

# Education Specialist in School Psychology

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## Overview

The Education Specialist Program in School Psychology ([https://www.minotstateu.edu/graduate/future\\_students/programs/school\\_psychology.shtml/](https://www.minotstateu.edu/graduate/future_students/programs/school_psychology.shtml/)) prepares students for national certification as School Psychologists and meets ESPB standards to practice in North Dakota (please check with your state licensing board for specific criteria for locations outside North Dakota). Graduate students participate in a rigorous three-year program. The program emphasizes hands-on experiences culminating in a one-year, 1,200-hour internship. The program emphasizes rural school psychology in the coursework.

The program provides students with the theoretical and practical skills to be effective school psychologists. The curriculum emphasizes assessment, intervention techniques, collaborative frameworks, and consultative strategies through practicums and rural outreach opportunities. The program trains practitioners who are culturally competent service providers and explores social justice issues in North Dakota with an emphasis on American Indian populations.

The School Psychology Program is approved by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) through February 2025 and is currently involved in the accreditation process.

## Program Philosophy

The theme of Preparing Leaders who are Reflective Decision Makers is a guide to the mission of the school psychology program at MiSU. This mission prepares students to become competent leaders in the field of school psychology with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to make effective professional decisions via reflective decision-making. The conceptual framework that supports the theme of Reflective Decision Making + Leadership includes the following thematic strands:

- Professional and Content Standards
- Diversity and Social Justice
- Technology Integration
- Community Partnerships
- Learning Environments

Underlying the conceptual framework is the belief that preparation for all professional educators must be aligned with state, national, and professional standards. This includes the following: a strong emphasis on the development of the student's knowledge, skills, and dispositions, inclusion of all learning environments, focus on diversity, social justice, and technology integration, and the development and enhancement of community partnerships.

Decision-making is viewed as an ongoing interactive process in which a myriad of factors must be understood and balanced in making sound professional decisions. Using the scientist-practitioner approach, students are trained to consider input from a variety of sources, synthesize the information and after reflection make data-based decisions, which result in positive change for children. Also inherent in the theme are teamwork and promoting collaboration with the community and among school-based professionals; this prepares students to become professional leaders who are Reflective Decision-Makers.

## Program Goals and Objectives

The School Psychology program at MiSU utilizes a scientist-practitioner model. Upon graduation, students will possess the knowledge base, necessary clinical skills, and dispositions to serve the educational and mental health needs of children from diverse backgrounds. They will have the skills to function as leaders within educational systems and promote problem-solving through teamwork and collaboration.

Graduates of the MiSU School Psychology program are prepared to provide direct and indirect school psychological services for children, parents, teachers, related school personnel, administrators, and community agencies.

Anchored in the mission, philosophy, and goals stated above, the program subscribes to the following objectives for students enrolled in the MiSU School Psychology program:

- To provide students with knowledge of school organization and operation, to promote their understanding of educational settings as dynamic systems.
- To familiarize students with the role and function of school psychologists as well as current professional standards, ethics, and issues.
- To assist students to acquire data-based reflective decision-making skills, which facilitate outcome-based service delivery.

- To promote student knowledge of human learning and development including cognitive, academic, social, behavioral, affective, and adaptive skills of children.
- To develop students' clinical skills in the assessment of human learning and developmental processes pertinent to serving the educational and mental health needs of children, using various models and techniques.
- To prepare professionals to develop, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of academic and behavioral interventions.
- To develop communication, collaboration, and consultation skills and the ability to positively engage in teamwork efforts.
- To acquire the ability to work effectively with families, educators, and others in the community and to promote partnerships in providing comprehensive services to children and their families.
- To help students develop an awareness of human diversity and acquire skills to work with children of diverse backgrounds.
- To develop an awareness of and adherence to laws, ethical considerations, and professional dispositions.
- To increase students' knowledge of research, statistics, evaluation methods, and to enable students to integrate theoretical knowledge, empirical research, and professional experience in practice.
- To prepare professionals with the skills needed to incorporate technology throughout school psychology practice.

### Student Learning Outcomes:

Minot State University adheres to NASP's model of comprehensive and integrated school psychological services and is guided by the **NASP 2020 Domains of Practice**. Therefore, students graduating from the School Psychology Program shall demonstrate an understanding of and competence in the 10 NASP 2020 Domains of Practice and be prepared to enter the workforce as competent early career School Psychologists. The **NASP 2020 Domains of Practice** include the following:

- **Domain 1: Data-Based Decision Making** - School psychologists understand and utilize assessment methods for identifying strengths and needs; developing effective interventions, services, and programs; and measuring progress and outcomes within a multitiered system of supports. School psychologists use a problem-solving framework as the basis for all professional activities. School psychologists systematically collect data from multiple sources as a foundation for decision-making at the individual, group, and systems levels, and they consider ecological factors (e.g., classroom, family, and community characteristics) as a context for assessment and intervention.
- **Domain 2: Consultation and Collaboration** - School psychologists understand varied models and strategies of consultation and collaboration applicable to individuals, families, groups, and systems, as well as methods to promote effective implementation of services. As part of a systematic and comprehensive process of effective decision-making and problem-solving that permeates all aspects of service delivery, school psychologists demonstrate skills to consult, collaborate, and communicate effectively with others.
- **Domain 3: Academic Interventions and Instructional Supports** - School psychologists understand the biological, cultural, and social influences on academic skills; human learning, cognitive, and developmental processes; and evidence-based curricula and instructional strategies. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, use assessment and data collection methods to implement and evaluate services that support academic skill development in children.
- **Domain 4: Mental and Behavioral Health Services and Interventions** - School psychologists understand the biological, cultural, developmental, and social influences on mental and behavioral health, behavioral and emotional impacts on learning, and evidence-based strategies to promote social-emotional functioning. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, design, implement, and evaluate services that promote resilience and positive behavior, support socialization and adaptive skills, and enhance mental and behavioral health.
- **Domain 5: School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning** - School psychologists understand systems structures, organization, and theory; general and special education programming; implementation science; and evidence-based, school-wide practices that promote learning, positive behavior, and mental health. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, develop and implement practices and strategies to create and maintain safe, effective, and supportive learning environments for students and school staff.
- **Domain 6: Services to Promote Safe and Supportive Schools** - School psychologists understand principles and research related to social-emotional well-being, resilience and risk factors in learning, mental and behavioral health, services in schools and communities to support multitiered prevention and health promotion and evidence-based strategies for creating safe and supportive schools. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, promote preventive and responsive services that enhance learning, mental and behavioral health, and psychological and physical safety and implement effective crisis prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.
- **Domain 7: Family, School, and Community Collaboration** - School psychologists understand principles and research related to family systems, strengths, needs, and cultures; evidence-based strategies to support positive family influences on children's learning and mental health; and strategies to develop collaboration between families and schools. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, design, implement, and evaluate services that respond to culture and context. They facilitate family and school partnerships and interactions with community agencies to enhance academic and social-behavioral outcomes for children.
- **Domain 8: Equitable Practices in Diverse Student Populations** - School psychologists have knowledge of individual differences, abilities, disabilities, and other diverse characteristics and the impact they have on development and learning. They also understand principles and research

related to diversity in children, families, schools, and communities, including factors related to child development, religion, culture and cultural identity, race, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, and other variables. School psychologists implement evidence-based strategies to enhance services in both general and special education and address potential influences related to diversity. School psychologists demonstrate skills to provide professional services that promote effective functioning for individuals, families, and schools with diverse characteristics, cultures, and backgrounds through an ecological lens across multiple contexts. School psychologists recognize that equitable practices for diverse student populations, respect for diversity in development and learning, and advocacy for social justice are foundational to effective service delivery. While equality ensures that all children have the same access to general and special educational opportunities, equity ensures that each student receives what they need to benefit from these opportunities.

- **Domain 9: Research and Evidence-Based Practice** - School psychologists have knowledge of research design, statistics, measurement, and varied data collection and analysis techniques sufficient for understanding research, interpreting data, and evaluating programs in applied settings. As scientist practitioners, school psychologists evaluate and apply research as a foundation for service delivery and, in collaboration with others, use various techniques and technology resources for data collection, measurement, and analysis to support effective practices at the individual, group, and/or systems levels.
- **Domain 10: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice** - School psychologists have knowledge of the history and foundations of school psychology; multiple service models and methods; ethical, legal, and professional standards; and other factors related to professional identity and effective practice as school psychologists. School psychologists provide services consistent with ethical, legal, and professional standards; engage in responsive ethical and professional decision-making; collaborate with other professionals; and apply professional work characteristics needed for effective practice as school psychologists, including effective interpersonal skills, responsibility, adaptability, initiative, dependability, technological competence, advocacy skills, respect for human diversity, and a commitment to social justice and equity.

### Connection to Profession

#### Required NASP membership and conference attendance

All Minot State University School Psychology students are required to:

- Become a member of the North Dakota Association of School Psychologists or the state organization where they intend to practice by the end of the first semester.
- Become student members of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). The cost of student membership is \$125 per year (2025 rates).
- Attend the NASP Convention either virtually or in person. School Psychology courses will not be in session during the week of the NASP Convention. This only applies to courses with PSY prefixes.

#### Performance-Based Assessment

The MiSU School Psychology Program in accordance with the *NASP Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists* (NASP, 2020) employs a comprehensive, performance-based system to evaluate program quality. The twofold purpose of comprehensive systematic assessment of candidate performance is to ensure that candidates at the completion of their training demonstrate professional competencies which reflect the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that early career School Psychologists should possess and to use the resulting information to monitor candidate progression as well as to evaluate and improve program quality. Assessment data are aggregated and reviewed by the School Psychology faculty on a regular basis to determine program strengths and weaknesses. The School Psychology faculty meets on a regular basis to discuss findings and at the conclusion of the fall and spring semesters each year. Each year, student progress in the program and professional dispositions are carefully monitored and evaluated by the School Psychology faculty, using the Student Progress Evaluation Form for Ed.S. and Professional Dispositions Assessment.

#### First Year

In the second semester of the first year, students are assessed using the Professional Disposition Assessment (PDA) [See *School Psychology Handbook* Appendix B]. Input is solicited from all the student's instructors. The School Psychology faculty completes the PDA, meets with the student to review the assessment results, discusses student strengths, and addresses areas of needed improvement. If warranted, specific recommendations for improvement are documented and a written remediation plan is developed and enacted (See *School Psychology Handbook* Appendices J and K).

In March of the first year, students sit for the Written Preliminary Examination. The Written Preliminary Examination consists of four essay questions that are designed to assess students' school psychological knowledge base and their ability to write in a coherent, organized manner. Written Preliminary Examinations are scored by the School Psychology faculty. Students who fail questions participate in remediation lectures held on Saturdays and then sit for a re-examination. Should a student either fail to attend remediation sessions and/or fail to pass the re-examination the student will be required to meet with the core School Psychology faculty and outside members of the faculty as appropriate to discuss the student's standing in the program. The result of this meeting will be either further remediation or dismissal from the program (See *School Psychology Handbook* Appendices J and K).

Students who fail to maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA in all academic work completed during their first academic year or who earn a "C" or below in PSY 514 Cognitive Assessment will not be allowed to enter practicum (until courses are retaken and a "B" is earned). Failure to meet this criterion will

result in a review of the student's status in the program. Upon completion of the review, the School Psychology faculty may recommend dismissal from the program or continuation with a remediation plan (See *School Psychology Handbook* Appendices J and K).

### **Second Year**

During the second year professional disposition is assessed through the School Psychology Practicum Evaluation Form (See *Practicum Guidelines* Appendix C). At the end of the fall semester and at the end of the spring semester, students are assessed on professional disposition based on the 2020 NASP Practice Domains. The university instructor/supervisor meets with students and reviews their field-based supervisor's evaluations at the end of the fall and spring semesters.

Students take the Written Comprehensive Examination in the spring semester of their second year. The Written Comprehensive Examination incorporates core and supporting area coursework. The Written Comprehensive Examination is eight hours in length and consists of four essay questions and case vignettes. Students who fail their Comprehensive Written Examination or pass with conditions will meet with the School Psychology Committee, including core School Psychology faculty and outside members as appropriate, to discuss the results of their examination and develop a remediation plan (See *School Psychology Handbook* Appendices J & K). The remediation plan may include rewriting all or parts of the written examination or doing an oral defense of the written exam questions. Should an oral defense be deemed necessary, the oral defense is presented to the School Psychology program coordinator, core School Psychology faculty, and outside members of the faculty as appropriate.

Students must maintain a grade of "B" or better in PSY 514 Individual Cognitive Assessment, PSY 584 School Psychology Practicum I/PSY 585 School Psychology Practicum II, and PSY 598 Internship/PSY 599 Internship I and II to continue in the program. Courses must be repeated when less than a "B" is earned. Failure to obtain a grade of "B" or better the second time will result in dismissal from the program. Students may appeal the decision and request an exception with the School Psychology graduate faculty.

### **Third Year**

During the third year, students are evaluated by their field-based supervisor at the end of the fall and spring semesters using the Internship Evaluation Form (See *Internship Guidelines*). The university internship instructor/supervisor reviews the student's evaluation, conducts an interview with the field-based supervisor, and reviews the results and any other professional disposition concerns that have been detected with the student in a scheduled meeting conducted at the conclusion of the fall and spring internship semesters. During this meeting, the university internship instructor/supervisor also reviews student strengths and areas of needed improvement. The Internship Evaluation Forms are placed in the student's file (See *Internship Guidelines/Field Experiences* Appendix G).

A Portfolio is developed in the third year by students to document their full range of professional competencies. Each section of the portfolio (Based on the 10 NASP 2020 Domains of Practice) is reviewed by the internship instructor/supervisor and School Psychology program coordinator and rated as "acceptable" or "needs improvement". Students who obtain "needs improvement" ratings must work with the internship instructor/supervisor and the School Psychology program coordinator to correct artifacts and reflections. The student cannot graduate until they receive an "acceptable" rating on all domains as assessed through the NASP Portfolio Rubric. Students must submit evidence to support each of the 10 NASP 2020 Domains of Practice in their Portfolio (See *Internship Guidelines/Field Experiences* Appendix D).

An Academic Case Study and Behavioral Case Study are completed during the internship year. These case studies are evaluated by the internship instructor/supervisor using the NASP Case Study Rubric (Appendix J). The Academic Case Study and Behavioral Case Study are evaluated by the university internship instructor/supervisor and are submitted as graded assignments in PSY 598 Internship and PSY 599 Internship. Should a student not meet expectations for either case study he or she will meet with the university instructor/supervisor to create a plan to make corrections and/or redo the assignment. These case studies are included in the Portfolio and passage of the Portfolio in all 10 NASP 2020 Practice Domains is required for graduation.

All students must take and pass the Praxis II with a score of 155 or better prior to graduation. The Praxis II may be taken multiple times, but students will not graduate until a passing grade is obtained.

Throughout the program, student professional dispositions are monitored in and out of class. If at any time, a student's behavior breaches American Psychological Association (APA) and/or NASP ethical and/or professional standards, the student is required to meet with the School Psychology core faculty to discuss the concern and to develop a plan for addressing corrective measures. Depending on the severity of the violation, a student could be placed on an academic improvement plan or at the extreme, could be dismissed from the program (See *School Psychology Handbook* Appendices J and K).

Students are also expected to follow the MiSU code of conduct and follow guidelines related to academic honesty by reviewing the MiSU Student Code of Conduct (<https://catalog.minotstateu.edu/graduate/student-conduct-policy/>) and Graduate Policy on Academic Honesty.

### **Procedures for Remediation**

For students who do not meet the criteria for progression and retention, the following procedures will be implemented with all steps documented in writing and communicated to the student during a conference with his/her advisor and/or other appropriate program faculty.

The student will be notified in writing of the specific problem areas by his or her advisor (See *School Psychology Handbook* Appendix J). A written plan to remediate the problem areas will be developed by the student and the School Psychology graduate faculty. The plan will specify problem

areas, courses of action, and a date for re-evaluation. During the remedial period, the student will be on probation (See *School Psychology Handbook* Appendices J and K).

Upon completion of the re-evaluation, the committee will recommend one of the following options:

- Determine that remediation has been successful and the student is allowed to continue in the program;
- Continue remediation with an updated remedial plan and a new date set for re-evaluation;
- Or dismissal from the program.

The student may appeal the decision and make a request for an exception with the School Psychology graduate faculty.

### **Requirements for Graduation**

Graduation requirements include an overall GPA of 3.0 or above, successful completion of the Preliminary Examination and Comprehensive Examination, a score of “acceptable” on all 10 NASP 2020 Domains in the Portfolio, “acceptable” ratings in all areas of the assessment on the Academic and Behavioral Case Studies, and passage of the Praxis II with a score no lower than 155. An official copy of the Praxis II results must be submitted to the student’s advisor. Finally, successful completion of all courses outlined in the student’s Program of Study. Prior to graduation the program coordinator of the School Psychology Program will review student files and sign complete graduation applications.

## **Departmental Admission Standards**

The School Psychology Program is committed to broadening diversity within the program. Students from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Students with permanent residence in North Dakota will receive priority consideration.

Prospective students must have/consider the following:

1. Completion of a bachelor’s degree with a minimum GPA of 3.0.
2. Completion of Graduate Record Exam (GRE).
3. Three letters of recommendation must be submitted as part of the application packet.
4. Students who apply to the School Psychology program should have a strong background either in education or psychology and preferably in both. Students with backgrounds from related fields will also be considered.
5. Completion of all admission requirements of the Graduate School at Minot State University. Students who have applied for admission by March 1st, for the next academic year, will be given priority consideration. Applications will be taken until the cohort is full.

## **Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty is at the core of any graduate program. Any behavior deemed as academically dishonest by the department will result in dismissal from the program. Academic dishonesty would include, but is not limited to, the following types of behaviors:

1. Misrepresenting another individual’s work as one’s own, e.g., plagiarism.
2. Copying from another student during an exam.
3. Altering one’s exam after grading for the purpose of enhancing one’s grade.
4. Submitting the same paper to more than one class.
5. Use of any material not approved by the instructor during an exam.
6. Turning in reports intended to be based on field collection data but, in fact, is not.
7. Failure to respect the confidentiality of persons served or studied and to maintain the professional standards for ethical conduct as set forth in The Handbook of School Psychology published by the National Association of School Psychologists.

## **Academic Honesty Appeal Policy**

Dismissal for academic dishonesty can be appealed. A student who wishes to appeal his/her dismissal should follow the appeal process established by the Graduate School and listed in this catalog under Graduate School Policies and Regulations.

## **Grading Policy**

Students are advised that a grade of “C” in a required course for the Education Specialist in School Psychology degree is considered a failing grade.

## **Grade Appeal Policy**

The process and conditions for a grade appeal follow the definitions and schedules of the Graduate School. All requests for review of a grade must be submitted according to the timelines established by the Graduate School for this process.

## Written Qualifying Comprehensive Exams

Students will demonstrate their knowledge of school psychology through written qualifying and comprehensive exams. These exams will be taken in the fall of the student's first year of graduate work and in the spring of the students second year.

### Required Courses (70 SH Minimum)

ED 540	Reading: Advance Diag and Remed	2
ED 541	Clinical Practice Remedial Read	2
SPED 517	Methods for Mild Disabilities	3
SPED 510	Law and Policy in Special Education	3
PSY 503	Statistics I	4
PSY 511	Human Growth and Development	3
PSY 512	Research Design and Measurement	4
PSY 514	Individual Cognitive Assessment	4
PSY 515	Academic Assessment	4
PSY 518	Psychopathology of Children	3
PSY 525	Role and Function of School Psychologist	3
PSY 533	Social and Behavioral Interventions in School	3
PSY 583	Diversity in the Schools	3
PSY 584	School Psychology Practicum I	3
PSY 585	School Psychology Practicum II	3
PSY 586	Clinical Experience	3
PSY 590	Counseling Skills	3
PSY 593	School Safety, Crisis Preparation, and Crisis Response	3
PSY 594	Consultation and Collaboration	3
PSY 597	Thesis (optional)	3
PSY 598	Internship	6
PSY 599	Internship	6
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>71</b>