (minimum), students will earn the Ed.S. in Psychology and a specialization in School Psychology. Upon completion of the Ed.S. Degree students will be endorsed for the educator license/certification in school psychology.

### **Purpose of Degree**

The purpose of the School Psychology program is to train students to work as school psychologists, primarily in the K-12 public school system. This purpose will not change if the request to grant the Ed.S. in addition to the M.S. is approved.

The purpose of granting the Ed.S. Degree as the final credential to school psychology graduates is that their final degree better reflects the time and effort they put into their graduate studies. As outlined here, there are three main reasons USU is seeking to offer the Ed.S. in Psychology with a specialization in School Psychology:

- 1) The school psychology program currently requires 66 semester-credits of graduate coursework. As specified by national (the National Association of School Psychologists) and state (the Utah State Office of Education) accrediting bodies, school psychology training programs must require a minimum of 60-semester hours of graduate coursework. The current program at USU is clearly in-line with that requirement. However, the minimum number of credits required for a master's degree at USU is 30. Thus, the number of credit-hours required to complete the School Psychology program is significantly above the minimum standard. And, there is nothing to reflect this in the degree the students earn. Because the School Psychology program involves a higher level of a training than a traditional master's degree but less training and, in particular less of a research component, than a doctoral program, the Ed.S. Degree is the best fit for the type of program (applied, practice oriented) and the number of credit hours required.

- 2) Nationwide, it is becoming increasingly common for non-doctoral school psychology training programs to grant Ed.S. Degrees – either rather than or in addition to master's degrees. Approximately 40 percent of training programs grant the Ed.S. A number of other training programs grant other types of specialist degrees (e.g., SSP - specialist in school psychology; PsyS - psychology specialist). Until recently none of the three school psychology programs in Utah (U of U, USU, BYU) offered the Ed.S.; however BYU recently changed the degree granted from an M.S. to an Ed.S. In addition, universities in neighboring states offer the Ed.S. For example, the specialist level school psychology programs in Idaho, Montana, and Nevada all grant the Ed.S. Among western states (excluding California) 9 of the 13 nationally accredited specialist-level school psychology programs grant the Ed.S.
- 3) Changing the degree will allow graduates to be paid at the appropriate level in school districts in which they are employed. Because graduates of USU's School Psychology program have a master's degree as their terminal degree, they are often paid on the master's level scale rather than the master's +30 (which school districts frequently reserve for those who have earned 30 additional credits after being awarded a 30 credit master's degree) or Ed.S./specialist scale. Thus, many of the graduates from USU's program are receiving salaries similar to those with 30 semester hours of graduate training rather than those with the equivalent 60 hours or more of graduate coursework.

### **Institutional Readiness**

The proposed program is not new. USU is only requesting to add a degree (the Ed.S.) to an existing program. Therefore, no additional resources of any type will be needed.

### **Faculty**

No additional faculty will be required if the Ed.S. Degree is approved . Current faculty will experience no change in their teaching loads, clinical supervision duties, or research supervision.

### **Staff**

No additional staff resources will be required.

### **Library and Information Resources**

No additional library resources will be required.

### **Admission Requirements**

The admissions requirements will remain the same and are stated in the 2006-0227 USU catalog as follows:

Admissions requirements vary somewhat across Psychology graduate programs. However, applications submitted to the School of Graduate Studies must include the following: (1) transcript

showing completion of undergraduate course prerequisites plus any recommended coursework; (2) report of GRE test scores from ETS; (3) GPA of a least 3.2, covering the last 60 semester credits; (4) three letters of recommendation; and (5) a statement of professional goals and intent. The department requires a minimum GRE combined (Verbal and Quantitative) score of at least 1,100 for all programs.

### **Student Advisement**

Students will be advised as they are currently. Under this system, each student is assigned a temporary advisor when admitted to the program. This temporary advisor is a core school psychology faculty member. Students meet with this advisor as needed and obtain a permanent advisor once they have identified a research topic for their project and chosen a chair for this project.

### **Justification for Number of Credits**

The current M.S. program exceeds 36 credits but with the addition of the Ed.S. Degree the M.S. portion of the program will not exceed 36 credits and the Ed.S. portion will be an additional 30 credits (minimum). With this change, the program will be in line with accepted number of credits for each degree.

### **External Review and Accreditation**

The School Psychology program is currently accredited as a "specialist-level" program by the National Association of School Psychologists. This will not change if the students earn an Ed.S. in addition to the M.S. There are no costs for the ongoing accreditation of the program. Also, the program is approved by the Utah State Office of Education for the licensure of school psychologists. This too, would not change with the addition of the Ed.S. Degree.

### **Projected Enrollment**

Enrollments will not change with the change in degree. Currently 4-6 students are admitted each year. The program would continue to admit the same number of students. However, it is hoped that by granting the Ed.S. in addition to the M.S., there will be an increase in highly qualified applicants.

### **Expansion of Existing Program**

The University is not requesting to expand the program but to simply add a degree to an existing specialization program within the Psychology Department.

## **SECTION III: Need**

### **Program Need**

Although the addition of the Ed.S. Degree is not essential for the continuation of the School Psychology

program, as outlined in the Purpose of Degree section above, the University and psychology faculty believe that the Ed.S. Degree more accurately reflects the program requirements. The psychology faculty believe this change is important in being able to continue to recruit quality applicants (as schools are increasing granting this degree) and in allowing graduates of USU's program to be fairly recognized and compensated for their true level of education.

### **Labor Market Demand**

USU faculty believe that the vast majority of USU School Psychology program graduates are currently working as school psychologists. Some graduates have returned to school to earn a degree in psychology or a related field (e.g., special education). School psychologists are very much in demand in Utah and nationwide and this demand is expected to continue. According to the November 2007 Criticality Index, the USOE's list of shortage areas in education, school psychologists are listed slightly below the critical shortage score. Nationwide there is expected to be a shortage of school psychologists through at least the year 2010 with many estimating this shortage will persist due to the "graying" of the field and impending retirements.

### **Student Demand**

Qualified applicants are routinely denied admission to the program. The demand for the program, if anything, would increase with the change in degree. Over the past 10 years the number of applicants to the School Psychology program has ranged from 10-20 with a mean of 16 (standard deviation =3).

The proposed program was initiated due to student demand as interns and graduates of the program were increasingly expressing frustration that their terminal degree (the M.S.) did not accurately reflect their level of education and did not allow them to be paid on the pay-lane commensurate with the number of credit hours they had earned. A recently e-mail survey of the 21 current students (including those completing their year-long internships in the schools) asking which degree they would prefer to earn (M.S. or Ed.S.) as their terminal degree resulted in 16 responses, all of whom indicating they would prefer to earn an Ed.S. Although not asked to indicate reasons for their preferences, several students commented that the Ed.S. would better reflect their level of education and allow them to be paid on a higher scale in the public schools.

### **Similar Programs**

Both the University of Utah and Brigham Young University offer similar programs and have done so for many years. All three programs continue to thrive and the request to add the Ed.S. Degree is not expected to influence the other programs.

### **Collaboration with and Impact on Other USHE Institutions**

Because this is not a new program, both the University of Utah and BYU are well aware that a School Psychology program is offered at USU. None is collaborative.

### **Benefits**

The benefits of this program to USU will not change with the degree offered. USU benefits from this program by its association with teacher-training programs and the visibility the program earns USU by placing its students and graduates in school districts across Utah as well as in out-of-state settings.

### **Consistency with Institutional Mission**

This program is already part of Utah State University's graduate education programs. The program fits with the University's commitment to graduate education and its commitment to education-related programs and programs that serve the state of Utah. (The majority of graduates from this program have historically worked in Utah's K-12 schools.)

## **Section IV: Program and Student Assessment**

### **Program Assessment**

The following are the goals, objectives, and methods of assessment currently in place for the School Psychology program. These will not change if students earn the Ed.S. in addition to the M.S..

Graduates of the School Psychology program are expected to develop a variety of creative, critical, causal, interpretive, and reflective thinking skills during their time in the program. These skills are developed through observing, reading, writing, listening, speaking, problem solving, group and individual assessments, and practical experiences. The following are specific objectives for graduates of the School Psychology program.

- 1) Students will demonstrate the ability to make data-based decisions regarding individual students.
- 2) Students will demonstrate the ability to make data-based decisions regarding programmatic issues.
- 3) Students will demonstrate knowledge of, and the ability to practice, behavioral consultation with teachers and parents.
- 4) Students will demonstrate knowledge of effective instructional procedures.
- 5) Students will demonstrate the ability to develop interventions (in collaboration with other school personnel) for students with academic skill difficulties.
- 6) Students will demonstrate knowledge of social and developmental bases of behavior.
- 7) Students will demonstrate the ability to assess children displaying developmental delays.
- 8) Students will demonstrate the ability to develop appropriate intervention plans for children with developmental delays.
  
- 9) Students will demonstrate competence in the conduct of standardized assessments related to academics, intellectual ability, behavior/emotional problems of children and youth.
- 10) Students will demonstrate familiarity with behavioral assessment and curriculum based techniques.
- 11) Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of issues of cultural diversity.
- 12) Students will demonstrate the ability to work effectively with students from varying backgrounds.
- 13) Students will demonstrate cultural sensitivity in all professional activities.
- 14) Students will demonstrate knowledge of schools, their climate, their policies, and their

- procedures, to include knowledge of special education services and laws.
- 15) Students will demonstrate knowledge of child development and developmental psychopathology.
  - 16) Students will demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to intervene with students with emotional and behavioral problems.
  - 17) Students will demonstrate the ability to develop cognitive-behavioral interventions and prevention plans to meet children's mental health needs.
  - 18) Students will demonstrate knowledge of family systems and school systems and understand how to work in a collaborative manner with families, school, and communities.
  - 19) Students will demonstrate knowledge of research methods (both group and single-subject).
  - 20) Students will demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to apply basic statistical processes professionally to include the ability to translate such knowledge in practice for purposes such as program evaluations.
  - 21) Students will demonstrate knowledge of School Psychology as an area of practice, to include the history of school psychology, ethical issues in school psychology, and the roles and functions of school psychologists.
  - 21) Students will demonstrate the ability to use technology relevant to their work.

These objectives are evaluated through the following methods:

- 1) In class objective testing
- 2) Mastering testing (for assessments)
- 3) Written assignments
- 4) Demonstration of skills (through practicum and internship experiences)
- 5) Completion of research project
- 6) Completion of National School Psychology Exam
- 7) Completion of program portfolio

### **Expected Standards of Performance**

See above Objectives and Methods of Assessment. These were chose to be in line with NASP requirements. None of these will change if the Ed.S. Degree is granted as the terminal degree.

## **Section V - Finance**

### **Budget**

This program is not new and will not require any additional resources or any changes within the departmental or college budget.

### **Funding Sources**

This program is already funded and will continue to be funded as it is currently.

### **Reallocation**

No funds will be reallocated to this program

**Impact on Existing Budgets**

This program is already part of the departmental budget.

## Appendix A: Program Curriculum

### New Courses to be added in the next 5 years

No new courses will be added. All courses needed for this program are currently taught. The addition of the Ed.S. Degree will not change the course requirements or staffing needs.

### All Program courses

The following is the list of current program requirements

Psy 6150	Empirically Supported Treatments for Children/Adolescents		3
Psy 6270	Child Psychopathology		3
Psy 6290	Diversity Issues in Treatment and Assessment		3
Psy 6310	Intellectual Assessment		3
Psy 6330	Psychometrics		
<b>or</b>			
Psy 6600	Research, Design, Analysis I		3
Psy 6340	Psychological and Educational Consultation		3
Psy 6350	Introduction to Theory and Practice in Counseling	3	
Psy 6360	Practicum in Counseling/Psychotherapy		3
Psy 6380	Practicum in School Psychology		6
Psy 6410	Psychoeducational Assessment		3
Psy 6450	Introduction to School Psychology		1
Psy 6460	Professional Issues in Sch Counseling and Sch Psych		3
Psy 6530	Developmental Psychology		3
Psy 6570	Introduction to Educational and Psychological Research		3
Psy 6660	Cognition and Instruction		3
Psy 6880	Transcultural Assessment		1
Psy 6890	Assessment of Child/Adol. Psychopathology and Personality		3
Psy 6950	Internship in School Psychology		6
Psy 6970	Thesis Credits		2-6
	(students are required to complete a thesis or Plan B paper)		

**Two** of the following Intervention / Prevention Courses:

Psy 6220	Group Counseling		3
Psy 6810	Intimate Violence Across the Lifespan		3
Psy 6810	Violence Prevention/Intervention		3

**One** of the following Biological Basis of Behavior Courses:

Psy 7840	Psychopharmacology		1
Psy 7820	Neuropsychology: Principles and Assessment		2
Psy 6800	Addictive Behaviors		3
Psy 7100	Biological Bases and Behavior		3

**Appendix B:  
Program Schedule**

Below is the suggested program schedule. This will not change if students earn the M.S. plus the Ed.S. However, instead of earning one degree at the end of their program, students will earn the M.S. after completion of at least 33 credit hours. Students will be granted the Ed.S. after completing all program requirements (including their internship) plus an additional 30 credits (minimum).

Fall 2006	Spring 2007	Summer 2007
<b>Year One</b>		
Psy 6270 (3) Psy 6310 (3) Psy 6350 (3) Psy 6450 (1) Psy 6530 or 6330 (3) <b>Total 13</b>	Psy 6150 (3) Psy 6360 (3) Psy 6410 (3) Psy 6460 (3) <b>Total 12</b>	Psy 6570 (3) Psy 6890 (3) <b>Total 6</b>

Fall 2007*	Spring 2008	Summer 2008
<b>Year Two</b>		
Psy 6220 (3) Psy 6340 (3) Psy 6380 (3) Psy 6600 or 6530 (3) <b>Total 12</b>	Psy 6290 (3) Psy 6380 (3) Psy 6660 (3) Psy 6810 (3) Psy 6880 (1) Psy 7820 (2) <b>Total 15</b>	Psy 6970 (2) <b>Total 2</b>

\*M.S. in Psychology will be granted at the end of this semester following successful completion of at least 33 semester hours.

Fall 2008	Spring 2009
<b>Year Three</b>	
Psy 6950 (3) <b>Total 3</b>	Psy 6950 (3) <b>Total 3</b>

## Appendix C Faculty

Below is a brief overview of each of the faculty members in the Department of Psychology who are involved in teaching core school psychology classes or contributing to the school psychology program through ongoing program advisement. All classes listed are currently part of the individual's load. The requested change in degree will not affect faculty loads.

### Core School Psychology Faculty

Name / Degree	Title	Areas of expertise	Core School Psychology Courses Taught
Carolyn Barcus, EdD	Clinical Assistant Professor	- Multicultural counseling - Abuse	Psy 6290 Diversity Issues Psy 6880 Transcultural Assess. Psy 6220 Group Counseling
Clint Field, PhD	Assistant Professor; Director Psychology Community Clinic	- Behavioral assessment and intervention - Pediatric psychology	Psy 6360 Practicum Psy 6410 Psychoed. Assess.
Donna Gilbertson, PhD	Assistant Professor	- Academic and behavioral interventions - Consultation	Psy 6340 Consultation Psy 6380 Practicum Psy 6460 Professional Issues
Gretchen Gimpel Peacock, PhD	Associate Professor; School Psychology Program Coordinator	- Behavioral Interventions - Families	Psy 6150 Treatments for Child. Psy 6450 Intro to School Psych Psy 6890 Assess. of Child/Adol Psy 6950 Internship

### Additional Clinical and Counseling Program Support Faculty

Name / Degree	Title	Areas of expertise	Core School Psychology Courses Taught
Susan Crowley, PhD	Professor; Director of Training Combined PhD Program	- Anxiety and depression - Supervision and training	
Scott Deberard, PhD	Associate Professor	- Health psychology	Psy 6350 Intro to Counseling Psy 6600 Research I
Melanie Domenech Rodriguez, PhD	Associate Professor	- Ethnicity & mental health - Parenting interventions	
Renee Galliher, PhD	Assistant Professor	- Adolescent relationships - Rural psychology	Psy 6270 Child Psychopathology
David Stein, PhD	Professor; Department Head	- Eating Disorders - Addictive behaviors	Psy 6810 Addictive Behaviors
JoAnn Tschanz, PhD	Associate Professor	- Neuro-psychology	Psy 6310 Intellectual Assess. Psy 7820 Neuropsych Assess. Psy 7100 Biological Bases

### Additional Faculty Teaching Core School Psychology Courses

Name / Degree	Title	Areas of expertise	Core School Psychology Courses Taught
Frank Ascione, PhD	Professor	- Child maltreatment	Psy 6810 Intimate violence
Tamara Ferguson, PhD	Professor	- Moral development	Psy 6810 Intervention in schools
Camille Odell, MS		- School Counseling - Developmental issues	Psy 6530 Developmental Psych
Kerstin Schroder, PhD	Assistant Professor	- Statistics - Research Design	Psy 6330 Psychometrics
Karl White, PhD	Professor	- Educational research - Hearing loss	Psy 6570 Intro to Research