

Handbook and Internship Manual for School Psychology

Department of Counseling and Psychology



Tennessee Tech University

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Welcome Letter to New Students

Tennessee Technological University
Department of Counseling & Psychology
School Psychology Program

Attention: Incoming School Psychology Students

Welcome to Tennessee Tech University's School Psychology Master's and Ed.S. program! We are thrilled to have you join our dynamic and dedicated community of future school psychologists. As you embark on this journey, know that you are stepping into a program committed to excellence in training, professional development and making a meaningful impact on the lives of children, families and schools.

Our faculty and staff are here to support you every step of the way, providing guidance, mentorship and opportunities to engage in hands-on learning experiences. Throughout your time in program, you will gain the knowledge and skills necessary to address the diverse needs of students, collaborate with educators and families, and promote positive outcomes in school settings. We encourage you to take full advantage of the resources available to you-whether through coursework, field experience or professional organizations.

Graduate school is both a challenging and rewarding experience and we want to assure you that you are not alone in this journey. Your cohort will become an essential source of support and collaboration, and we encourage you to build connections with your peers, faculty and the broader school psychology community. As you begin this exciting new chapter, we encourage you to approach it with curiosity, dedication and a passion for making a difference. We are excited to see the impact you will make, and we look forward to supporting you as you develop into skilled and compassionate school psychologists.

Once again, welcome to Tennessee Tech! We are honored to have you as part of our program and look forward to an incredible journey ahead. Best wishes for a successful and fulfilling academic experience.

Sincerely,

Daniel Upchurch, PhD., MSCP.
Program Lead, School Psychology
Tennessee Tech University

What is School Psychology?

School psychology is a specialized branch of psychology that emerged after World War II, evolving from clinical psychology to address the psychological needs of children with special requirements and those at risk in educational environments. As federal and state special education laws were introduced, the responsibilities of school psychologists became more clearly defined, expanding to include assessment and intervention services for all school-aged children, ultimately covering ages 3 to 22.

What is a School Psychologist?

A school psychologist is a professional who works within educational settings to support the mental health, learning, and overall well-being of students. They use their expertise in psychology and education to assess, diagnose, and address various emotional, behavioral, and academic challenges that students may face. School psychologists collaborate with teachers, parents, administrators, and other professionals to create effective strategies for improving student outcomes. Their responsibilities often include conducting assessments, providing counseling, developing intervention plans, promoting a positive school environment, and helping manage crisis situations. They also play a key role in identifying students with special educational needs and supporting their inclusion in appropriate educational programs.

School Psychology as a Dual Level Field of Practice

The outcome of the 1954 Thayer conference led to the recommendation that school psychology be a dual-level field. Doctoral-level school psychologists would primarily work in university training and research programs, while sub-doctoral practitioners would be employed in schools. Although this model has evolved in many states and debates continue between the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and the American Psychological Association (APA), Tennessee still provides credentials for both levels of practice with specific limitations. In Tennessee, doctoral-level school psychologists can apply for a license as a Health Service Provider Psychologist for private practice or, through the state board of education, as a B.O.E. licensed school psychologist to practice in schools. For sub-doctoral practice, Tennessee follows NASP standards, requiring an Ed.S. degree and a 1200-hour internship. Sub-doctoral school psychologists in Tennessee are restricted to working in schools and cannot practice privately. However, they are allowed to use the title "School Psychologist." Notably, Tennessee's licensure laws contain an exemption that allows only B.O.E. credentialed "School Psychologists" to use the title "Psychologist."

School Psychology at Tennessee Tech University

The School Psychology program at Tennessee Tech University is a graduate program that leads to licensure through the state board of education. Students must first earn a Master of Arts (M.A.) in School Psychology, followed by a Specialist in Education (Ed.S.) degree before they can apply for licensure. The program is accredited by CAEP (formerly NCATE) and approved by the state, meeting most of the standards set by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). Spanning over 60 credit hours (across both the M.A. and Ed.S. degrees), the program includes a 1200-hour internship (full-time for one academic year) and typically takes about three years to complete. Graduate students in the program at TTU receive comprehensive training in all areas traditionally associated with school psychological service delivery, including:

1. Counseling
2. Psychoeducational Assessment

3. Report Writing & Neurodevelopmental Disorders/Disabilities
4. Behavioral & Mental Health Consultation

The College of Education Conceptual Framework

Tennessee Technological University's College of Education and Human Sciences has established a clear and concise conceptual framework for all teacher education programs. This framework serves as a unifying foundation for preparing educational professionals. At its core, the framework aims to **"prepare effective, engaging professionals through a clinically rich, evidence-based program with a network of mutually beneficial partnerships."** It recognizes that competent Pre-K-12 educators must demonstrate knowledge of their field, the skills necessary for their role, and the dispositions that reflect well-rounded individuals. These key dispositions include **Scholarship, Responsibility, Effective Communication, and Reflection**. The graduate faculty in the Department of Counseling and Psychology also emphasize **Professional Behavior and Critical Thinking**. The development and demonstration of these dispositions are assessed at various stages throughout the graduate student's program.

Note to the Prospective School Psychologist

School psychologists, by the nature of their training, embody the core principles of our conceptual framework. Students and interns in the TTU school psychology program are expected to master the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for effective practice. They are held to the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct. The graduate faculty in school psychology serve as gatekeepers of the profession, ensuring that only the most qualified candidates enter the field. Addressing the mental health and psychoeducational needs of children and youth in our schools is both a challenging and deeply impactful responsibility, one that should never be taken lightly.

The Difference Between Program of Study and License

The programs of study for the Master's and Specialist degrees are recommended pathways to earn TTU diplomas (M.A. and Ed.S.). However, this is distinct from licensure competency. While the programs are designed to meet the Tennessee Board of Education licensure requirements, there are additional courses required by TTU to fulfill degree obligations. It is the responsibility of the student or candidate to satisfy both the degree and licensure requirements. This can be easily achieved by following the published programs of study and the "endorsement worksheet in school psychology" (copies of both are available in this document)

Quality of Academic Work Requirement for Degree or License

Graduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B) to earn a graduate degree from TTU. This requirement permits up to six hours of "C" credit (as outlined in the Graduate Catalog). However, courses taken for licensure competency, as listed on the "endorsement worksheet in school psychology," must be graded no lower than a "B." Any course with a grade of "C" or lower that is intended to meet licensure competency requirements must be retaken.

Purpose of This Manual

This manual is designed to introduce interns to the requirements for successfully completing PSY 7950 (Internship in School Psychology) and to guide them through the internship process (see Appendix). It can also serve as a resource for the internship site, helping site-based supervisors and other personnel understand the expectations of the school psychology internship. Included in this manual are details about required paperwork, the site selection process, and recommendations for fostering effective communication between supervisors and interns. Prospective interns should recognize that no single resource can fully prepare them for every situation. A successful intern makes use of all available tools to be thoroughly prepared for any challenges that may arise.

Purpose of the Internship

The internship experience serves as the culmination of school psychologist training. During this time, the intern is expected to take on the role of a professional school psychologist, guided by instruction and feedback from their supervisors. The intern is also required to engage in supervision from a university-based trainer, who provides ongoing training, guidance, and acts as a liaison to the school site-based supervisor. The internship is designed to bridge theoretical and academic learning with real-world experiences, in line with university, state, and National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) guidelines. As part of the school psychology internship, interns must complete 1200 hours (one academic year) of supervised experience, with at least 600 hours spent in a school setting. Cooperating school systems are encouraged to offer a broad and diverse internship experience, spanning from preschool to 12th grade.

Internship Application Procedures

Before placement, the prospective school psychology intern must complete all licensure-related coursework at both the Master's and Specialist levels. Although most school systems plan their annual budgets in advance, prospective interns may seek or request a placement site before completing their final coursework. However, placement will not be allowed until all coursework is finished, unless an exception is granted by the intern's graduate committee and/or school psychology coordinator.

Please note: **not all sites provide compensation, and placement decisions are not based on whether a site offers payment. Interns should be prepared to accept a non-paying position, as the TTU school psychology program cannot guarantee a paid internship.**

1. Prospective interns should notify the school psychology program coordinator of their intent to begin the internship at least one semester (excluding summer) before the desired start date. Interns may request a specific site or ask the program coordinator to select a site on their behalf. Application can be made by completing the internship request form (see Appendix).
2. Prospective interns must be enrolled and registered for PSY 7950 for each semester they plan to work. A course syllabus will be provided. This course is typically offered during the fall and spring semesters. The school psychology program coordinator understands that school system calendars may not align perfectly with the university calendar, which may require supervision beyond the official course dates. This will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

3. The school psychology program coordinator will collaborate with the prospective intern and the placement site to arrange the internship. Placement will only occur if an agreement is reached among all parties involved (the intern, site administrator, site supervisor, and university supervisor).
4. All interns must obtain liability insurance prior to placement.
5. The intern must be thoroughly familiar with the professional and ethical standards set by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), the Tennessee Association of School Psychologists (TASP), and the American Psychological Association (APA). This information is typically provided in school psychology courses and can also be found on the respective association websites.

General Requirements

1. Ideally, the school psychology internship is completed full-time during the fall and spring semesters of an academic year. However, NASP guidelines allow for a half-time internship spread over two academic years for interns who may not be able to work full-time. Half-time internships must be approved by the university school psychology program coordinator and require consent from the prospective site. In both cases, the intern must register for PSY 7950 each semester they participate in the internship.
2. Before placement at a site, the prospective intern must schedule an appointment and be interviewed by an administrator at the site (typically the supervisor of special education). The intern should approach this interview as they would a job interview, even if the internship is unpaid. The site has the right to reject the intern, and the intern should understand that placement at a preferred (or any) site is not guaranteed. If necessary, the university coordinator will attempt to find an alternate site.
3. Once accepted by the site, the intern and site supervisor will collaborate to develop a schedule and outline responsibilities (see Appendix for suggestions).
4. After acceptance by the site, the intern should notify the university-based supervisor of the placement.
5. To fulfill PSY 7950 requirements, the intern must meet with the university-based supervisor in person for at least one hour per week. The meeting times will be agreed upon by both parties.
6. To meet NASP and state requirements, the intern must have at least 10 hours of face-to-face contact with the site supervisor.
7. The intern is expected to meet and eventually demonstrate all competencies required by the site, the state board of education, NASP, and the university. These competencies are clearly defined in the site materials, course syllabi, licensure checklist, and the standards outlined in this document.
8. If the intern encounters any issues, they should report them to both the site and university-based supervisors as soon as possible.
9. The university-based supervisor will conduct at least one site visit per semester (following NASP and state standards) to consult with the site supervisor and evaluate the intern's progress.

10. To meet PSY 7950 requirements, the intern must complete a project specifically designed for their site. This project should benefit the site and serve as a "thank you" from the intern.
11. The intern is required to maintain a log/journal documenting the internship experience. This should not be simply a date book; it must include descriptions of skills learned, new tests encountered, questions, and reflections. The log/journal must also include a daily record of internship hours. Confidentiality of examinees should be upheld, as the university-based supervisor will review the log/journal at the end of each semester. Upon completion of the internship, the log/journal will be retained by the university-based supervisor.
12. The intern's progress will be evaluated by the site supervisor and university-based supervisor throughout the internship. Major evaluations will take place early and late in each semester to assess skill development and the demonstration of important dispositions. Informal evaluations will occur periodically during the semester(s) (see Appendix for examples of evaluation instruments).
13. At the end of the internship, the intern will evaluate both the site supervisor and the university-based supervisor (see Appendix for evaluation forms).

Some Rules of Common Sense and Conduct

School psychologists are professionals, and as such, they are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. Interns should dress appropriately, adhering to the dress codes of their placement sites. They are expected to attend meetings organized by site administrators and fulfill all responsibilities to both the site and the university. If conflicts arise between these obligations, interns should work collaboratively to resolve any issues.

Interns are expected to maintain a positive, cooperative, and professional demeanor at all times. They should consistently demonstrate the highest standards of behavior and represent the qualities of their training program in the best possible light.

Interns...

When others see you, they see:

- Someone who represents professionalism
- The quality of your training
- The influence of your professors
- The reputation of your university

Make us proud- *Dr. Jane Kupp*.

The Dispositions We Value Most at TTU

- Scholarship
- Responsibility
- Effective Communication
- Reflection
- Professional Behavior

- Critical Thinking

Department of Counseling and Psychology

List of Cross-Concentration Dispositions

(As of March 2012)

The following dispositions encapsulate the pre-professional values and characteristics the departmental graduate faculty desire of their applicants, candidates and graduates. These dispositions reflect those noted in the College of Education's conceptual framework and the standards of various credentialing bodies.

1. Scholarship (mastery in coursework and competency in application)
2. Responsibility (ownership of personal, academic, and professional development and behavior)
3. Effective Communication (ability to communicate clearly verbally and in writing, and to accept new ideas and constructive feedback)
4. Reflection (ability to assess one's own decision making process and recognize consequences of behavior)
5. Professional Behavior (recognition of ethical, legal, and professional standards of conduct)
6. Critical Thinking (capability for critical thinking and real world problem-solving)

Roles and Responsibilities of Supervisors

University-Based Supervisor: The university-based supervisor supports interns throughout their internship experience. This supervisor provides timely guidance, critiques intern work products, consults with the site supervisor(s), assesses and evaluates intern performance, and assigns the PSY 7950 course grade. Additionally, the university supervisor is responsible for officially confirming and documenting the intern's competency attainment.

Site Supervisor: The site supervisor offers on-site supervision, guidance, and mentoring to the intern. This supervisor helps the intern complete their tasks at the site, discusses progress, critiques work, consults with the university-based supervisor, and participates in evaluating the intern. In accordance with state and national standards, the site supervisor must hold a license as a health service provider psychologist or a Tennessee State Board of Education professional license with a school psychologist

endorsement. Furthermore, the site supervisor must have at least two years of professional experience before being eligible to supervise interns.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Site

The internship site, whether a school system or mental health facility, must offer the intern a comprehensive range of experiences that reflect the full scope of responsibilities of a school psychologist. Whenever possible, the site should provide a designated area (desk, study area, office) where the intern can score test protocols, write reports, and complete other paperwork-related tasks. The administrative officers of the site retain the right to dismiss the intern at any time and for any reason. The site is not obligated to offer or continue employment for the intern.

What School Psychology Interns are Expected to Do

(Interns: please share this with site personnel)

- Interns must be in the final year of their Ed.S. degree and have completed most or all of their coursework.
- Interns must be supervised on-site by a Board of Education (BOE) licensed school psychologist.
- Interns must also receive supervision from a university-based BOE licensed school psychologist (Dr. Upchurch) and attend weekly supervision meetings at the university.
- Internships require a commitment of 1200 hours, typically spanning a full academic year.
- Interns should be allowed to perform all tasks that school psychologists are trained for, even if employed school psychologists focus primarily on testing.
- A reminder: School psychologists are fully trained in:
 1. Psychological Testing
 2. Behavioral Consultation and Intervention
 3. Counseling
- Interns should have exposure to as many assessment opportunities as possible across all relevant Special Education (SPED) categories.
- Interns are required to conduct at least one counseling series with a student, consisting of three or more sessions over a period of time.
- Interns must conduct at least one full behavioral consultation, including baselines, data charts, and interventions.
- Interns must comply with all federal and state standards for practice and fulfill the requirements of both the school system and the university.
- Interns are expected to maintain the highest level of professional and ethical conduct.
- The university supervisor (Dr. Upchurch) will maintain regular contact with the site's supervising school psychologist via email, including periodic electronic evaluations of the intern.
- The university supervisor (Dr. Upchurch) will conduct two site visits per semester to evaluate the intern, with evaluations taking place only between the university supervisor and site supervisor (the intern will not be present).

- If any issues arise or deficiencies need to be addressed, both the university and site supervisors will work together to resolve them to the satisfaction of the special education supervisor and the school system.

An understanding of the knowledge base specific to school psychology, including:

- (a) history and foundations
- (b) legal and ethical issues
- (c) professional issues and standards
- (d) alternative models for the delivery of school psychological services
- (e) emerging technologies
- (f) roles and functions of the school psychologist.

An understanding of the psychological foundations of behavior based on knowledge of:

- (a) Biological Bases for Behavior
- (b) Human Learning
- (c) Social and Cultural Bases for Behavior
- (d) Child and Adolescent Development
- (e) Individual differences.

State of Tennessee Department of Education

Standards for School Psychologist (PreK-12)

1. An understanding of the instructional design and organization of schools, community-based resources, and alternative delivery systems as they apply to all students, including special needs learners.
2. Ability to provide school psychological services within a model which links assessment to intervention services delivered to individuals and groups.
3. Ability to provide individual assessments of ability, achievement, classroom behavior, and personal and social characteristics of individuals.
4. Ability to provide direct and indirect assessments and interventions for the delivery of comprehensive school psychological services.
5. Ability to develop and implement individual and group interventions for the educational and mental health needs of children and youth.
6. Ability to develop and implement consultation services to individuals and groups, especially parents and teachers.
7. Ability to use measurement, statistics, research, and program evaluation methodologies in the delivery of comprehensive school psychological services.
8. Ability to develop, implement, and evaluate training programs for parents and educators.
9. Ability to provide services that are consistent with provider standards and legal and ethical guidelines of the field of school psychology.
10. Ability to conduct day-to-day delivery of school psychological services through effective oral and written communication, time management, record keeping, and public and professional relations.

National Association of School Psychologists
Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists
2020 Revisions

The vision of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is that all children and youth access the learning, behavior, and mental health support needed to thrive in school, at home, and throughout life. Consistent with this vision is the core purpose of NASP, which is to empower school psychologists to promote the learning, behavior, and mental health of all children and youth. This purpose is accomplished through the values of integrity, diversity, a focus on children and youth, advocacy, collaborative relationships, continuous improvement, and visionary leadership.

The 2020 Professional Standards were created with consideration of current issues in education and psychology, aligned with NASP's strategic goals for the profession, and with a forward-looking perspective on future developments at national, state, and local levels. Over the course of more than three years, the standards writing team, along with other NASP leaders, worked diligently to revise the four key documents of the standards. The revision process involved input from NASP members, elected and appointed leaders, other school psychology professionals, and external stakeholders. Their collective dedication ensured that the NASP 2020 Professional Standards accurately reflect the vision for the field over the next decade. The following link will provide detailed information on the 10 domains, Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services, Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists, Standards for the Credentialing of School Psychologists, and Principles for Professional Ethics.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has identified 10 domains of practice that serve as a foundational framework for school psychology training, practice, and professional development. These domains outline the comprehensive skill set and knowledge areas that school psychologists must master to effectively support students, families, educators, and school communities. They include essential areas such as data-based decision making, consultation and collaboration, academic and mental health interventions, diversity awareness, and legal/ethical practice. Understanding these domains ensures that school psychologists are well-equipped to provide services that promote positive outcomes across academic, behavioral, and social-emotional dimensions.

For graduate students pursuing an Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) degree in school psychology, familiarity with the NASP 10 domains is crucial. These domains guide both the coursework and practical experiences students will encounter throughout their training. Moreover, the NASP Practice Model—rooted in these domains—sets the standard for ethical and effective service delivery in schools. By internalizing and applying the domains, graduate students not only prepare for competent practice and national certification but also build a professional identity centered on evidence-based, student-centered, and culturally responsive support. Ultimately, a strong grasp of the NASP 10 domains empowers future school psychologists to advocate for best practices and make a meaningful impact within diverse educational systems. https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/nasp-practice-model/nasp-practice-model-implementation-guide/section-i-nasp-practice-model-overview/nasp-practice-model-overview?utm_source=chatgpt.com&nocache=1754672007216