

## **Proposal for Education Specialist Degree (Ed.S.) in School Psychology**

**Department of Education and Allied Studies  
John Carroll University**

### **I. Purpose of the Proposed Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) Degree for the JCU School Psychology Program**

#### **a. Program introduction and contributions of the Ed.S. to the student experience**

The JCU School Psychology Program is housed in the Department of Education and Allied Studies and is a nationally approved, specialist-level program requiring three years of full-time continuous study. Currently, the program is 78 semester hours in length. The first 30 semester hours comprise the work for the M.Ed. in School Psychology, followed by an additional 48 semester hours of post-Master's coursework at the specialist level. At the successful completion of the program, students receive a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Standing (CAGS) in School Psychology rather than the typical academic degree associated with the School Psychology profession, the specialist degree (Ed.S. or Psy.S.). In fact, among the nine Ohio training programs, the JCU School Psychology Program remains the only program not awarding the specialist degree. As a 78 semester hour program fully accredited at the specialist level by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), the program is qualified to offer the Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree without any resource or curriculum changes.

The Ed.S. is a formal academic degree awarded by colleges and universities to reflect graduate training between the Master's and doctoral levels. The proposed Ed.S. is expected to significantly assist our graduates in fulfilling the academic mission of the university by strengthening their credibility and range of influence in both service and leadership roles at local, state, and national levels. Importantly, our department's mission embraces a focus on the personal as well as professional development of the individual. We believe the Ed.S. degree will contribute to the students' sense of accomplishment and confidence to serve others in the professional capacity for which they have been well prepared. Accordingly, the Department of Education and Allied Studies is requesting that upon successful completion of the program, School Psychology students' academic preparation be appropriately recognized with the Ed.S. degree in School Psychology.

#### **b. Ways in which the current specialist-level School Psychology Program strengthens academic mission**

Consistent with the mission of the university, the School Psychology Program has a long history of preparing individuals to provide supportive services to children and adolescents in school settings. This preparation is well-grounded in both theoretical and empirical work to augment students' understanding of the diverse characteristics of all learners as the core foundation for effective child advocacy in the schools. Recognizing

that compartmentalized knowledge and skills cannot adequately address the diverse characteristics of children and those who serve them, the program has maintained a strong emphasis on the ability to integrate knowledge across several domains. Importantly, in furthering the mission of the university, the School Psychology Program continues to encourage student inquiry into direct and indirect processes that can improve the academic and social/emotional lives of children through research. As an example, all school psychology students from the onset of the program are required to be critical consumers of research and incorporate empirically-based research in their professional practices. They conclude their formal coursework prior to the 1400 clock hour internship with a capstone research project requiring the dissemination of findings at the state or national level. The program's emphasis on applied research is also well aligned with the university's mission of encouraging research that offers solutions to problems of human need. Throughout their two years of field experiences, JCU school psychology students are required to develop empirically-based intervention programs for children with diverse backgrounds, disabilities, and learning or social/emotional needs. Lastly, in service to others they are encouraged to be leaders through membership and participation in local, state, and national organizations.

### **c. School Psychology Program accreditation and training standards**

The training standards utilized for the preparation of School Psychologists in the United States are regulated by NASP, the only nationally recognized accreditation body addressing the preparation of non-doctoral School Psychologists. Through the years, the NASP standards for accreditation have evolved and expanded, particularly related to the entry-level degree requirements. Through each revision of the standards, the JCU School Psychology Program has maintained full NASP approval at the specialist level.

In 1978, NASP first began endorsing specialist-level training for the entry-level practice of School Psychology (Little & Rodemaker, 1997). Following NASP's recommendation, most graduate training programs expanded the curriculum of existing Master's degrees, established certificates to recognize their students' post-Master's specialist-level training (e.g., CAGS) or formally introduced either the Ed.S. or Psychology Specialist (Psy.S.) degrees. At the time, JCU chose the second of these three options (i.e., CAGS). Since then, the majority of School Psychology programs across the country, and all other existing programs in Ohio, have further upgraded to the formal Ed.S. or Psy.S. degree. Although the content of NASP-approved Master's/CAGS and Master's/Ed.S. programs is virtually the same, some states do require the formal specialist degree for credentialing and remuneration (Fagan, 2007; Little & Rodemaker, 1997).

## **II. Curricular Requirements**

### **a. Courses and programmatic requirements already in existence**

As an existing NASP-approved specialist-level program, no changes to the curriculum are being proposed. The language used in the existing Graduate Studies Bulletin will only be changed to reflect the approval of the Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) degree. All references to the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Standing will be changed to refer to the Ed.S. degree in School Psychology. No other changes to the program or Graduate Studies Bulletin are being proposed.

***Existing Program Description and Curriculum (from the Graduate Studies Bulletin)***

The School Psychology Program is a specialist-level program approved by the National Association of School Psychologist and meets Ohio Department of Education and NCATE training standards. It is a full-time program that requires 78 semester hours of continuous full-time study. The School Psychology Program is open to those who have an undergraduate major in psychology or hold a valid Ohio teaching license or professional education degree. The program follows a scientist-practitioner training model and is advised by a committee comprised of the core faculty, part-time faculty, pupil service directors, and practicing school psychologists. Candidates are required to follow a prescribed sequence of coursework beginning with the summer session immediately following formal admission to the program. Individuals admitted to the program during the Fall semester may begin coursework in the Spring semester.

Field experiences are an integral part of this program beginning with the first year. Accordingly, students are required to make available at least one day per week for these experiences during the first two years. The third year internship requires a full-time, five day per week commitment. In the event that the candidate is unable to complete the Internship during the third year of the program, an internship placement **may not** be available during the fourth year or subsequent years. Individuals unable to complete the internship during the third year in the program must notify the School Psychology Coordinator at least one semester prior to the scheduled internship placement.

School Psychology applicants should apply for admission to the program through the Office of Graduate Studies. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required application materials including the School Psychology Questionnaire are received by the deadline date. Application deadlines for School Psychology applicants are October 15, and February 1. The Office of Graduate Studies will not forward an incomplete file to the department for review. Application files completed and received by the department by October 15, and February 1, will be evaluated and considered for admission interviews. Applicant files that are not completed and received by the deadline date(s) may not be included in the initial applicant pool for the next cohort.

## Course Requirements

- ED 419 The Exceptional Learner
- ED 503\* Orientation to the Educational Environment
- ED 530 Tests and Measurements
- ED 532 Developmental Psychology
- ED 534 Learning-Teaching
- ED 536A Psychoeducational Evaluation I
- ED 536B Psychoeducational Evaluation II
- ED 540 The Role and Function of the School Psychologist
- CG 561 Counseling Theories
- CG 562 Counseling Techniques and Practice

\*For incoming students without a valid Ohio teaching license. PS 457 (Psychopathology) or ED 451 (Theories of Personality) must be taken in place of ED 503 (Orientation to the Educational Environment) for those with a valid teaching license.

The master's degree in School Psychology is conferred upon the satisfactory completion of the above courses and a comprehensive examination.

NOTE: A master's degree or doctoral degree in another area cannot be accepted in lieu of the M.Ed. in School Psychology. Graduate coursework to be considered for transfer credit should be petitioned by the student following admission to the program. Consult Graduate Studies for information regarding procedures and policies for transferring coursework.

In addition to the above courses leading to the M.Ed. degree, candidates seeking School Psychology licensure must also complete the following courses:

- ED 453 Multicultural Education
- ED 502 Research Methods
- ED 533 Introductory Statistics
- ED 541 Child Psychopathology
- ED 543 Practicum Experience I: School Psychology
- ED 578 Literacy Diagnosis and Intervention Models
- ED 590 Practicum Experience II: School Psychology
- ED 592 Consultation Skills
- ED 593 Seminar in School Psychology (A & B)
- ED 597 Supervised Experience in School Psychology (A, B, & C)
- CG 535 Group Dynamics, Processing, and Counseling

The number and availability of internship placements (ED 597) are restricted from year to year. Criteria and procedures for determining placements are located in the Program Handbook. Failure to accept an internship placement as planned may result in losing the opportunity for this experience due to the limited number of placements available. Candidates accepting a state paid internship must agree in writing to provide one year of service as a School Psychologist in the State of Ohio.

Successful completion of the appropriate PRAXIS II Assessments is required for program completion and licensure.

*Certificate of Advanced Graduate Standing in School Psychology*

A Certificate of Advanced Graduate Standing in School Psychology will be awarded to each School Psychology licensure candidate upon successful completion of all coursework, a passing PRAXIS score, and residency requirements for the specialist level of training in School Psychology in accordance with NASP Standard 1.6”

(From the 2010-2012 JCU Graduate Studies Bulletin)

**b. Courses, programmatic requirements to be developed**

No courses or programmatic requirements are being proposed for development of the Ed.S. degree.

**III. Organization and Administration of the School Psychology Program**

**a. Line of reporting and number of faculty**

The School Psychology program is housed in the Department of Education and Allied Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences. The program’s senior level faculty member serves as the Coordinator of the program and reports directly to the Chair of the Department of Education and Allied Studies. As a graduate program within the College of Arts and Sciences, the program is overseen by the Dean and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. The core program faculty is comprised of two full-time, doctoral level individuals with specialization and experience in School Psychology. Other departmental faculty teach foundational and specialized courses for the program. The department consistently employs a part-time instructor for the School Psychology Program to teach one course each semester. This individual possesses a doctorate in School Psychology, currently practices in the field, is actively involved at local and state levels in the

profession, and makes significant contributions to the program through participation as a member of the program's advisory committee.

#### **b. Structure of governance**

The JCU School Psychology Program has an advisory committee comprised of faculty, practitioners, pupil service directors, and former graduates for the purpose of reviewing the curriculum and making recommendations in the context of new training initiatives, stakeholder needs, program evaluation data, and national standards. The committee meets either annually or semiannually.

### **IV. Mechanism/instruments of assessment**

#### **a. Assessment plan (learning outcomes and assessment methods)**

The learning outcomes are well documented in the syllabi for the 78 semester hour School Psychology Program. These outcomes are aligned with the department's conceptual framework and national standards (i.e., NASP). The learning outcomes associated with the program's key assessments are also reflected in several rubrics across the curriculum.

The JCU School Psychology Program conducts an ongoing evaluation of the program curriculum, field experiences, and student performances in an effort to maintain a high standard of training consistent with our philosophy and best practice standards. Numerous sources of evaluation data are sought to inform the faculty about the quality of content and experiences being provided to our students. We are equally concerned about the performance of our students, constantly striving to monitor their progress and provide them with the best possible instruction and guidance to help them develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to provide quality school psychological services. We closely monitor the quality of our students work throughout the program, but particularly during the second year in the program when several of the key performance-based assessments are occurring. This allows us to determine if our students are engaging in and are exposed to ethical and legal practices, demonstrating a best practices approach to assessment, intervention, consultation, and counseling, and serving as valued team members. We also work closely with the students and field supervisors to ensure that program objectives are met and that we adhere to the standards set forth by NASP.

An important component of our program assessment is the continuous assessment of student progress. Students' performance in courses, practica, and internship are monitored each semester. Faculty review student progress at the conclusion of each academic year on such dimensions as coursework performance, workshop and conference participation, and dispositions. The latter are particularly important aspects of the practicum and internship evaluations. If student progress fails to meet program

standards, feedback is immediately provided to students and an intervention is developed if necessary.

Throughout their program at JCU, students complete both knowledge- and performance-based indicators of their developing competencies. These indicators reflect multiple sources (e.g., self-evaluation, products, external referees), domains (e.g., classroom, practicum, internship), and methodologies (e.g., portfolio, ratings, presentations). As an example, in addition to completing required course work in school psychology, students must also successfully complete a comprehensive examination to assess their knowledge and application of the foundational domains of school psychology addressed during the first year in the program. During the second year in the program, students are assessed with a variety of course-embedded assignments, course exams, and field evaluations. The performance-based course assignments allow faculty to evaluate students' ability to employ a best practice approach to child study. It is important that our students do not just develop a set of discrete skills disconnected from a solid knowledge base. The ability to integrate knowledge gained from the foundational coursework (e.g., developmental psychology, learning-teaching) with diagnostic skills is always considered when evaluating students applied work in the field. Students learn that the scope of measurable outcomes must always exceed what is directly observable. They learn early in the program that plausible hypotheses must take into account the full range of factors that can influence learning and adjustment. Consequently, this is built into our grading criteria for several of our key assessments.

The program's strengths and weaknesses also are assessed by external reviewers. We seek information from an advisory committee to the program, employers of our recent graduates, field supervisors, and recent graduates on an annual basis. As an example, we hold an annual or semi annual meeting with the program advisory board, currently comprised of seven members, to discuss a range of issues related to program improvement. We also maintain contact during each semester with university practicum and internship supervisors. Our alumni are surveyed periodically regarding their self-evaluations of their competencies which can be aligned with our program objectives and the NASP standards. They are also asked to evaluate each course in our program. More formal evaluation of students' foundational knowledge and professional skill development occurs through course-embedded evaluation mechanisms (e.g., presentations, projects, exams), whereas more structured evaluations of student competency development are provided by practicum and intern supervisors at least twice each semester using university evaluation tools.

At the completion of the internship, supervisory ratings and student portfolios provide multiple sources of evidence of students' ability to integrate domains of knowledge and apply their professional skills in delivering a comprehensive range of services. Students exiting the program are also asked to prepare a written evaluation of the internship experience, providing the program with information about the quality of the supervision

and range of experiences. All of these sources of evaluation information help us to systematically identify our strengths and where we need to improve to ensure that our students are receiving the experiences and foundational knowledge and skills they need to provide exceptional service as practicing school psychologists.

**The key assessments, as required by the program's accreditation bodies (i.e., NASP, NCATE), are summarized below:**

<b>Name of Assessment</b> (The following are NASP guidelines for the most recent program review)	<b>Type or Form of Assessment</b> (used by JCU School Psychology Program)	<b>When the Assessment Is Administered</b>
<b>CONTENT KNOWLEDGE:</b> This must be a state or national school psychology credentialing exam. If your state does not require a school psychology credentialing exam, then the Praxis II in School Psychology must be required.	National Exam: Praxis II (School Psychology)	The Praxis is taken during the internship year. Students take the exam either during the fall or spring semester.
<b>CONTENT KNOWLEDGE:</b> Program or course-embedded assessment of candidate knowledge. This might consist of a comprehensive examination, an oral or qualifying exam, an exam embedded in one or more courses that all candidates complete, and/or grades for courses.	Student grades and Course Specific Performance-Based Assessments (PBAs)  Master's Comprehensive Exam	The Master's Comprehensive Examination is administered at the beginning of Year II.
<b>PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND DISPOSITIONS:</b> Assessment in practica that demonstrates candidates can effectively <u>plan</u> the professional responsibilities required of a school psychologist.	Two Practicum Evaluation Tools  Two Course-Embedded Assignments	Completed during the second year, both semesters.
<b>PEDAGOGICAL AND PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND DISPOSITIONS: INTERN EVALUATIONS BY FIELD SUPERVISORS.</b> Assessment that demonstrates candidates' knowledge, skills, and professional work characteristics/dispositions are applied effectively in practice during internship.	Internship Evaluation Tool	Students provide a self-evaluation at the onset of the internship; internship supervisors provide ratings twice per semester.
<b>PEDAGOGICAL AND PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND DISPOSITIONS: COMPREHENSIVE, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT OF CANDIDATE ABILITIES EVALUATED BY FACULTY DURING INTERNSHIP.</b> Assessment that demonstrates candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions are applied effectively in practice.	Internship Portfolio Evaluation	The internship portfolio evaluation is conducted at the conclusion of each semester. The internship evaluation tool is completed by the field and university supervisor twice each semester.
<b>EFFECTS ON STUDENT LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND/OR LEARNING:</b> Assessment that demonstrates that candidates are able to integrate domains of knowledge and apply professional skills in delivering a comprehensive range of services evidenced by measurable positive impact on children, youth, families, and other consumers. NOTE: You need not have a separate assessment of this area if it is addressed by assessment 5. Simply refer to the particular	Six Comprehensive Intervention Cases (documentation of effect sizes, utilizing goal attainment scaling)  Internship Planning and Evaluation Form  Internship Portfolio Evaluation (also	The comprehensive intervention cases occur throughout the year with established due dates (12/1, 2/1, & 6/10).  The internship portfolio assessment is conducted at the conclusion of each semester.

<b>Name of Assessment (The following are NASP guidelines for the most recent program review)</b>	<b>Type or Form of Assessment (used by JCU School Psychology Program)</b>	<b>When the Assessment Is Administered</b>
assessment(s) and aggregate the relevant data (e.g., particular items or sections of an assessment).	#5 assessment)	
<b>Additional assessment that addresses NASP Domains.</b> Examples of assessments include comprehensive or qualifying exams, exit surveys, alumni and/or employer follow-ups, theses, case studies, simulations, or similar measures.	Employer Survey of Recent Graduates	The Employer Survey is administered at the conclusion of the academic year.
<b>Additional assessment that addresses NASP Domains.</b> Examples of assessments include comprehensive or qualifying exams, exit surveys, alumni and/or employer follow-ups, theses, case studies, simulations, or similar measures.	Alumni Survey	The Alumni Survey is administered at the conclusion of the academic year.

The summary timeline for program assessments is as follows:

<b>ENTRANCE Admission Assessments</b>	<b>YR I Assessments</b>	<b>Year II Assessments</b>	<b>Year II Approval for Internship</b>	<b>Year III Assessments</b>	<b>Recommendation for Program Completion and Provisional Licensure</b>	<b>Post-graduate Follow-up &amp; Program Assessment</b>
Holistic consideration of application materials in relation to specified criteria  Standard interview protocol with assessment rubric	A or B grades in all required coursework  Master's comprehensive examination at the conclusion of all required coursework for the master's degree and prior to internship  PBA's in each course	Students evaluated by their field supervisors at the midpoint and conclusion of each practicum experience (ED543 and ED590).  A or B grades in all required coursework  PBA's in each course	Evaluation of preparedness for internship based on evaluations from supervisors, course grades (A or B only), and faculty recommendations.	Early internship self-assessment of competencies as outlined in the School Psychology Plan and Evaluation Protocol.  Formative evaluation of competency attainment during intern site visits  End of semester grades of B or better for ED597A ,B,&C  Portfolio evaluation at conclusion of each semester	Successful completion of all required coursework.  Score on Praxis exam meeting or exceeding state & national requirements	Survey of former internship supervisors  Survey of first year employers  First year post-graduate evaluation of preparedness and perceptions of competencies

## V. Marketing and Implementation Plan

### a. Estimated Student Demand

Graduates of the JCU School Psychology Program enter a field consistently ranked among the top careers in the country (U.S. News & World Report, 2008), with an average

salary greater than \$60,000. The job market for the foreseeable future is extremely promising. Currently, there is a “critical” national shortage of school psychologists available to meet student needs (Davis, McIntosh, Phelps, & Kehle, 2004). Recent estimates suggest that as many as 15,000 school psychology positions will go unfilled through the next decade (NASP, 2006), with some notable experts predicting that the shortage will continue “indefinitely” (Fagan, 2004). At the state level, data from the Ohio State Superintendent’s Task Force for the Preparation and Retention of Education Personnel (SSTF) supports the acute shortage of school psychologists in Ohio as well. Only one fourth to one third of school psychology positions in the United States meet the ratio of 1 school psychologist for every 1000 students as recommended by NASP (Fagan & Wise, 2007).

#### **b. Revenue Projections**

Revenue changes are not expected to increase or decrease. The number of admitted applicants each year is governed by a faculty/student ratio formula established by an advisory group to the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Exceptional Children.

#### **c. Ways in which the Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) degree complements the existing program and replaces the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Standing (CAGS)**

Although the JCU program includes a rigorous curriculum on par with the other Ohio universities, we fail to award the degree most often associated with the profession our students are being prepared to enter. In recent years, students have become increasingly knowledgeable consumers and frequently question program faculty regarding the value of the CAGS. This is particularly problematic given the option to attend two other northeastern Ohio universities, both of which offer specialist degrees in School Psychology. By not awarding the Ed.S. degree, our program is placed at a competitive disadvantage. Almost all of our applicants apply to multiple programs, including those in the immediate region (Cleveland State University and Kent State University). The impact on recruitment will likely increase as another university in the region (Youngstown State University) moves forward with the development of a new Ed.S. School Psychology program.

The consequences of granting the Ed.S. degree will be significant for our students. Our graduates will be able to enter a competitive job market with the degree synonymous with the profession from a program exceeding specialist-level standards. An Ed.S. School Psychology Program at JCU will place our students on an even playing field with respect to degree status, credentialing, and remuneration.

Students in the School Psychology Program will continue to receive the M.Ed. in School Psychology at the successful completion of their first 30 semester hours of coursework and the master’s comprehensive examination. The Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) degree

will replace the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Standing (CAGS) at the successful completion of the additional 48 semester hours of post-masters coursework. It will provide our students with a higher, more credible credential associated with specialist-level training in School Psychology.

#### **d. Marketing and implementation**

As an existing graduate program within the College of Arts and Sciences, program faculty will continue to work with Graduate Studies to promote and market the School Psychology Program. Upon approval of the Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) degree, the Department of Education and Allied Studies will create a press release and request an announcement be posted on the university's website. The National Association of School Psychologists will be notified to update the program's credential for specialist-level training from the CAGS to the Ed.S. degree on their website and in their promotional literature.

Implementation of the program change will commence immediately following the necessary approvals at the university, state (i.e., Ohio Board of Regents), and national levels (i.e., Higher Learning Commission).

### **VI. Documentation of Necessary Resources and Impact on the College and University**

The existing 78 semester hour M.Ed./CAGS School Psychology Program is included in the budget for the Department of Education and Allied Studies. No additional departmental expenses will be incurred by awarding the Ed.S. degree. The program currently meets the highest level of accreditation available to nondoctoral School Psychology programs (i.e., specialist level). As such, a transition from the CAGS to the Ed.S. degree will not have a negative economic impact on the university, college, or adversely affect the operating budget of the department.

No additional faculty members will be required beyond those serving the current program and allied graduate offerings (e.g., Community Counseling, School Counseling). No additional materials or physical resources will be necessary to support the program's transition to the Ed.S. degree. Given the program's favorable full approval status with NASP, additional changes in the program are not expected as a result of the Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) degree proposal review by the Ohio Board of Regents and Higher Learning Commission.

The proposed Ed.S. degree will not affect our Carnegie classification. The change from providing a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Standing (CAGS) to the awarding of the Educational Specialist degree (Ed.S.) is not expected to have an adverse effect on the operation of the department, college, or university.

### **IV. Indication of Support**

Letters of support will be sent separately from the Chair of the Department of Education and Allied Studies, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, Associate Academic Vice President for Planning and Assessment, and Associate Academic Vice President for Academic Programs.