



Master of Arts (MA) Program in Psychology: Clinical Concentration
Program Handbook

2024 Incoming Cohort

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Introduction to Handbook

This Handbook is written for graduate students enrolled in the Master of Arts (MA) program in Clinical Psychology at Western Carolina University (WCU). The purpose of the Handbook is to assist students as they pursue the MA degree and to answer many common questions concerning the MA program (“Program”) at Western Carolina University. The Handbook contains information about administrative and academic policies, curriculum, course work, academic requirements, and other important aspects of the Program.

During Program orientation, the Director of Clinical Training (DCT) and other Program faculty will provide a general overview and introduction to the Handbook. Students will indicate their receipt of the Handbook and that they participated in an orientation to its contents through completing the Program Orientation and Review of Handbook form (see Appendix). Students should read the Handbook carefully and in its entirety soon after orientation to ensure that they are familiar with information about and requirements of the Program; students will indicate their completion of reading the Handbook via the Program Orientation and Review of Handbook form. Faculty and students will consult the Handbook as needed throughout students’ training in the Program. Students are encouraged to use this handbook as a supplement to the personal feedback and guidance of faculty, staff, and student colleagues in the department. In general, students are held accountable for completing the requirements as stated in the Handbook in effect at the time of program entry; however, there are sometimes changes that must be made and become effective immediately, applying to all students in the Program at the time of the change. As such, the Handbook should be considered “a living document.” The faculty reserves the right to make alterations to the program requirements and examinations in response to American Psychological Association (APA) accreditation policy requirements, state licensing requirements, University policy or other University requirements, and for changes in training resources or capabilities of the Department of Psychology. These changes may alter program requirements not only for new students, but also for students enrolled in the program. In the event of any major change in the program requirements, students will be provided with the opportunity for input into the proposed change and will be given formal notification through established communication channels, such as through Faculty Student Forum meetings (see Program Communications section of the Handbook) or Departmental e-mails.

Relationship between Program and the Graduate School Policies and Procedures

The Handbook does not replace policies and procedures that appear in the WCU Graduate School Catalog. The Handbook specifies, where appropriate, instances where the WCU Graduate School procedures reference program-specific requirements that may differ from the Graduate School, such as program admissions and student dismissal procedures. Graduate students are expected to be familiar with the information in WCU’s Graduate Catalog, particularly the section on Academic Regulations which include Graduate School policies regarding: registration; course and grade policies; program completion and graduation; enrollment status; thesis requirements; and student rights and regulations, among others. Students should view the online version at: catalog.wcu.edu.

Program Training Model, Mission, Vision, and Learning Objectives

Training Model

The WCU Master of Arts (MA) program in Clinical Psychology follows the scientist-practitioner model of clinical training, emphasizing the integration of research and clinical practice. The Program strives to train clinicians who base their clinical practice on evidence-based interventions and who integrate objective techniques into their work (e.g., the use of scientifically-sound assessment techniques to aid in conceptualizing and monitoring of clients' problems).

Key program training components consist of didactics (i.e., formal coursework), internal and external practicum training, and thesis research. Critical program training components feature student training experiences that are sequenced and graded in complexity over the course of the curriculum. For example, students initially gain clinical skills through course material, observation, and practice with volunteers before moving on to work with actual clients during their second year. Student evaluation and milestones are also used to determine if students are prepared to move to more advanced training experiences. *Program supports* consist of funded graduate assistantships, dedicated student office space, a dedicated training clinic, and a variety of student services available to support student success. *Program outcomes* consist of training goals consistent with program aims, particularly student completion of practicum experiences, student graduation rates, licensure, and employment.

Mission and Vision. The *mission* of the Master of Arts (MA) program in Clinical Psychology at Western Carolina University (WCU) is to produce graduates who advance the field of clinical psychology and serve the public through clinical activities, research activities, or a combination of both. The mission specifically targets addressing the mental health needs of rural communities and serving underserved populations. The mission of the Program is consistent with WCU's mission to serve the citizens of the western region of North Carolina and improve rural health. The *vision* of the Program is to serve as a model for professional preparation in psychological practice to serve clients from rural, underserved communities.

Aims and Goals. Consistent with our Program's mission statement, we have developed the following learning objectives. The primary aim of the Program is to train students who are able to:

1. Apply legal and APA ethical standards, including those related multicultural competence, to their clinical and scholarly work in a variety of settings and systems
2. Understand areas of foundational knowledge in the field of psychology (e.g., clinical, cognitive, biological, personality) and apply this information to their professional work.
3. Competently administer and interpret cognitive, academic, behavioral, emotional, and social assessment tools, and provide consultation to clients, caregivers, and institutions.
4. Effectively interpret, utilize, apply, and conduct empirically-based research.
5. Identify, classify, and diagnose psychopathology, and implement evidence-based treatments to intervene with specific psychopathological issues.

Program Description

The Western Carolina University Master of Arts program in Clinical Psychology is a *full-time, two-year, on-campus Masters-level program*. Students should expect to be on campus 4 to 5 days a week (see sample schedule for Fall Semester, Year 2). The Program consists of a rigorous sequence of advanced training that consists of formal coursework, supervised clinical experiences, and research requirements with the goal to prepare graduates to enter doctoral-level programs clinical psychology or other applied disciplines, or for licensure at the master’s level. The Program is closely linked to WCU’s Western Carolina University’s Doctorate of Psychology (PsyD), which builds upon foundational knowledge, research training, and supervised clinical experiences accrued in the MA curriculum to meet doctoral level training standards, expectations, and licensure requirements. Taken together, the M.A./S.S.P. plus PsyD curriculum results in a minimum of five years of graduate training. However, graduates of the MA program are also prepared to pursue PhD training in psychology or to become licensed as master’s-level psychological associates. During the two years of the Program, students will learn to integrate theory, research, and practice to become skilled professionals who understand the importance of the scientific foundation of psychology and are prepared to assume one of the many roles of professional psychologists.

It is expected that students will enroll and complete 12-15 semester hours each Fall and Spring semester. The curriculum has been developed so that students completing the program and passing the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP) will be eligible for licensure as psychological associates in the state of North Carolina. For students pursuing licensure, it is the responsibility for student to be aware of state licensure laws to ensure training meets licensure standards for the state. For example, while the program requires two semesters of practicum experience, students who wish to be licensed need to ensure that they obtain 500 practicum hours. Students only completing an internal practicum will likely not obtain 500 hours.

Fall Semester Year 2 Schedule				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
McKee Clinic Internal Practicum 9-1PM	External Practicum All Day	McKee Clinic Internal Practicum 9-1PM	External Practicum All Day	Research/Thesis McKee Clinic Overflow All day
Neuro Psych and CBT 1-3:45PM		Neuro Psych and CBT 1-3:45PM		
4-5pm Internal Practicum Supervision		4-5pm External Practicum Supervision		

Program Diversity Statement and Commitment to Social Justice

Western Carolina University and the Program are committed to broadening our students' sensitivity, knowledge, and competence in working with individuals from different backgrounds. In the classroom, faculty work to foster open dialogue and provoke discussions about multicultural issues related to clinical practices and competencies. Students are encouraged to seek practicum experiences that will foster the further development of multicultural competencies. Students in the Program are expected to gain competence with and provide evidence-based, ethical clinical services for all clients. Students are expected to provide services to individuals who hold beliefs, values, life experiences, or attributes that may be different from their own. Students are expected to understand the impact of their own personal biases, effectively limit the impact of those biases on their work with clients, understand important historical contexts and social structures that play a role in the lives of diverse individuals, and develop and employ effective intervention strategies aimed at maximizing client outcomes. Finally, students are expected to demonstrate a commitment to social justice work and multiculturalism by serving as advocates for social change in the face of unhealthy and oppressive societal structures when these serve as obstacles for their diverse clients.

Program Diversity Statement

Diversity involves the affirmation, understanding, and professional application of the richness of human differences, ideas, practices, and beliefs that result from, but are not limited to, age, race, color, disability/health, ethnicity, gender identity, language, national origin, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, rural or urban status, as well as the intersectionality of these multiple identities. *Professional practice that is responsive to diversity* includes culturally appropriate communication skills to develop strong therapeutic alliances, assessment, diagnostic, intervention, consultation, supervision, administrative, and research modalities; understanding power differentials and dynamics; and attending to the social and cultural values which influence professional psychology.

Program Commitment to Social Justice

A commitment to social justice serves as a guiding principle of the Program and reflects our belief in the values and goals of a socially just society. Socially just societies are dependent upon the optimal functioning, health, and well-being of *all persons in that society*. Optimal functioning, health, and well-being of persons are contingent upon access to healthy environments that support healthy development and functioning. Our program embraces a social justice approach by helping students to create a heightened awareness of social injustices and to adopt an advocacy role in working with marginalized and underserved populations. Our goal is to foster the development of professional advocates who work to change societal structures, practices, values, and policies which have long served to perpetuate unhealthy environments for these populations. By working to effect change at the individual, institutional and systemic level, our students assist in promoting greater access to economic, social, political, and cultural resources.

Academic Recruitment, Application Requirements, and Admissions

Recruitment

The Program engages in various student recruitment efforts. The Program works with the Western Carolina University (WCU) Graduate School and WCU Communications and Marketing to publicize the Program. Program faculty participate in WCU Graduate School's Open House initiative to meet personally with students interested in the MA degree. The Program collaborates with the WCU Communications and Marketing department to advertise through search engines, print media (e.g., full page advertisement in the Southeastern Psychological Association program), and Departmental website presence. Program faculty also regularly attend statewide meetings, such as the North Carolina Undergraduate Conference, to advertise the Program. Student recruitment efforts are also shared and coordinated amongst the School Psychology and Masters programs to maximize efficiency and coverage.

Recruitment of diverse students. Through appropriate university offices, particularly WCU's Graduate School, Program faculty, particularly the DCT, has begun to network with community colleges and sister four-year institutions (including North Carolina's historically Black colleges and universities [HBCUs]) to identify potential scholars from underrepresented groups. Recruitment efforts will also extend to regional colleges and universities (e.g., Brevard College; Mars Hill College; University of North Carolina-Asheville) to recruit students from rural Appalachian communities to increase the diversity of the student body.

Application Requirements and Preferred Admissions Criteria:

Candidates must have earned (or will have earned prior to enrollment) either: a) an undergraduate degree (BA or BS) in psychology or b) an undergraduate degree (BA or BS) in another field with at least 18 hours of undergraduate credit in psychology which must include general psychology, 6 hours of statistics and/or research methods, and abnormal psychology. Candidates with degrees in another field may complete the additional 18 hours of psychology coursework as non-degree seeing students after earning their undergraduate degrees, but these courses must be completed prior to being admitted to the MA Program. The following application materials are also required:

- Unofficial Transcripts from all universities attended
 - Note: If accepted into the Program, official transcripts must be submitted prior to matriculation and enrollment.
- Official GRE General score report from test administration within the past five years (Psychology GRE scores are not required)
- Three letters of recommendation solicited from professionals (ideally professional supervisors and psychology faculty) who can provide information about candidate's:
 - Capacity for success in a graduate psychology program
 - Interpersonal characteristics
 - Academic preparation
 - Clinical or research skills (if applicable)
- A Curriculum Vita documenting the following criteria

- Prior research experience (preferred criteria)
- Educational history and Other Experiences
- Personal statement written in three (3) double-spaced pages or less describing the candidate's:
 - background and experiences in psychology
 - specific reasons for interest in WCU's MA Program in Clinical Psychology
 - research interests that align with departmental faculty
 - career goals

Deadline: Applications to the MA program are typically due March 1st for Fall admission. **Only completed applications received by the deadline will be considered.**

Application review, candidate selection, and timeline

Application review: Admission into the MA program is selective and satisfying the preferred admission criteria described below does not guarantee admission to the program. An admissions committee including psychology faculty members associated with the program will review all completed applications and invite top candidates for in-person interviews. Interviewee selection will be based on review of undergraduate coursework and GPA, GRE scores, quality of recommendations, research experience, and personal statement. The application review process involves holistic evaluation, including fit with mission of the program as well as academic preparation and promise.

Interview process: A select number of applicants will be invited for interviews (on-campus or via Zoom). The interview experience will consist of an orientation to the program, individual interviews with the admission committee members, and meetings and interviews with current graduate students. More information about interviewing will be provided to students when interview invitations are extended. The admission committee will reconvene after interviews to make final decisions regarding admissions. Students will be notified of their status and allowed to consider the offer until April 15th; the April 15th deadline is consistent with graduate training program agreements nationwide.

Table 1. Typical Application and Admission Timeline.

Event	Date
Application due	March 1st
Notification of interview invitation	March 15th
Interview date(s)	Third week of March
Notification of admission	April First
Applicant notification of acceptance of offer of admission	April 15

Course Transfer Credit, Course Waiver, and Prerequisite Review Procedures

The Program adheres to WCU's Graduate School policies regarding prior graduate coursework being applied to a WCU graduate program.

Course Transfer Credit. Course transfer credit refers to course credit transferred to WCU from another institution. Except under highly unusual circumstances, no course transfer credit will be accepted into the Program. As seen in the WCU Graduate School policy below, **no graduate coursework may be transferred for credit if earned as part of another graduate degree.** No course transfer credit will be applied to the core sequence of coursework for clinical training. These courses are: PSY 661 (Psychological Assessment I), PSY 662 (Psychological Assessment II - Adult Focus), PSY 675 (Cognitive Behavioral Interventions), and PSY 686 & 687 (Practicum). The Program does not accept thesis work completed at another institution.

For graduate coursework that was completed but not earned as part of another graduate degree, the Program will follow WCU Graduate School policies and procedures below. Course equivalency will be determined by review of graduate transcript and course syllabus by the DCT, the student's Program advisor or Program faculty, and the most recent instructor of the course considered for course transfer credit.

Graduate School Policy on Transfer of Credit. Transfer of credit requests will only be considered for credit earned on courses with a grade of "B" or higher from a regionally accredited college or university. Course credit taken as part of an earned master's or doctorate degree from another institution is not transferable into another graduate degree program at WCU. Transfer credit is not awarded for non-degree or certificate only students.

Each transfer of credit request will be evaluated to ensure appropriate WCU course equivalency in order to meet a specific degree course requirement. Transfer of credit policies vary according to the curriculum requirements of each graduate degree program. Before a transfer of credit request is submitted, the student should discuss the request with their program advisor. See directions below for submitting a transfer of credit request. Transfer credit requested for masters, post-masters, specialist or doctoral level courses at Western Carolina University must be designated at the same or higher level as noted on the official institutional transcript where the transfer credit was earned.

Students should note that while courses may be transferred into a degree program, grades earned at other institutions are not transferred and therefore are not counted toward a student's cumulative GPA. Transfer credit must be completed within six years immediately preceding the completion of requirements for the degree. The form to request transfer of credit from another institution is available from the Graduate School at grad@wcu.edu. Graduate students may enroll at another regionally accredited institution for transfer coursework which is applicable to their programs provided they have obtained advance permission from their advisor(s), the Department Head and the Dean of Graduate School and Research. The transfer coursework cannot exceed the maximum allowable transfer credit.

Course Waiver. A course waiver is slightly different from course transfer credit in that a student may request that a prior graduate course be counted as equivalent to a Program course, but that no transfer credit be awarded. Similar to Program policies related to Course Transfer Credit, Program coursework may not be waived (i.e., deemed satisfied) from prior graduate coursework except under

unusual circumstances. No course waiver will be applied to the core sequence of coursework for clinical training. These courses are: PSY 661 (Psychological Assessment I), PSY 662 (Psychological Assessment II - Adult Focus), PSY 675 (Cognitive Behavioral Interventions), and PSY 686 (Practicum). The Program does not accept thesis work completed at another institution and will not waive the thesis requirement. Course waiver requests will be determined by review of graduate transcript and course syllabus by the DCT, the student's Program advisor or Program faculty, and the most recent instructor of the course considered for course waiver.

Student Advisement

Although all Department faculty support graduate students during their program, several key roles warrant mention as they relate to student advisement.

Academic Advisement. The Director of Clinical Training (DCT), currently Dr. David Solomon, serves as the de facto academic advisor for all MA students. As such, the DCT serves as the initial point of contact for all policy, procedural, and programmatic questions for the MA program. Among other duties, the DCT is responsible for (a) informing graduate students about key program events, (b) coordinating program communications, (c) coordinating student evaluations, and (d) generally guiding students throughout the program.

Thesis Chair/Research Mentor. Any Departmental faculty member with Full Graduate Status may serve as a thesis Chair and research mentor for students. After admission, students are assigned a **temporary research mentor** based upon stated research interests in written application and during the interview process. Research mentorship may lead to faculty service as a Thesis Chair; however, students may change research mentors after discussion with their temporary research mentor and consultation with the DCT. Students should identify a Thesis Chair by the end of the first semester to efficiently plan and execute requirements for the thesis prospectus (see Thesis section of the student handbook for more details).

Thesis Committee Members. In addition to the student's Thesis Chair, students assemble a thesis committee within the first year of the program. The thesis committee consists of the Chair and two thesis committee members. Thesis committee members provide input, guidance, and consultation for student's thesis and are responsible for evaluating the written thesis prospectus, oral thesis prospectus defense, and final written thesis document, and final oral thesis defense (see thesis section of the student handbook for more details about thesis committee membership). Students are advised to select thesis committee members with content or methodological expertise related to the student's thesis project. The Thesis Chair shall assist students in selecting committee members. Students should identify their thesis committee members by the end of the second semester in the program.

Adherence to University Policies Regarding Non-Discrimination and Harassment

The Program adheres to WCU's Non-Discrimination and Harassment policies (see <https://www.wcu.edu/discover/leadership/office-of-the-chancellor/legal-counsel-office/university-policies/numerical-index/university-policy-53.aspx>). WCU's policy statement on unlawful discrimination states that the University is committed to equal opportunity in educational programs

and employment for all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, political affiliation and veteran status. The University is also committed to an inclusive and welcoming environment where scholarship and the exchange of ideas may be freely accomplished. To the fullest extent allowed by law, the University does not permit harassment based on bigotry, slurs and other hateful rhetoric. Additionally, in order to foster participation and learning, to the fullest extent provided by law, the University does not permit discrimination based on the above classes or characteristics.

WCU's policy on sexual harassment states that sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, constitutes unlawful discrimination based on gender and threatens the University's culture of civility and mutual respect. It is the policy of the University that its employees and students should be free from sexual misconduct perpetrated by any University employee, student, visitor to the campus, or any agent or contractor having a business, professional, or educational relationship with the University. The University reaffirms its commitment to academic freedom in accordance with the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and the policies of the University of North Carolina. Where it is an integral and legitimate part of course content, the pedagogical discussion of sexual ideas, taboos, behavior or language is reasonable and shall in no event constitute Sexual Harassment. While the discussion of opinions and ideas related to sexuality may cause some individuals discomfort, it is recognized that academic freedom ensures the free exchange of ideas – an essential part of a functioning democracy.

Degree Requirements and Minimum Levels of Performance

In this section of the Handbook, a summary of degree requirements is presented with targeted timelines appearing in parenthesis. Detailed policies and procedures for each degree requirement appear in other sections of the Handbook, and students are advised to refer to the appropriate sections for more detailed information.

The following are required to earn the Master of Arts (MA) program in Clinical Psychology at Western Carolina University (WCU):

1. **Satisfy prerequisites for program admission (Admission).** Program admission is contingent upon the student meeting program pre-requisites for admission outlined above.
2. **Complete all coursework, earning no more than 2 “C” grades.** All graduate coursework is expected to be completed with a grade of “B”. If a course grade of “C” is earned, the student may be placed on probation. Students must earn a grade of “B” or better in all core courses. These are PSY 661 (Psychological Assessment I), PSY 662 (Psychological Assessment II - Adult Focus), PSY 675 (Cognitive Behavioral Interventions), and PSY 686 (Practicum). If a student earns a “C” in any of these courses, the course must be retaken. Students who earn an “F” in any course are dismissed from the program.
3. **Complete 680 Project (Fall of Year 1).** Students must successfully complete an independent research project (the 680 project) under the guidance of a faculty mentor. The requirements for completion of the project are under the mentor's discretion, but typically completion involves some type of “product,” such as the submission of the research to a peer-reviewed conference.

4. **Complete thesis prospectus (Spring of Year 1).** Students must successfully write and defend a thesis prospectus. Detailed criteria for evaluation of the thesis prospectus are presented in the thesis section of the Handbook.
5. **Complete internal practicum in McKee Clinic (Fall and Spring of Year 2).** Students must successfully complete an internal practicum in the McKee Clinic. During this time, students must complete a **minimum of 3 integrated psychological assessments over the course of their second year.** Students must earn supervisory ratings of **satisfactory or higher** across all domains to successfully complete the internal practicum requirement. Detailed criteria for student evaluation are presented in the Practicum section of the Handbook. **Students seeking to become licensed psychological associates in the state of North Carolina will also need to accrue 500 total practicum hours between their internal and external practica during this time.** Students who do not also complete an external practicum must complete additional assessments beyond the minimum two per semester to meet their practicum training hours.
6. **Complete thesis defense (Spring of Year 2).** Students must successfully defend the final thesis product. Detailed criteria for evaluation of the thesis are presented in the thesis section of the Handbook.

Timeline for Program Completion

A description of the program curriculum, including when courses are offered, appears in Table 2. A recommended timeline for student completion of program milestones appears in Table 3.

Table 2. Program Curriculum

Fall 1st Year

PSY 651: Adv. Research Methods	4 hours
PSY 661: Assessment I	4 hours
PSY 671: Adv. Psychopathology	3 hours
PSY 680: Directed Study	3 hours
	14 hours

Spring 1st Year

PSY 652: Adv. Research Methods	3 hours
PSY 662: Personality Assessment	3 hours
PSY 672: Evidenced-Based Psychotherapy	3 hours
PSY 677: Group Psychotherapy	3 hours
PSY 599: Pre-Thesis	3 hours
	15 hours

Fall 2nd Year

PSY 748: Human Neuropsychology	3 hours
PSY 675: Cognitive & Behavioral Interventions	3 hours
PSY 686: Internal Practicum	1 hour
PSY 687: External Practicum	3 hours
PSY 699: Thesis	3 hours
	12 hours

Spring 2nd Year

PSY 624: Advanced Developmental Psychology	3 hours
PSY 686: Internal Practicum	1 hour
PSY 687: External Practicum	3 hours
PSY 699: Thesis	3 hours
Graduate Level Elective (Optional)	(3 hours)
	9 hours (12)

Table 3. Program Timeline of Significant Milestones

Year and Semester of Program	Program Milestones
First Year - Fall	1. Satisfactory completion of coursework. 2. Satisfactory completion of 680 project.
First Year - Spring	1. Satisfactory completion of coursework. 2. Satisfactory completion of thesis prospectus.
Second Year – Fall	1. Satisfactory completion of coursework. 2. Satisfactory completion of Practica.
Second Year- Spring,	1. Satisfactory completion of coursework. 2. Pass Thesis defense. 3. Satisfactory completion of Practica.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Western Carolina University has a long tradition of maintaining an environment that respects the dignity, rights, and value of all people and protects the tenants of freedom of expression, which includes voicing unpopular views and dissent. As members of the WCU community, students have the right to express their own views, but must also take responsibility for affording the same right to all others. As members of an institution dedicated to creating an environment rich with learning opportunities that incorporates teaching, research, service, and engagement through on-campus, off-campus, online, and international experiences, WCU students have a variety of rights and responsibilities.

Student Rights

The Program is committed to upholding **student rights** identified in WCU’s Code of Student Conduct, as follows:

- Expect treatment in accordance with the rights provided to individuals by the United States Constitution, laws of the state of North Carolina, and University procedures.
- Live and learn within an environment that values freedom of access and does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, political affiliation, or veteran status.

- Engage in a learning environment that promotes and values freedom of expression and evaluates Students on their academic performance, not on their opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards.
- Privacy, confidentiality, and/or appropriate management of their educational records as prescribed by FERPA, HIPPA, and other University, state, and/or federal guidelines.
- Live and learn within an environment that values freedom of association, and that has a clear process for establishing, joining, and organizing associations to promote their common interests.
- Academic evaluations, disciplinary proceedings, and/or University procedural matters. As a part of their due process rights, Students have the right to a clear understanding of all options for appeal and the associated procedures.
- Engage in academic and non-academic opportunities which value excellence, scholarship, teaching, and learning.
- Collaborate in an environment of respect for self and others.
- Live and learn within an environment that values the free and open interchange of ideas.
- Express complaints and concerns through established procedures with the expectation they will be investigated to the fullest extent possible and without fear of repercussions and/or acts of retaliation.
- Live and learn within an environment that values cultural diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity.

During student's orientation to the Program, students sign a document that ensures that they are aware of the Academic Integrity Policy and they will adhere to it.

Student Responsibilities

Similarly, the Program also expects students to adhere to **student responsibilities** identified in the Code of Student Conduct as follows:

- Adhere to University regulations, policies, and procedures as well as obey local, state, and federal laws.
- Understand and adhere to the Code and WCU Community Creed.
- Take the role of being a Student seriously and strive to meet the highest levels of academic integrity.
- Engage in behavior that does not deny others the rights provided to them by the United States Constitution, laws of the state of North Carolina, and/or University policies/procedures.
- Interact with others in a manner that does not discriminate against them on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, political affiliation, or veteran status.
- Understand the Catamount email system is the official form of University communication (University Policy 52). As a result, Students must adhere to the expectation of checking their WCU

email on a regular basis (we recommend multiple times a day). This responsibility applies to Winter and Summer Breaks for Students who were registered for classes in the semesters prior to and after the breaks.

- Adhere to the expectation that no Student shall threaten, coerce, harass, or intimidate another person or identifiable group of persons, in a manner that is unlawful or in violation of a constitutionally valid University policy, while on University premises or at University-sponsored activities based upon the person's race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, political affiliation, or veteran status.(UNC Policy Manual 700.4.2)
- Adhere to the expectation that no Student shall engage in unlawful harassment leading to a hostile environment. Unlawful harassment includes conduct that creates a hostile environment by meeting the following criteria: (a) Directed toward a particular person or persons; (b) Based upon the person's race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender-identity, creed, disability, or veteran status; (c) Unwelcome; (d) Severe or pervasive; (e) Objectively offensive; and/or (f) So unreasonable that it interferes with the target person's employment, academic pursuits, or participation in University-sponsored activities as to effectively deny equal access to the University's resources and opportunities. (UNC Policy Manual 700.4.2)
- Understand that in determining whether Student conduct violates these provisions, all relevant facts and circumstances shall be considered. Care must be exercised in order to preserve freedoms of speech and expression, as articulated in current legal standards. (UNC Policy Manual 700.4.2)
- Understand that University Officials shall seek advice from campus attorneys, as appropriate. (UNC Policy Manual 700.4.2)
- Report violations of the Code and/or law to an appropriate University Official (i.e. Associate Vice Chancellor/Dean of Students, DSCE, Student Affairs Office, WCU Police Department, etc.) immediately upon learning about the actual/alleged occurrence

Student Rights and Responsibilities Related to the APA Code of Conduct

The Program adheres to the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct related to all aspects of Program functioning. **Education and Training**, Section 7 of the APA Ethical Standards, warrants highlighting in this section of the Handbook. Consistent with the APA Ethics Code, Program faculty take reasonable steps to ensure that:

- (a) the Program meets requirements for licensure, certification and other goals of the program (Standard 7.01),
- (b) a current and accurate description of the Program is readily available to students (Standard 7.02),
- (c) course syllabi accurately describe subject matter, student evaluation procedures, and the nature of course experiences, and that Program faculty present information accurately (Standard 7.03), and,
- (d) timely and specific processes are followed when providing students with feedback, and that Program faculty evaluate students on actual performance relevant to program requirements (Standard 7.06).

Likewise, the Program requires that all students enrolled in the Program adhere to all applicable aspects of the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct.

Faculty Expectations and Student Responsibilities

In addition to University and ethical responsibilities, Program faculty believe there are a number of experiences students should have in order to develop professionally and personally. Some of these experiences are embedded in class requirements; others are demands on time beyond class commitments. Student willingness to accept these expectations is judged by attitudes and actions. The purpose of this section of the Handbook is to make clear these expectations. Students can then make informed decisions regarding the responsibilities they are undertaking when enrolled in this program. Students will be expected to live up to the tacit contract to fulfill these responsibilities.

Students are expected to behave in a responsible and assertive manner. This means taking care of one's own needs and responsibilities while at the same time being aware of and respecting the needs of others, both the peers and the faculty. This process requires such actions as being aware of and meeting deadlines, taking responsibility for missed classes, fulfilling class and program requirements, helping other students, being involved in the evolution of the program, and respecting the rights of other students and faculty who have their own lives and stresses.

Students should demonstrate a commitment to continued learning. Much of the specific course content covered in the program will be outdated within five years, or shortly thereafter. There are too many gains being made on too many fronts for anyone, faculty or students, to keep abreast of everything we might want or need to know in every area of clinical practice. The faculty expect students to learn the process of how to learn, i.e., how to know what you need to know, how to find the information, and how to incorporate it into your already existing body of knowledge and skills. Students are expected to exit the program with a strong base from which to grow and develop; however, they will have to go beyond the basic program to become and remain competent enough to practice.

Students should participate in the program fully. The requirements are not designed capriciously; they each have a purpose and add to the students' overall development as a professional. Students may question the rationale, offer alternatives to gain the same ends, or challenge the need for a particular experience (as long as it is done in a reasonable and responsible manner; there are vehicles for doing so). However, students should expect to satisfy each and every requirement, in all but the most extenuating circumstances, before graduating with a degree.

Although the faculty do not expect every student to be an optimally self-actualized person, we are here to help students in the program become an effective clinician – not to do in-depth therapy with students in the program. If students have temporary problems, the faculty will be supportive and encourage them to seek help. In keeping with APA Ethics Code 2.06 (Personal Problems and Conflicts) “Psychologists refrain from initiating an activity when they know or should know that there is a substantial likelihood that their personal problems will prevent them from performing their work-related activities in a competent manner.” This section of the Ethics Code also states, “When psychologists become aware of personal problems that may interfere with their performing work-related duties adequately, they take appropriate measures, such as obtaining professional consultation or assistance, and determine whether they should limit, suspend, or terminate their

work-related duties.” Should a student not be able to complete the duties of the program, a remediation plan will need to be developed with the DCT in conjunction with the program faculty.

Code of Student Conduct

The Program abides by Western Carolina University’s Graduate School Code of Conduct, which is presented below.

“The Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE) works with the University community to educate students about their rights and responsibilities as stated in the Western Carolina Creed, the Student Handbook and the Code of Student Conduct. A copy of WCU’s Code of Student Conduct is saved in the MA Program folder in Canvas.

The DSCE website is found at <http://dsce.wcu.edu> and includes important information about the Community Creed, alcohol and drug education, as well as student rights and responsibilities under the WCU Code of Student Conduct. The DSCE facilitates education about the Western Carolina University Community Creed, and also works to help students and organizations who violate University living and learning expectations become more responsible members of the Western Carolina University Community. DSCE also collaborates with academic leaders and public safety officials to help keep our campus community safe and welcoming to everyone in this community.

The university is committed to developing and maintaining the highest standards of scholarship and conduct. Therefore, all students are subject to the rules and regulations of the university. In accepting admission to Graduate School, students indicate their willingness to abide by university rules and regulations and acknowledge the right of the university to take appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion, as may be deemed appropriate, for failure to abide by university rules and regulations. Rules related to student conduct and procedures for the resolution of cases may be found in the Code of Ethics and the Academic Integrity Policy.

Students registered in the Graduate School at Western Carolina University may not be enrolled simultaneously at another institution except in the case of transfer of credit or guest matriculant, which must be approved in advance by the Dean of Graduate School and Research. Failure to comply with this policy may result in dismissal from the Graduate School.”

Academic Integrity Policy

The Program abides by Western Carolina University’s Academic Integrity Policy, which is presented in the section of the Handbook. During Program orientation, students acknowledge commitment to the Academic Integrity Policy via signing commitment form (see Appendix).

“Students, faculty, staff, and administrators of WCU strive to achieve the highest standards of scholarship and integrity. Any violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is a serious offense because it threatens the quality of scholarship and undermines the integrity of the community. While academic in scope, any violation of this policy is by nature, a violation of the Code of Student Conduct (Code) and will follow the same conduct process (see Article VII.B.1.a.). If the charge occurs close to the end of an academic semester or term or in the event of the reasonable need of either party for additional time to gather information timelines may be extended at the discretion of the appropriate academic Dean.

I. General:

Instructors have the right to determine appropriate academic sanctions for violations of the Academic Integrity Policy within their courses, up to an including a final grade of “F” in the course in which the violation occurs.

II. Definitions:

Cheating - Using, or attempting to use, unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

Fabrication - Creating and/or falsifying information or citation in any academic exercise.

Plagiarism - Representing the words or ideas of someone else as one’s own in any academic exercise.

Facilitation - Helping or attempting to help someone to commit a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy in any academic exercise (e.g. allowing another person to copy information during an examination).”

Program Commitment to American Psychological Association’s Code of Ethics

Graduate students are expected to be familiar with and to adhere to the professional and ethical guidelines appropriate to their area of study. Failure at any time to adhere to the guidelines may result in immediate dismissal from the Graduate School. Students enrolled in the MA program are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the American Psychological Association’s (APA) Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2017). The most recent version of the APA Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct is available in the MA Program folder in Canvas.

Student Due Process and Grievance Procedures

The Program adheres to Western Carolina University’s (WCU) Academic Integrity Policy, Code of Student Conduct, and the student due process and grievance procedures established by the WCU Graduate School. In this section of the Handbook, the due process procedures are described for: (a) violations of the **Academic Integrity Policy**, and (b) WCU’s **Academic Action Appeal Policy**. The Academic Action Appeal Policy applies to student *appeals of a final assigned grade or dismissal from the Program*. WCU Graduate School and Program procedures for academic dismissal appear in the Student Performance Evaluation and Feedback section of the Handbook.

Academic Integrity Policy and Process

This policy addresses academic integrity violations of undergraduate and graduate students. Graduate students should read inside the parenthesis below to identify the appropriate entities in charge of that step of the process.

Students, faculty, staff, and administrators of Western Carolina University (WCU) strive to achieve the highest standards of scholarship and integrity. Any violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is a serious offense because it threatens the quality of scholarship and undermines the integrity of the community. While academic in scope, any violation of this policy is by nature, a violation of the

Code of Student Conduct (Code) and will follow the same conduct process (see Article VII.B.1.a.). If the charge occurs close to the end of an academic semester or term or in the event of the reasonable need of either party for additional time to gather information timelines may be extended at the discretion of the appropriate academic Dean.

I. General:

Instructors have the right to determine appropriate academic sanctions for violations of the Academic Integrity Policy within their courses, up to an including a final grade of “F” in the course in which the violation occurs.

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Cheating - Using, or attempting to use, unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

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Plagiarism - Representing the words or ideas of someone else as one’s own in any academic exercise.

Facilitation - Helping or attempting to help someone to commit a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy in any academic exercise (e.g. allowing another person to copy information during an examination).

III. Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Integrity Process:

Within five (5) business days of the instructor’s knowledge of the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, s/he will inform his/her department head (or associate Dean of the graduate school when applicable) in writing of the allegation and sanction(s).

Within ten (10) business days of the instructor’s knowledge of the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the instructor will inform the student of the allegation, including the proposed sanction(s), in writing. In the written notification, the instructor will inform the student of his/her right to request a meeting with the instructor. During the meeting, the instructor shall complete the Academic Integrity Violation Faculty Resolution Form. If the student does not submit a written request for a meeting with the instructor within five (5) business days of receipt of the written allegation(s), the student shall be deemed to have mutually resolved the matter and shall be bound to the sanction(s) outlined by the instructor in the written allegation. If the student does not request a meeting, the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy shall not be subject to further review and/or appeal.

Within five (5) business days of meeting with the instructor, the student shall either appeal the decision in writing to the department head or mutually resolve the matter by accepting the allegation and proposed sanction(s). No action by the student within five (5) business days of the meeting with the instructor shall constitute a mutual resolution and waiver of the student’s rights to appeal pursuant to the Academic Integrity Policy. If the student does not respond within five (5) business days of meeting with the instructor, the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy shall not be subject to further review and/or appeal.

Within five (5) business days of receiving a student's written appeal, the department head must schedule a meeting with the student. The instructor may be present during the meeting. During the meeting, the department head shall complete the Academic Integrity Violation Department Head Resolution Form. Only information submitted during the meeting with the student, or in the meeting between the instructor and the student, may be considered by the department head. The evidentiary standard for making a decision shall be preponderance of the evidence. The department head may agree or disagree with the allegation(s) of the instructor. The department head may also approve, overturn, or modify the sanction(s) proposed by the instructor. If the student does not attend the scheduled meeting with the department head, the matter will be heard in absentia and shall not be subject to further review and/or appeal.

Within five (5) business days of meeting with the department head, the student shall either submit a written appeal regarding the decision or mutually resolve the matter by accepting the allegation and proposed sanction(s). The student must submit a written appeal to the academic Dean listed on the Academic Integrity Violation Department Head Resolution Form. No action by the student within five (5) business days of the meeting with the department head shall constitute a mutual resolution and waiver of the student's rights to appeal pursuant to the Academic Integrity Policy. If the student does not respond within five (5) business days of meeting with the department head, the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy shall not be subject to further review and/or appeal.

Within seven (7) business days of receiving a student's written appeal, the appropriate academic Dean must schedule an Academic Integrity Board hearing with the student. The Academic Integrity Board shall consist of a minimum of two (2) currently enrolled students and/or faculty members (with a minimum of one faculty member). A faculty member will serve as chair of the board. The instructor may be present during the hearing. Only information submitted during the hearing, or in the meetings between the instructor/department head and the student, may be considered by the hearing board. The evidentiary standard for making a decision shall be preponderance of the evidence. The hearing board may agree or disagree with the allegation(s) of the instructor. The hearing board may also approve, overturn, or modify the sanction(s) proposed by the instructor and/or department head. If the student does not attend the scheduled hearing, the matter will be heard in absentia and shall not be subject to further review and/or appeal. Within ten (10) business days of the hearing, the appropriate academic Dean shall review pertinent records and send the student written notification of the decision of the Academic Integrity Board.

Within five (5) business days of receiving written notification of the decision of the Academic Integrity Board the student may accept the findings and sanctions of the board or submit an appeal to the designated academic Dean. No action by the student within five (5) business days of the meeting with the department head shall constitute a mutual resolution and waiver of the student's rights to appeal pursuant to the Academic Integrity Policy. If the student does not respond within five (5) business days of meeting with the Academic Integrity Board, the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy shall not be subject to further review and/or appeal.

If the student elects to file an appeal of the decision of the Academic Integrity Board, s/he must submit a written appeal within five (5) business days of receiving written notification of the decision of the Academic Integrity Board to the designated academic Dean. An appeal to an academic Dean

must be limited to the following grounds; 1) a violation or due process or 2) a material deviation from Substantive and Procedural Standards by the UNC Board of Governors (as set forth in the UNC Manual 700.4.1).

If an appeal is heard by an academic Dean, s/he shall review pertinent records within ten (10) business days of receiving a valid appeal. The academic Dean may agree or disagree with the allegation(s) of the instructor. The academic Dean may also approve, overturn, or modify the sanction(s) proposed by the instructor, department head, and/or Academic Integrity Board. Within five (5) days of making a decision, the academic Dean shall provide the student with a written decision. The decision of the academic Dean shall be final.

The student must remain enrolled in the course related to the case, and may not be permitted to withdraw from the course related to the case, until all hearing timelines, notifications, and/or appeals have been completed.

Upon resolution of each level of the case (no matter the outcome), the instructor, department head, and academic Dean must provide the Associate Vice Chancellor/Dean of Students with all materials and documents related to the case (i.e. course syllabus, materials in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, Instructor Resolution Form, Department Head Resolution Form, Academic Integrity Board decision letter, academic Dean decision letter, etc...). The Division of Student Affairs shall serve as the repository for all records associated with allegations and violations associated with the Academic Integrity Policy.

IV. Academic Integrity Board:

The Academic Integrity Board shall consist of a minimum of two (2) currently enrolled students and/or faculty members (with a minimum of one faculty member). A faculty member will serve as chair of the board. Students and faculty members serving on boards for each college will be selected by each college Dean. The Department of Student Community Ethics and Academic Affairs will train all board members prior to their service on a hearing board. Each academic Dean will convene hearing boards as necessary, and will determine a faculty member to serve as chair prior to a hearing.

V. Sanctions:

The instructor, department head, Academic Integrity Board, and/or academic Dean may impose academic sanctions permitted by the institution (not to exceed receiving a grade of “F” for the course). The instructor, department head, Academic Integrity Board, and/or academic Dean may not permanently remove the student from the course or suspend/expel the student from a program or the University. Student behavior of the magnitude to warrant consideration for permanent removal from the course or suspension/expulsion from a program or the University must be referred to the Associate Vice Chancellor/Dean of Students.

VI. Habitual Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy:

Upon receipt of materials associated with violations of the Academic Integrity Policy, the Associate Vice Chancellor/Dean of Students will determine if a student has previous violations of University policies. Students with a prior record of violations, or who commits a gross and/or egregious violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, will be referred to the Department of Student Community

Ethics for consideration of being subject to hearing proceedings for a serious academic violation as defined by the Code of Student Conduct. Students in this category are subject to course-related sanctions imposed by the instructor, department head, Academic Integrity Board, and/or academic Dean and University-level sanctions imposed by the Department of Student Community Ethics for multiple violations of University policies.

VII. Forms:

Forms related to the Academic Integrity Policy are not maintained in the printed catalog, but can be accessed at this address on the web: <https://www.wcu.edu/experience/dean-of-students/academic-integrity.aspx>.

Academic Action Appeal Policy

A student (undergraduate or graduate) has the right to *appeal a final assigned grade or dismissal from a program* level. A student may only appeal a final grade or program dismissal if they can show the grade or program dismissal was assigned arbitrarily or impermissibly. A student who wishes to appeal a grade on a particular assignment or exam can do so if it affects their final assigned grade or dismissal from a program.

1. The final grade or dismissal was impermissible based in whole or in part upon the student's race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or for some other arbitrary or personal reason unrelated to the instructor's reasonable exercise of his or her professional academic judgment in the evaluation of the academic performance of the student; or
2. The final grade or program dismissal was assigned in a manner not consistent with the standards and procedures for evaluation established by the instructor, the program, or the University in the Catalog, in the course syllabus, or during the class/program in written or oral communications directed to the class/program as a whole; or
3. The final grade or program dismissal was the result of a clear and material mistake in calculating or recording grades or other evaluation.
4. Individual elements (e.g., assignments, tests, activities, projects) which contribute to a final grade are generally NOT subject to appeal or subsequent review during a final grade appeals procedure. However, individual elements may be appealed under these procedures providing all of the following conditions are met: a) The student presents compelling evidence that one or more individual elements were graded on arbitrary or impermissible grounds; b) Grounds can be established for determining a professionally sound grade for the appealed element(s); and c) The ensuing grade for each appealed element would have resulted in a different course grade than that assigned by the faculty member.

If dismissal from the Graduate School is a result of grades (3 C's or an F), the student may appeal the grade causing the dismissal. If the appeal is unsuccessful, the dismissal stands; the student cannot appeal the dismissal as well as the grade because dismissal is based upon the grades. If the appeal is successful, the dismissal will be rescinded.

If a student is appealing dismissal from a program, or a final assigned grade that results in dismissal, the student shall be allowed to continue taking courses until the appeal is resolved (with the approval

of the program in which the classes are taken), with the exception of clinical placements or internships, or when the students' continued participation is deemed by the program director or department head to be harmful or disruptive to other students and/or the program.

If the appeal is unsuccessful and the dismissal stands, the student will be removed from any classes in which he or she is registered and will be responsible for any tuition and fees accrued as a result of registration during the appeals process.

Academic Action Appeal Overview

Students who wish to appeal a final assigned grade or dismissal from an academic program for any reason other than academic dishonesty should follow, in order, the academic appeal procedure outlined below. (For these procedures, a "working day" = a day classes are held on campus).

Appeals of a final assigned grade and appeals of dismissals from an academic program follow similar procedures: 1) Appeal to Instructor; 2) Appeal to Department Head (The term "Department Head" in these procedures refers both to Department Heads and School Directors); 3) Appeal to Academic College - Associate Dean - may dismiss appeal or send to: 4) College Academic Action Committee Review; or 5) Academic Dean Review.

An Appeal to Provost is only allowed for (1) alleged violations of procedures, (2) discrimination based on a protected class, or (3) the student's exercise of rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution. No right of appeal is available beyond the Provost.

Final Grade Appeal Procedures. The following procedures detail the steps for appealing a final assigned grade (whether or not that grade results in dismissal from the Graduate School). The student is encouraged to meet/talk with the instructor prior to filing a formal appeal.

The student must demonstrate that the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned (see Academic Action Policy). That the student simply disagrees with the assigned grade does not constitute a basis for a review.

Step 1. Appeal to Instructor.

Within 35 calendar days after the student receives notification of the academic action (grade) the student should submit a formal written appeal to the instructor. This appeal must include: a) a statement of the reason(s) why the student believes the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned (see policy Academic Action Appeal Policy) b) the resolution sought.

If the grade being appealed is leading to dismissal from the Graduate School, the Dean of the Graduate School should be copied on the student's initial appeal. All correspondence should include contact information.

The instructor must respond to the student's request in writing as soon as possible (no later than ten working days after receiving the student's written appeal). This response should detail whether or not the instructor is approving or denying the appeal.

Step 2. Appeal to Department Head.

If the student is unable to resolve the grievance through the appeal to the instructor, the student should submit a written appeal to the department head within 10 working days of receiving the

instructor's written response (from Step 1). If the department head is the instructor for the grade assigned, the associate dean of the department's college will serve this function. Students appealing to the department head assume the burden of proof. Therefore, the appeal must include: a) a statement of the reason(s) the student believes the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned; b) the steps taken to resolve the disagreement over the assigned course grade; and c) the resolution sought.

The appeal must be accompanied by evidence the student believes supports the conclusion that the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned. Evidence might include papers, tests, syllabi, or written documentation.

Within ten working days of receiving this appeal, the department head will attempt to resolve the appeal. If the department head is unable to resolve the appeal within ten working days, the department head will notify the student of the decision, and the student has 10 days to appeal to the associate dean of the academic college.

Step 3. Appeal to the Academic College (Associate Dean Review).

If appealing to the academic college, the student should forward (to the associate dean of the academic college) his/her initial Appeal to the Instructor and response from the instructor (from Step 1), the subsequent Appeal to the Department Head, and the department head's written notification (from Step 2). Upon receipt of the appeal and aforementioned materials the associate dean may request further information from the student, the instructor, and/or the department head.

If the associate dean concludes that the facts alleged by the student do not constitute permissible grounds for appeal as set forth in this Academic Action Appeal Policy or Procedures, the associate dean may, in consultation with the Dean and Graduate Dean if applicable, dismiss the review. The student will not be allowed any further appeal.

If the associate dean determines that the facts alleged in the student's written appeals could, if true, constitute a violation of the Academic Action Appeal Policy or Procedures, the associate dean, within ten working days of receiving all information, shall refer the case to the College's Academic Action Committee.

Step 4. Academic Action Committee Review.

The College Academic Action Committee (CAAC) will consist of faculty members (who do not teach in the program from which the appeal originated) and students as designated by the academic college (graduate or undergraduate based upon appeal) appointed by the appropriate Academic Dean or Associate Dean. At least two of the faculty members shall be selected from "allied" disciplines or programs. The Associate Dean will serve as ex officio (non-voting) chair of this committee. The purpose of the CAAC is to determine whether the facts support the student's contention that the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned, or there was material procedural deviation, as defined in the policy. It is not the function of the Committee to re-evaluate the student's work to determine whether the CAAC agrees with the professional judgment of the faculty member who assigned the grade.

The CAAC Chair shall convene the Committee not later than ten working days from the request by the associate dean to examine the student's appeals to the instructor and department head. The

CAAC will also take into consideration any written statements received by the associate dean from either the student or the instructor, and any additional relevant documentation. Additionally, the CAAC may request oral presentations from both parties. Other relevant parties may be questioned.

Neither the student nor the faculty member may be accompanied or represented in the hearing by legal counsel or other advisor. The CAAC may consider only such evidence as is offered by the parties and at the hearing(s) and need consider only the evidence offered that it considers fair and reliable. The burden of proof shall be on the student to satisfy the Committee that a preponderance of the evidence supports a conclusion that the grade was awarded arbitrarily or impermissibly as defined. All recommendations of the CAAC shall be made by a simple majority vote.

Within ten working days from the conclusion of its hearing(s) on the matter, the CAAC Chair will provide a written report to the academic dean and to the graduate dean (for graduate-level grade appeals). The Committee report must include the Committee's finding as to whether or not the grade assigned was awarded arbitrarily or impermissibly as defined in the policy. If such a determination is made, the CAAC shall recommend a course of action which could include recommending assignment of a specific grade to replace the one originally assigned or implementation of some process to re-evaluate the student's work.

Step 5. Review by the Dean.

Within ten working days after receiving the CAAC's report, recommendations and other documentation assembled in the review, the academic Dean will, in consultation with the faculty member and department head, determine a final course of action. She/He will then communicate the final action in writing to the student, faculty member, department head, and (for graduate-level grade appeals) the dean of the Graduate School.

Appeal to the Provost: An appeal to the Provost is only allowed if the student can establish a reasonable basis that the appeal procedures were not followed, discrimination of a protected class has occurred, and/or a student's exercise of rights guaranteed by the First Amendment has been violated. If the student feels one of these conditions applies, s/he must file a written appeal to the Provost explaining the situation that warrants this level of appeal. The Provost shall provide his/her written decision to the student within ten calendar days of receipt of the appeal. No appeal is available beyond the Provost.

Substitution Provisions: In the event that the faculty member whose grade is being reviewed is also a department head/school director, the associate dean shall do those things required by the head or director. In the event that the faculty member whose grade is being reviewed is also an associate dean, the academic dean or Provost can name an appropriate substitute to perform the functions of the associate dean as required by this policy.

Program Dismissal Appeal Procedures. The following procedures detail the steps for appealing a dismissal from a program for any reason other than final assigned grade(s), including failure to adhere to technical standards.

Dismissal from the Graduate School (and therefore dismissal from the program) based on poor grades may not be appealed. In this case, the affected student must appeal the final grade(s) resulting

in the dismissal from the Graduate School. The student is encouraged to meet/talk with the program director prior to filing a formal appeal.

The student must demonstrate that dismissal was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned (see Academic Action Policy). That the student simply disagrees with the dismissal does not constitute a basis for a review.

Step 1. Appeal to Program Director (For the Program, this is the Director of Clinical Training) .

Within 35 calendar days after the student receives notification of the academic action (cause for program dismissal) the student should submit a formal written appeal to the instructor. This appeal must include: a) a statement of the reason(s) why the student believes the dismissal was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned (see policy Academic Action Appeal Policy); b) the resolution sought.

When appealing a dismissal from a graduate program, the student must copy the Dean of the Graduate School on this initial appeal. All correspondence should include contact information.

The program director must respond to the student's request in writing as soon as possible (no later than ten working days after receiving the student's written appeal). This response should detail whether or not the program is approving or denying the appeal.

Step 2. Appeal to Department Head.

If the student is unable to resolve the grievance through the appeal to the program director, the student should submit a written appeal to the department head within 10 working days of receiving the program director's written response (from Step 1). If the department head is the instructor for the grade assigned, the associate dean of the department's college will serve this function. Students appealing to the department head assume the burden of proof. Therefore, the appeal must include: a) a statement of the reason(s) the student believes the dismissal was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned; b) the steps taken to resolve the disagreement over the dismissal; and c) the resolution sought. The appeal must be accompanied by evidence the student believes supports the conclusion that the dismissal was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned. Evidence might include papers, tests, syllabi, or written documentation.

Within ten working days of receiving this appeal, the department head will attempt to resolve the appeal. If the department head is unable to resolve the appeal within ten working days, the department head will notify the student of the decision and copy the Dean of the Graduate School, and the student has 10 days to appeal to the Associate Dean of the academic college.

Step 3. Appeal to the Academic College (Associate Dean Review).

If appealing to the academic college, the student should forward (to the associate dean of the academic college) his/her initial Appeal to the Program Director and the program director's response (from Step 1), the subsequent Appeal to the Department Head, and the department head's written notification (from Step 2). Upon receipt of the appeal and these materials the associate dean may request further information from the student, the program director, and/or the department head.

If the associate dean concludes that the facts alleged by the student do not constitute permissible grounds for appeal as set forth in this Academic Action Appeal Policy or Procedures, the associate

dean may, in consultation with the academic Dean and Graduate Dean if applicable, dismiss the review. The student will not be allowed any further appeal.

If the associate dean determines that the facts alleged in the student's written appeals could, if true, constitute a violation of the Academic Action Appeal Policy or Procedures, the associate dean, within ten working days of receiving all information, shall refer the case to the College's Academic Action Committee.

Step 4. Academic Action Committee Review.

The College Academic Action Committee (CAAC) will consist of faculty members (who do not teach in the program from which the appeal originated) and students as designated by the academic college (graduate or undergraduate based upon appeal) appointed by the appropriate academic Dean or Associate Dean. At least two of the faculty members shall be selected from "allied" disciplines or programs. The Associate Dean will serve as ex officio (non-voting) chair of this committee. The purpose of this Committee is to determine whether the facts support the student's contention that the dismissal was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned, or there was a material procedural deviation, as defined in the policy. It is not the function of the CAAC to re-evaluate the student's work to determine whether the Committee agrees with the professional judgment of the program director or faculty member(s).

The CAAC Chair shall convene the Committee not later than ten working days from the request by the associate dean to examine the student's appeals to the program director and department head. The committee will also take into consideration any written statements received by the associate dean from either the student or the program director, and any additional relevant documentation. Additionally, the Committee may request oral presentations from both parties. Other relevant parties may be questioned.

Neither the student nor the program director may be accompanied or represented in the hearing by legal counsel or other advisor. The CAAC may consider only such evidence as is offered by the parties and at the hearing(s) and need consider only the evidence offered that it considers fair and reliable. The burden of proof shall be on the student to satisfy the Committee that a preponderance of the evidence supports a conclusion that the dismissal was awarded arbitrarily or impermissibly as defined. All recommendations of the CAAC shall be made by a simple majority vote.

Within ten working days from the conclusion of its hearing(s) on the matter, the CAAC Chair will provide a written report to the academic dean and to the graduate dean (for graduate-level grade appeals). The Committee report must include the Committee's finding as to whether or not the dismissal assigned was awarded arbitrarily or impermissibly as defined in the policy. If such a determination is made, the CAAC shall recommend a course of action which could include recommending readmission or implementation of some process to re-evaluate the student's actions/work that lead to the program dismissal.

Step 5. Review by the Dean.

Within ten working days after receiving the CAAC's report, recommendations, and other documentation assembled in the review, the academic Dean will, in consultation with the program director and department head, determine a final course of action. S/he will then communicate the

final action in writing to the student, faculty member, department head, and the dean of the Graduate School.

Appeal to the Provost: An appeal to the Provost is only allowed if the student can establish a reasonable basis that the appeal procedures were not followed, discrimination of a protected class has occurred, and/or a student's exercise of rights guaranteed by the First Amendment has been violated. If the student feels one of these conditions applies, she/he must file a written appeal to the Provost explaining the situation that warrants this level of appeal. The Provost shall provide his/her written decision to the student within ten calendar days of receipt of the appeal. No right of appeal is available beyond the Provost.

Substitution Provisions. If the faculty member whose grade is being reviewed is also a department head/school director, the associate dean shall do those things required by the head or director. If the faculty member whose grade is being reviewed is also an associate dean, the academic dean or Provost can name an appropriate substitute to perform the functions of the associate dean as required by this policy.

Student Grievances

Formal mechanisms for handling specific grievances are outlined in various sections of this Handbook (e.g., Academic Dishonesty, Program Dismissal). However, it is possible to resolve many student complaints and concerns on an informal basis. If you have a complaint involving a course or instructor (e.g., you disagree with a grade or course requirement) or feel you have been treated unfairly by any member of the faculty (e.g., you believe the faculty member violated the APA Code of Ethics with respect to education and training matters), it is appropriate to discuss your concern with the individual involved. If this proves unsatisfactory, you should feel free to discuss the matter in confidence with the DCT and/or the Department Chair. The Department Chair can also advise you on the appropriate procedures for lodging a formal complaint. If you have concerns of a more general nature involving, for example, departmental policy or the clinical program, feel free to discuss them with the DCT and/or the Department Chair.

Thesis

Purpose of the Thesis

All students work closely with faculty members on research during both years of their degree program. During the first year, students attain basic research experience with at least one faculty mentor. In the second year, students work closely under the supervision of a thesis chair to develop and carry out a research project that will either replicate and extend previous studies or make a novel contribution of its own to the extant literature. The purpose of the thesis is to provide graduate students in the clinical and school psychology graduate programs a way to formally demonstrate both research competency and content knowledge competency. Thesis projects can make use of qualitative or quantitative methods depending on the nature of the research. The scientific merit of the proposed project (including research methods) must be approved by the student's chair and a selected committee during an initial prospectus defense and during the final thesis defense.

Procedural Requirements

During the summer prior to their first semester in the program, all incoming students will be matched with an initial research mentor based on their interests and mentor availability (i.e., which mentors are accepting new students for the incoming semester). This mentor will serve as the student's Psy 680 instructor, who will mentor the student's first-semester project. While most students traditionally continue with their 680 instructor as their thesis chair, some students may switch research mentors as they learn more about the faculty research interests and further explore their own research interests. Students have until the Friday of their first week of classes of their first Spring Semester to select their thesis chair.

Changes following this point can only be made at the agreement of the current thesis chair, the newly selected thesis chair, and the director of the psychology graduate program. This change may require the student to late drop their pre-thesis course with the current chair and late add their pre-thesis course with their new thesis mentor, which may incur fees that must be paid to the registrar at the student's expense.

Students must successfully propose their thesis by the last day of exam week during the Spring Semester of their first year in the program to be considered to be meeting milestones and eligible for full GA funding for the following year. The thesis proposal and defense timeline are outlined further below.

To help ensure high quality theses and a fair, constructive evaluation process, the Psychology department has developed the following procedural requirements. These requirements supplement those described in the "[Thesis Guide](#)" produced by the WCU graduate studies office.

1. Committee Members

- a. The composition of each thesis committee should conform to the following guidelines as often as possible
 - i. Thesis committees may only be comprised of three (3) members. Two (2) members must be full-time psychology faculty members (including psychology department courtesy appointments).
 - ii. The thesis chair must be full time member of the Psychology Graduate Faculty or Psychology Department Courtesy Appointment of the University.
 - iii. The third member of the committee may be a faculty member from a different department who holds graduate faculty status.
- b. If, in consultation with the thesis chair, it is decided that a different composition is needed for membership of a committee then the thesis chair must submit a written request supporting an alternative composition. This request should include justification for this change and be sent to the chair of the Psychology Graduate Committee. The chair will forward this request on to the rest of the committee who will vote by email. A majority vote in favor of the alternative composition will be needed in order to move forward.
- c. If a student is considering a thesis chair who is not a full-time member of the Psychology Graduate Faculty or a Psychology Department Courtesy Appointment, this needs to be addressed with the Program Director and the Program Director will need to send to the Psychology Graduate Committee a request for such a change including

- justification for why this change would benefit the student's thesis work. This request should be sent to the chair of the Psychology Graduate Committee who will forward the request on to the rest of the committee. An email vote will be taken and a majority vote will be needed for approval of the request.
- d. Any changes to the membership of a thesis committee may only be done before a draft of the prospectus is ever distributed to the committee members. No changes to the committee membership are allowed after the thesis prospectus has been distributed with only extreme exceptions (e.g., a committee member departs the university).
 - e. If a student finds that an already defended prospectus is untenable (e.g., data are no longer available or are impossible to collect), then the student *may* form a new committee *but* a new prospectus *must* be defended in both oral and written form.
 - f. Consultation with an expert outside of thesis committee is allowed as a non-voting member. Only the thesis committee may require adoption or rejection of outside expert's recommendations, and their ratings are not counted towards total scores on the thesis prospectus. However, the non-voting member may participate in both the written and oral defense process.

Thesis Class Requirements

Students must complete a “pre-thesis” (prospectus) course (PSY 599), which is graded by the thesis chair during the second semester of the first year. During the second year, students will enroll in PSY 699 (Thesis) hours to complete the thesis project.

Writing the Thesis Prospectus and Thesis

The key to writing a good empirical research article is to strive, first and foremost, for *accuracy* and *clarity* (Bem, 2002). Like any scientific writer, you and your thesis advisor have some flexibility in the organization, structure and length of your thesis prospectus and thesis to best achieve these goals. Below, general guidelines are provided for you to consider as you write your thesis prospectus and thesis.¹

a. **APA standards.** The prospectus and thesis should adhere to the latest edition of the APA publishing guidelines and it must be in the graduate school's format. The final thesis document will be formatted according to the graduate school requirements (see graduate school “[Thesis Guide](#)” and attached formatting tips)

b. **Introduction (Prospectus and Thesis)**

Opening Statements. The first task of a research article is to introduce the background and nature of the problem or issue being investigated, and to let the reader know the purpose of your research.

Prospectus Example: As many college student will affirm, taking a test can be stressful experience. In fact, apprehension associated with taking a test can at times feel overwhelming. By merely anticipating a difficult test, a student can experience intense anxiety and their minds can be invaded by fearful thoughts of failure and self-doubt that interfere with concentration. In the proposed research, we will consider

¹ Recommendations are based on: Bem, D. J. (2002). Writing the Empirical Journal Article in Darley, J. M., Zanna, M. P., & Roediger III, H. L. (Eds) , *The Compleat academic: A career guide*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

the possibility that having a “good laugh” prior to taking a test can actually inhibit anxiety and prevent performance impairment. Specifically, we will test the effect of exposure to humorous stimuli on math test performance and anxiety associated with taking the test.

Literature Review. After making the opening statements summarize the current knowledge in the area of your investigation. Describe relevant theories and previous research that has been done on the problem. The goal of the literature review is to provide a context and a rationale for your new hypothesis or research question.

The APA Publication Manual gives the following guidelines for the literature review:

Discuss the literature but do not include an exhaustive historical review. Assume that the reader is knowledgeable about the field for which you are writing and does not require a complete digest. . . . Cite and reference only works pertinent to the specific issue and not works of only tangential or general significance. If you summarize earlier works, avoid nonessential details; instead, emphasize pertinent findings, relevant methodological issues, and major conclusions (APA, 2001, p. 16).

Ending the Introduction. A good way to end the Introduction is by providing a brief overview of your own study. Describe your conceptual hypotheses or research questions and then briefly discuss what you will do to test your hypotheses (answer your research questions). This provides a smooth transition to the Method section.

Prospectus Example: On the basis of the stress-reducing effect of humor, I hypothesize that exposure to humorous material prior to taking a difficult math test can inhibit the amount of state anxiety associated with the anticipated test, and thus enhance performance. Accordingly, I will tell participants that they will take a difficult math test. Before giving the test, however, I will ask participants to read either 10 cartoons, 10 short poems or nothing at all. Participants will then complete the math test and a measure of state anxiety associated with taking the test. I predict that participants in the cartoon condition will report less test anxiety and perform better on the math test than participants in either the poem condition or the control condition.

c. Method Section (Prospectus and Thesis)

The APA Publication Manual describes what needs to be included in the Method section. As an overview, the Method section provides the information by which the validity of your study is judged. It should describe what you did to test your hypothesis or answer your research questions. Thus, the Method section requires a clear and precise description of how you conducted your study and a rationale for why you chose certain procedures (e.g., experimental manipulations, measures). The Method section should be divided into sub-sections that describe: the participants of your study, the design of your study, materials used in the study, the research protocol or procedure, how manipulations were introduced, and how measurements (observations) were made.

d. Results Section (Thesis only)

Your thesis prospectus may not include a Results section, although you might want to include a section that describes expected results. For the Results section of your thesis, your goal is to report the results of the data analyses used to test your hypotheses or answer your research questions.

Therefore, remind the reader of your hypotheses or research questions. Then, identify your data analysis strategy, report your analyses, and provide some interpretation of the findings. Be sure to make clear the connection between each analysis and your hypotheses (research questions). In describing the results of statistical tests, report the descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations, as well as the test statistic, degrees of freedom, obtained value of the test, and the probability of the result occurring by chance (p value). When reporting a significant difference between two conditions, indicate the direction of this difference, i.e. which condition was more/less/higher/lower than the other(s). Assume that your audience has a professional knowledge of statistics. Do not explain how or why you used a certain test unless it is unusual (i.e., such as a non-parametric test).

e. Discussion Section (Thesis only)

Begin the discussion by describing what you have learned from your study. Make a clear statement about how the results supported or failed to support your hypothesis, or how they addressed your research question. Next, explain the meaning of the findings, why they are important. Relate the findings to those of similar studies, consider alternative explanations for the findings, draw out practical or theoretical implications of the findings, acknowledge the study's limitations and describe ways that future research can be conducted to address remaining questions or issues.

f. References and Appendices (Prospectus and Thesis)

The number of references cited in a thesis or prospectus will vary. The important guiding principle is to "cite and reference only works pertinent to the specific issue and not works of only tangential or general significance" (APA, 2001, p. 16). Appendices should include consent/assent forms and all surveys/questionnaires/measurements/materials unless they are copyrighted

g. Tables and Figures (Prospectus and Thesis)

See the APA Publication Manual for a description of how to incorporate tables and figures.

h. Prospectus (and Thesis) Defense Procedures: Passing/Failing Considerations

Passing/failing of a prospectus or thesis defense should be based only on the quality of the written product and the oral defense. No extraneous factors like the student's performance in other classes, or practicum, or students' future career aspirations should be taken into account. Outside consultants who are not formal members of the committee have no role in the prospectus/thesis' defense deliberations or decisions regarding passing or failing.

Defending the Prospectus

The determination of whether a prospectus is ready to be defended is up to the discretion of the thesis chair. Students may not send a prospectus to the committee without approval from the chair. After approval for defense from the chair, a prospectus must be sent to the committee with two (2) weeks of advance to allow sufficient time for review. During the review time, the committee members a) Evaluate and grade the written product and b) Prepare thoughtful, constructive criticism for the project. The committee members must grade the written product using the corresponding form (Appendix) and complete the rating form before the oral defense.

Requirements of the Written Product (see rating form in Appendix). These forms are also available in H:\CEAP\PSY Share\Forms).

A written prospectus must meet the following criteria to pass:

- Clear, thorough, relevant, and up to date literature review of the theoretical and empirical underpinnings of the idea being tested.
- Clear “statement of the problem” or “purpose of the study” that must be well linked to the literature review in the introduction.
- The methodology must be appropriate to answer the question at hand.
- Significant results are NOT a requirement for a project to be successful. However a clear explanation of the findings, linkage to the extant literature and thoughtful conclusions are necessary for a project to be deemed worthy of a passing grade.

During the oral defense the student is expected to provide a cogent presentation of the project and allow for sufficient time to field questions about the project. After the oral defense, the committee discusses the oral defense, grades it and tallies scores to determine passing/failing.

Requirements of the Oral Defense (see rating form in Appendix). These forms are also available in H:\CEAP\PSY Share\Forms).

During the oral defense the student should be able to accurately demonstrate:

- Understanding and dominion of the background literature,
- Understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the study,
- Understanding of the research methods and data analyses,
- Understanding of the implications/applications of potential findings of the study.

Action following Successful Prospectus Defense

- Send Abstract with Abstract Cover Sheet signed by committee (directions provided in the Graduate Schools Thesis Guide linked above). This has to be submitted prior to enrolling in any PSY 699 classes.
- Complete research, analysis, and writing of Thesis under supervision of Thesis Chair. Turn in final product to the graduate program within the established deadlines (consult graduate school website).

Action following Unsuccessful Prospectus Defense

- If a student is unable to successfully defend his/her prospectus (written and/or oral) during the Spring semester of their first year they will receive an Incomplete for the PSY 599 course and will be unable to enroll in the PSY 699 course for the Fall semester unless able to make the corrections needed and successfully defend the prospectus during the summer. A student is considered to have failed their first prospectus defense if they do not successfully defend it by the end of their Spring semester of first year, even if they do not make an attempt to defend it during that semester. Students who are not ready to defend their prospectus at the end of the Spring semester 1st year as determined by the student or by the chair MUST still have a “working meeting” with the committee to help the student further develop the thesis prospectus. The student must complete this meeting during the Spring semester 1st year, and has still been considered to have failed their first attempt at defending their prospectus following this meeting. A student who fails to defend their prospectus two times will be dismissed from the program. At the discretion

of the chair, students who fail only one portion of the prospectus during the spring defense may only be required to redo the remaining portion by the end of summer. For example, a student who passes the oral defense in the spring but has numerous errors on the written portion may be allowed by the chair to resubmit the written document during the summer but not required to complete a second oral defense. In such cases, the committee would still provide the student with feedback on the written document following its resubmission

Defending the Final Thesis

The determination of whether a Thesis is ready to be defended is up to the discretion of the thesis chair. Students may not send a Thesis to the committee without approval from the chair. After approval for defense from the chair, a thesis must be sent to the committee with two (2) weeks of advance to allow sufficient time for review. The committee members must grade the written product using the corresponding form (Appendix) and complete the rating form before the oral defense.

Action following Successful Thesis Defense

- Get signatures on the Cover Sheet
- Complete all editing requested by the committee
- Assistance with editing can be obtained by contacting **Julia Madison** at the Graduate School Office: jamadison@email.wcu.edu 828-227-2925
- Submit to the graduate school following the guidelines provided

Action following Unsuccessful Thesis Defense

- The thesis committee can decide whether the student will be allowed a second attempt to successfully defend the thesis or whether the student has failed the thesis which would result in the student not being able to graduate from the program.

Ethical Considerations

a. Human Subjects Research

Any and all thesis projects that involve human subjects must first be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before being carried out. Procedures to obtain IRB review are available on the [IRB website](#).

b. Plagiarism

The Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct specifically state that psychologists do not present “portions of another’s work or data as their own, even if the other work or data source is cited occasionally” ([Standard 8.11](#), APA, 2010). Plagiarism is also a violation of [WCU’s academic integrity policy](#). Plagiarism of any form on a prospectus or thesis will not be tolerated. Any faculty member who discovers an instance of plagiarism must follow the procedures outlined in WCU’s academic integrity policy including informing the department head, and the associate dean of the graduate school within five (5) days of discovery. Any substantiated instance of plagiarism will result in an “F” in the corresponding prospectus/thesis course and thus expulsion from WCU’s psychology graduate program. Faculty and students are strongly encouraged to become intimately acquainted with the Writing and Learning Commons [resources to avoid plagiarism](#) before starting work on the prospectus.

Practicum

Practicum

Overview and Organization of Practicum. Within the Program, practicum training presents the foundation for advanced training during a doctoral program and/or professional practice upon completion of the Program. Students are required to complete at least 6 credit hours combined of Internal Practicum (PSY 686 and PSY 687), with at least 2 hours of which must be Internal Practicum (PSY 686). Consistent with APA's Standards of Accreditation, the Program features a sequence of practicum training that is graded in complexity over the course of training. The practicum sequence is grounded in the **Vertical Team model of supervision and training**, in which students with varying degrees of education, training, and clinical experience participate together in supervision. Practicum experiences are designed to prepare students for internship training.

Approach to Evaluating Practicum Performance. Students' practicum performance is evaluated systematically using the Program's Clinical Benchmark Rating Scale (CBRS). The CBRS is based upon the competency benchmark evaluation approach (see Campbell, Fouad, Grus, Hatcher, Leahy, and McCutcheon's (2012) "A Practical Guidebook for the Competency Benchmarks" (<http://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/guide-benchmarks.pdf>). The CBRS aligns with APA's Profession-Wide Competencies. For the Masters program the CBRS is designed to assess students' professional practice skills at two stages of "benchmarking": (a) *Readiness for external practicum*, and (b) *Readiness for supervised practice*. For internal practicum, readiness for advanced practicum is benchmarked; for external practicum, and readiness for supervised practice is benchmarked.

Internal Practicum. In the second year of the Program, students participate in a two-semester, initial practicum training experience within the McKee Assessment and Psychological Services Clinic (McKee Clinic), which is the Program's in-house training clinic (see further description of the McKee Clinic in the Handbook). Prior to practicum training in the McKee Clinic, students complete a mandatory clinic orientation with the McKee Clinic Director (Dr. Lori Unruh). Within the clinic orientation, students review McKee Clinic policies and procedures, including emergency procedures. Over the course of two semesters, students enroll in PSY 686 (Practicum) and complete at least 3 comprehensive psychological assessments under supervision of licensed Program faculty. The internal practicum generally accounts for 1 credit hour of PSY 686 per semester. Students who do not complete an external practicum will need to complete additional assessments through their internal practicum to meet the 6 credit hour requirement for graduation. Students are expected to accrue a minimum of 60 hours of supervised experience during the McKee Clinic practicum during their second year in the program.

Evaluation of student performance during internal practicum. Students' performance during the internal practicum is evaluated across nine (9) Profession-Wide Competencies as identified in the APA Standards of Accreditation (i.e., APA SoA II.B.1.b). The Internal Practicum form of the CBRS (see Appendix for Competency Benchmark Rating Scale-Master's Program; CBRS-MA) is utilized to evaluate student performance during the second-year practicum experience. Students are evaluated at the end of the first semester of the internal practicum by all faculty who have supervised the student – the CBRS-MA may be completed separately by faculty or completed together. At the end of the first semester, faculty provide formative feedback utilizing

benchmark ratings from the CBRS-MA to identify and address concerns arising from the first semester of practicum performance. At the end of the second semester, faculty provide summative feedback utilizing benchmark ratings from the CBRS-MA to determine if the student is ready for supervised clinical work at the Master's level (i.e., to be employed as a licensed psychological associate). Thus, by the end of their second semester of internal practicum, students must have an average score of “**3 – Satisfactory and within range of competence**” across all competency areas.

External Practicum. The external practicum is optional, but highly recommended. **Students must complete 500 total hours between their internal and external practica if they want to meet licensure requirements.** This is difficult to achieve with only an internal practicum experience. The external practicum consists of a 14-20 hour per week placement with practicum activities focused on the practice of psychology as defined by the North Carolina Psychology Practice Act :

“The Practice of Psychology – The observation, description, evaluation, interpretation, or modification of human behavior by the application of psychological principles, methods, and procedures for the purpose of preventing or eliminating symptomatic, maladaptive, or undesired behavior or of enhancing interpersonal relationships, work and life adjustment, personal effectiveness, behavioral health, or mental health. . .”

A main requirement of the North Carolina Psychology Board is that the practicum student receives 1 hour per week of supervision from a licensed psychologist. Students may also attend additional trainings and receive additional supervision from other licensed professionals (e.g., group supervision) if those are part of the placement.

Arranging external practicum. External practicum placements are arranged during the spring of the first year. Program faculty have established relationships with practicum training sites in Western North Carolina, including:

Center for Research, Assessment, and Treatment Efficacy (CReATE), Asheville, NC

Meridian Behavioral Health Services, Various locations in Western North Carolina

TEACCH Autism Program, Asheville, NC

Western Carolina University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Cullowhee, NC

Occasionally, students learn about, or are offered, a training opportunity that is not among those approved by the Psychology Department. Students may apply to have a site reviewed for acceptance as a practicum site by contacting the DCT. The DCT will solicit input from Program faculty, meet to discuss the opportunity with the student, and contact the potential training site. The decision to approve a practicum site is guided by satisfying three criteria. First, the psychological work expected of the student must be at an appropriate level for graduate students. Second, clinical work must be under the primary supervision of a licensed psychologist. Third, the work expected of the student **must focus on training**. Program faculty expect that the work activities will facilitate new learning will occur, and that supervision will adhere to NC Psychology Board guidelines. If possible, didactic training should be included.

Practicum assignments. External practicum placements are assigned by the DCT, in consultation with Program faculty. In the first year, the DCT will ask students to identify their preferences for training experiences, such as working with specific populations, age groups, and agencies. The DCT and Program faculty will meet to discuss practicum placements with students and solicit rankings. Program faculty will approve student applications to sites and provide information about how to apply for practicum. Some agencies may require an interview prior to officially offering a student a practicum position.

General practicum student responsibilities. During external practicum training, students will be representing the Program and the University and should act with professionalism during all aspects of practicum training. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the policies and procedures of the training agency. Consistent with all other Program training activities, students must adhere to the APA Ethics Code during practicum. Students should be prepared to meet the administrative requirements of the practicum site, such as completing police background checks, vaccinations, physical exam, and meeting a dress code, among other requirements.

Evaluation of student performance during external practicum. Like the internal practicum evaluation process, students' performance during the second-year external practicum is evaluated across nine (9) Profession-Wide Competencies using the CBRS-MA (see Appendix) is utilized to evaluate student performance during the second-year practicum experience. Students are evaluated at the end of the first semester of the external practicum by supervisors at the external placement who have supervised the student – the CBRS-MA may be completed separately by supervisors or completed together. At the end of the first semester, supervisors provide formative feedback utilizing benchmark ratings from the CBRS-MA to identify and address concerns arising from the first semester of practicum performance. At the end of the second semester, supervisors provide summative feedback utilizing benchmark ratings from the CBRS-MA to determine if the student is ready for Masters level supervised practice. For students to be deemed ready for supervised practice, all external practicum student ratings must meet or exceed a rating of “**3 – Satisfactory and within range of competence.**”

McKee Assessment and Psychological Services Clinic

The McKee Assessment and Psychological Services Clinic (McKee Clinic) at Western Carolina University is a state of the art, not-for-profit training clinic for students in Clinical and School Psychology graduate programs. The McKee clinic provides comprehensive psychological evaluations, educational and therapeutic recommendations, and consultation services to schools, parents, students, and individuals from the community. McKee Clinic services are provided by graduate students under the close supervision of university faculty. The McKee Clinic offers invaluable training opportunities for the Psychology Departments' graduate students as well as high quality psychological assessments and services for the community.

Orientation to the McKee Clinic. Prior to the beginning of the academic year in the Fall semester, Program students will participate in an orientation to the operational policies and procedures in the McKee Clinic. The orientation will be required for the both years of the Program.

Client Evaluation of McKee Clinic Services. Clients served in the McKee Clinic complete

satisfaction rating forms (Appendix), which provide feedback to students regarding their professional behavior and assessment services rendered. These are shared with students during the Internal Practicum rotation and inform student performance evaluation and feedback.

Student Performance Evaluation and Feedback

Student performance evaluation and feedback occurs **frequently and regularly** throughout the Program. The Program utilizes a framework of student performance evaluation and feedback that is informed by a multi-source and multi-method approach. Student performance evaluation varies by: (a) *context* (e.g., didactic coursework; clinical supervision; research presentation), (b) *source* (e.g., faculty; self; client), (c) *assessment* (e.g., course grades; clinical benchmarking), and (d) *time* (e.g., end-of-semester; end-of-year). Student performance evaluation and feedback is utilized for both formative and summative purposes and occurs alongside programmatic assessment and quality improvement.

Student performance evaluation and feedback is ongoing during coursework, supervision, and research activities; however, several significant student performance evaluation and feedback processes occur in addition to ongoing student feedback: (a) the Annual Student Evaluation, (b) practicum and internship evaluation, (c) Comprehensive Examination, and (d) thesis prospectus and defense. Key student performance evaluation and feedback processes for practicum and internship, comprehensive examination, and thesis are described in appropriate sections of the Handbook. Annual Student Evaluation, Remediation, and Dismissal procedures are described here.

Annual Student Evaluation, Remediation, and Dismissal

Mid-Year Evaluation Meeting. At the end of their first semester in the Program, students will meet with either the Program Director or Program Coordinator for an informal feedback meeting. Students should come ready to reflect on their own performance and to receive feedback collected from faculty members who have interacted with the student during the first semester. Should a serious area of concern be identified during the student's first semester in the program, a Competency Remediation Plan will be developed (see below).

Annual Student Evaluation. The Annual Student Evaluation (ASE) is an important mechanism to provide summative feedback for student performance at the end of each academic year. The ASE process is designed to evaluate student progress in the following areas: (a) foundational knowledge (e.g., ethics and professional standards; evidence-based therapy), (b) profession-wide competencies (e.g., demonstration of evidence-based assessment), (c) research competencies, and (d) professional conduct. As part of the ASE process, student must prepare and submit three documents: (a) **Self-Evaluation**, which consists of a summary and competency self-evaluation, (b) **Summary of Program Progress** that provides a summary of completed coursework (e.g., PSY 686) and program requirements (e.g., thesis prospectus completed); and (c) updated **Curriculum Vita**. Students submit these materials to the Director of Clinical Training (DCT) by the last day of class in the Spring semester (typically first week of May).

Students prepare a **Self-Evaluation** that provides a self-evaluation of their experiences, performance, and mastery across nine (9) APA Profession-Wide Competencies and a program emphasis on rural mental health. The Self-Evaluation contains two parts. The **first part** consists of

a summary and highlights of relevant experiences from: (a) formal coursework, (b) practica experiences, and (c) research activities. Based upon the summary, the self-evaluation ends with a self-appraisal of overall strengths and areas for improvement. In the **second part**, students complete the Competency Benchmark Rating Scale – Self-Evaluation form (CBRS-SE), which is a parallel form to the one completed by supervisors (see Appendix).

Students also complete the **Summary of Program Progress** form (see Appendix) to document their progress with completed required coursework, practica, comprehensive examinations, and thesis requirements. Within the summary, students also provide necessary information for completion of the annual update section of the APA Annual Report Online (ARO), including:

1. Membership in professional/research society;
2. Number of scientific publications;
3. Number of scientific presentations;
4. Involvement in leadership roles/activities in professional organizations;
5. Presented a psychological topic to lay or community audience; and,
6. If applied for internship, provide number of practicum hours as follows: (a) total intervention and assessment hours, (b) total support hours, and (c) total supervision hours.

Students also complete and submit an updated and cumulative **Curriculum Vita**.

In May, Program faculty convene to provide feedback and input regarding student performance and progress within the Program. Prior to the meeting, Program faculty solicit input from teaching supervisors, research supervisors, clinical supervisors, and other faculty for input regarding student performance over the prior academic year. After Program faculty review information about student performance, the student's advisor prepares an ASE evaluation letter which summarizes the student's strengths and weaknesses across domains. The advisor submits the ASE to the DCT and student for review and meets with the student in person to review the ASE. The ASE letter becomes part of the student's file, which is maintained by the DCT.

Faculty Summary of Progress. Faculty provide an evaluation of student performance in each profession-wide competency, which is summarized by a rating of “*Satisfactory*” or “*Unsatisfactory*.” For domains evaluated as “Satisfactory,” the advisor may provide very brief commentary regarding the student's performance. For domains evaluated as “Unsatisfactory,” the advisor will provide more detailed information regarding steps to remediate areas where student performance does not meet Program requirements.

Remediation. If the ASE process identifies areas for remediation, the DCT, with input from Program faculty, will develop a written **Competency Remediation Plan** (CRP) that is shared with the student, the student's advisor, and other relevant faculty members (e.g., when the remediation is related to a certain course or series of courses). While CRPs are typically developed as a result of the ASE, the DCT may initiate the CRP process at any time should a significant concern with the student's performance become evident. The CRP will include the following information:

- (a) Description of the problem, using specific behavioral examples, requiring remediation and the corresponding competency domain,
- (b) Description of expectations for acceptable performance,

- (c) Description of student responsibilities and actions,
- (d) Description of faculty and supervisor responsibilities and actions,
- (e) Timeframe to demonstrate acceptable performance,
- (f) Description of assessment methods to be used to track performance, and,
- (g) Consequences for unsuccessful remediation.

The CRP will be reviewed and signed by the student and DCT and documentation kept in the student's file.

A student completing a CRP is not considered to be in "good standing" with the program. Although specifics will be provided in detail in the student's CRP, students may be prohibited from applying for graduation or registering for practicum or other coursework until the CRP is successfully completed.

Dismissal. At Western Carolina University, the Graduate School identifies two levels of academic dismissal: (a) Dismissal from the Graduate School and (b) Dismissal from a graduate program.

Dismissal from the Graduate School. A graduate student who accumulates three grades of C or any grade of F will be dismissed from the Graduate School. Students will be informed in writing by the Graduate School at the time of dismissal.

Dismissal from a Graduate Program. Individual programs may have program-specific grounds for program dismissal, including but not limited to failure to adhere to technical standards, failure to pass thesis examinations, professional misconduct, or failure to successfully pass other programmatic requirements. The Program Director will notify the Graduate School in writing of the decision to dismiss a student from the program. Students will be informed of the program dismissal by the Graduate School.

Within the Program, student dismissal may result from an **accumulation of student difficulties**, such as multiple failed attempts to pass the thesis prospectus or thesis defense, or problematic practicum performance. Students who are unsuccessful in completing Competency Remediation Plans may be dismissed from the Program.

Student dismissal may also result from **singular student behavior or difficulties**, such as violations of the APA Ethics Code, violations of Western Carolina University's Academic Integrity Policy, or violations of Western Carolina University's Student Code of Conduct. The Program adheres to the Graduate School policy that failure to adhere to professional and ethical guidelines appropriate to a student's area of study may result in immediate dismissal.

Students have the right to appeal program dismissal decisions, these procedures are described in the Handbook section titled "**Student Grievances and Due Process.**"

Program Resources

Administrative, Technical, and Electronic Support. The Psychology Department has a full time Administrative Assistant (Marilyn Beck), full-time McKee Clinic Administrative Assistant (Pam Lakey) and part-time student workers. These staff members can assist graduate students with various clerical duties (e.g., copying, printing). The Psychology Department has a computer laboratory that

students can use for computing needs and includes commonly used software (e.g., Microsoft Office Suite, SPSS). WCU has an outstanding Information Technology Department (<https://www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-services/it/index.aspx>) that can assist with technology needs and problems.

Training Materials and Equipment. Every student in the program will complete advanced practicum duties in the Department's McKee Clinic. Psychological testing materials are available in the McKee Clinic for psychological assessments. The CEAP

Physical Facilities: The Psychology Department and McKee Clinic are housed in two buildings on campus, Killian Building and McKee Building. Classrooms are technology-enhanced and accommodate the courses in the program. Additional classrooms for program-related courses and activities are available as needed in other campus buildings.

Student Office Space. There are two dedicated student offices in the McKee, including a total of 38 student work spaces are available to support students' McKee Clinic and other activities activities.

Services to support students with Academic, Health, and Personal issues: WCU provides tutoring services that are open to all students on campus – the Writing and Learning Commons (WaLC; Belk 207) and Mathematics Tutoring Center (MTC; Stillwell 455). Information about tutoring services can be found at: <https://www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-success/tutoring-services/> . Services include tutoring, writing support, and academic skills consultations (e.g., time management, note taking, test preparation).

WCU maintains a student health center on campus (<https://www.wcu.edu/experience/health-and-wellness/health-services/index.aspx>) that is available to graduate students. The university also has a full-time Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) center (<https://www.wcu.edu/experience/health-and-wellness/caps/index.aspx>), which provides mental health counseling to graduate students.

Office of Accessibility Resources. The Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR) facilitates accommodations for individual students along with supporting WCU as an accessible campus through consultation, outreach, and training. OAR staff is available to provide support and advocacy to address the unique personal and academic issues of students with disabilities. OAR does not provide therapy, counseling, or psychological evaluations, but we can refer you to appropriate sources as needed. It is your responsibility as a student to disclose your disability and to request academic or physical accommodations. You should make your request in a timely manner to the Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR) and every reasonable effort will be made to provide accommodations and ensure accessibility. Requests for accommodations can be made at any time; however, some accommodations may take time to put in place. Therefore, it is best to make your request as early as possible in the semester. Accommodations are not retroactive and cannot be made for events or exams that have happened before the request. OAR contact information is:

Office of Accessibility Resources
Suite 135 Killian Annex
Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.3886 tel
828.227.7602 fax

accessibility@wcu.edu

Myron L. Coulter Faculty Commons for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. The Coulter Faculty Commons provides resources to support MA students' roles as teaching assistants for those on TA graduate assistantships. The Coulter Faculty Commons, founded in 1988, provides comprehensive support for all part and full-time faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants in teaching, learning, research, and engagement. Located in Hunter Library, the CFC's mission includes the enhancement of student learning, the facilitation of effectiveness in instructional technology, the planning and implementation of events/ professional development opportunities, and the support of faculty research. Graduate students and faculty who participate in CFC activities are able to document their participation and collaboration with the CFC to show evidence of professional development in teaching and learning. For more information, visit the CFC website at <http://www.wcu.edu/learn/faculty/coulter-faculty-commons/>

Activities and services include:

- One-on-one consultation and workshop opportunities on course design, syllabi, learning objectives, active learning, and effective teaching and learning strategies
- One-on-one consultation and workshop opportunities for research design, methodology, and assessment, particularly for research in the scholarship of teaching and learning.
- One-on-one consultations and workshop opportunities focused on using lecture-capture software and other digital media tools in teaching.
- Monthly newsletters with news, opportunities, and best practices in teaching and learning
- Training opportunities for using the LMS (Learning Management System) for instruction
- Support for the use of research software, including ArcGIS, Qualtrics (a survey tool), SPSS, SAS, and STATA.
- Support for research across the Boyer model, including the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

The Coulter Faculty Commons can be reached at 828-227-7196.

Hunter Library

The Program is supported through the Hunter Library. The Hunter Library provides high-quality information support services to students, staff and faculty as its primary mission. Librarians provide both individualized research assistance and classroom instruction. The library is open more than 96 hours per week during the regular Fall and Spring semesters. The library's vast digital resources are available online 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The collections and services that support student and faculty research include:

- Main book collection consisting of over 700,000 books and bound periodicals. This collection is augmented by a cooperative agreement with UNC Asheville and Appalachian State University through the use of a shared online catalog and delivery service. Students can readily borrow items from these other libraries and generally receive them in 2 days or less. The combined collection is over 2 million volumes.
- 200+ electronic databases and 45,000+ electronic journals that can be accessed remotely
- Free document delivery service that provides access to articles from approximately 25,000 journal titles that can be accessed remotely.
- Electronic reserves collection that can be accessed remotely
- 1,200 print journal subscriptions
- Free interlibrary loan service for all students and faculty
- Microfiche collection of 1.5 million pieces
- Government Documents providing access to selected number of online and print documents

- representing both the Federal and the North Carolina governments
- Special Collections containing manuscript collections, books, photographs and other resources documenting the history of Western North Carolina and Southern Appalachia, the history of the Cherokee Indians, and literary works and papers of Western North Carolina authors
- The Map Room collection contains more than 122,000 sheet maps and an extensive collection of digital mapping data with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to support it
- Media Collection, an extensive collection of CDs, videotapes, DVDs and other media in its Curriculum Materials Center (CMC)
- Curriculum Materials also maintains collections of state-adopted textbooks, curriculum guides, children’s literature and other classroom instructional materials in support of the university’s professional education programs

Student Records Policy

WCU complies with federal records regulations policies established by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Additionally, WCU has a university-wide records management policy (11.3.1P).

Student records will be maintained in a folder in a locked filing cabinet with the Director of Clinical Training. These records include the student’s application material (GRE scores, undergraduate/graduate transcripts, letters of recommendation, and personal statements), as well as evaluations throughout the program (e.g., annual evaluations, self-evaluations, practicum/internship evaluations), comprehensive exam responses, and additional records that may pertain to the student (e.g., copies of remediation plans). Students can request to review their student files. This request should be made to the Director of Clinical Training. The DCT shall prepare the student file for review. This may include removal of information that the student waived the right to review (e.g., letters of recommendation at the time of application).

Financial Support

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships are available for a limited number of well-qualified graduate students. These assistantships generally include research and/or teaching experiences (as determined by their specific supervisor or assignment) and can be either fulltime (20 hours per week) or halftime (10 hours per week). In addition, all or part of the out-of-state portion of tuition may be waived for first-year students. Incoming students are typically notified when they receive their offer of admission whether they are being offered an assistantship and/or an out of state tuition waiver. **Tuition waivers are only offered for the first year; out-of-state students will need to establish residency to avoid paying out-of-state tuition for subsequent years. Graduate assistantships are not guaranteed for the entire time the student is in the program.** Students receiving graduate assistantships are evaluated each semester on the work provided and this is one factor considered when making decisions regarding future assistantships. Additionally, students may lose all or part of their assistantships if they are having difficulty meeting program requirements. For example, a student will lose their assistantship for subsequent semester(s) if they make a “C” in any course. Except in extreme circumstances, students will also lose their assistantship if they fail their thesis prospectus,

need to take a grade of “incomplete” in any course, or fail to meet any other program requirements (e.g., not attending colloquium meetings, not completing the required number on assessments for their internal practicum at the McKee Clinic, etc.).

Research Funding

Several opportunities are available to help fund students’ research activities. Students traveling to present research at research conference may be eligible for up to \$500 of funding through the graduate student association (see first link below). Additionally, the McKee Clinic provides a small stipend of up to \$300 for conference travel for eligible students. Application instructions for McKee Clinic are found in the “Research Presentation Request for Financial Assistance” document on the Psychology Department Graduate Programs page on Canvas. Students are also encouraged to apply for summer research funding through the graduate school, which awards up to \$3,000. Applications generally open early in the Spring semester and are due in March.

<https://www.wcu.edu/apply/graduate-school/students/GSA/graduate-student-research-travel-award.aspx>

Scholarships

Several scholarships are available for graduate students, though most of them are not available until a student’s second year in the program. Applications for scholarships generally open in October for funding the following academic year.

<https://www.wcu.edu/apply/scholarships/index.aspx>

Additional Financial Aid

Students may request additional financial aid during their tenure in the graduate program. Please visit the WCU Office of Student Financial Assistance for more information:

Office of Financial Aid
118 Killian Annex
1 University Drive
Western Carolina University
Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.7290 tel
828.227.7042 fax
finaid@wcu.edu

<https://www.wcu.edu/apply/financial-aid/index.aspx>

Outside Work Policy

The MA Program at WCU is full-time and rigorous. Students must be prepared to balance

numerous responsibilities during their tenure as graduate students in the Program (e.g., coursework, clinical practica, Assistantship duties). Consistent with Graduate School policy, outside employment is not allowed for students who are awarded a 20-hour per week graduate assistantship.

Program Tuition and Fees

The most current information about program tuition and fees may be found at the following website: <https://www.wcu.edu/apply/tuition-and-fees/fall-spring-graduate-tuition-and-fees.aspx>

Extracurricular Professional Activities

Students in the Program are encouraged to participate in a variety of professional activities designed to demonstrate a serious commitment to the profession and to foster professional development. Such activities include, but are not limited to, attendance at departmental colloquia (required for first year students), membership in appropriate professional organizations (e.g., American Psychological Association, Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, North Carolina Psychological Association), attendance at conventions, attendance at outside seminars and workshops, and active participation in the Graduate Student Association (GSA) (see: <https://www.wcu.edu/apply/graduate-school/students/GSA/>). Although financial constraints place limitations on the degree of participation in some of these activities (e.g., convention attendance), most are available at minimal or no cost. Participation in extracurricular professional activities is an important component of your graduate training and you should view it as such. It also establishes a pattern for your future professional growth.

Dress Code Policy

The Program has adopted a dress code to provide a standard to follow while working in the McKee Clinic and at all Training\Clinical Experiences (e.g., practicum sites). Clients come to the McKee Clinic looking for professional help. Dressing appropriately as a professional clinician contributes to giving the client confidence that you can be of help. More detailed policies and procedures regarding McKee Clinic operations will be provided by the McKee Clinic Director, Dr. Lori Unruh.

- Students are required to wear name tags provided by the Department. These name tags should be worn when working in the clinic and when on external training experiences (e.g., testing or observing a student at McKee). They do not need to be worn when working at an external practicum site (e.g., TEACCH).
- Graduate students can wear dress slacks or khaki's (with a belt) and a dress shirt with a collar, polo shirts, or sweaters.
- Clothing must cover 3 inches below neckline to a minimum of below knee length. Low cut or revealing shirts, sweaters, or blouses are inappropriate.
- Hair should be neat. Jewelry should be kept to a minimum. Facial piercings are not appropriate. Multiple rings (i.e., one on each finger), are unacceptable. Tattoos should be covered while in the clinic and at practicum or internship sites.
- Not allowed: Sweatshirts, tee shirts, and sweat pants, (exercise) work out clothing, shorts, blue jeans (with one exception-see below), baseball hats, or cutoffs. No bare midriffs, no

miniskirts and no cleavage revealing shirts/blouses/sweaters.

For working with child clients: Casual khaki's, cargo pants or neat dark colored jeans (no holes or tears) are allowed as this may require working on the floor playing with the children.

While working on paperwork in student offices, the dress code **does not** have to be followed. However, if you are not properly dressed, come in and leave by the back door, and do not loiter in the receptionist area. Simply pass through that area and go to the back room and do your work. Similarly, you are not to be in the waiting area if you are not properly attired.

Program Communications and Events

Email and Canvas serve as the primary mechanisms for ongoing Program communications with students. Students should check their email accounts regularly and respond in timely fashion to email correspondence. Canvas serves as the primary mechanism for communication about coursework.

Faculty-Student Forum. The Program will feature Faculty-Student Forum (FSF) meetings that occur between Program faculty and students. FSF meetings will occur bi-annually, once in the fall and once in the spring. The purpose of the FSF meetings are to review student experiences in the program, share information, detail any modifications to Program policies and procedures, , and allow for open discussion between faculty and students in the Program. One week prior to each FSF, the DCT will solicit agenda items from faculty and students to create an agenda for the meeting.

Program Newsletters. The Program will contribute to Departmental newsletters that highlight student and faculty accomplishments and provide ongoing updates about the Program for the University community, the larger community, and alumni.

Alumni Communication. The Program will communicate regularly with its alumni. For purposes of APA accreditation, the Program will track employment, licensure, and other professional achievements to document Program outcomes. The Program's Alumni Survey serves as the primary source of this information. Apart from accreditation, the Program aims to engage in ongoing communication with alumni to celebrate professional accomplishments, foster new training opportunities, and continue to support alumni professional development (e.g., colloquia and invited speakers). The Program will create a listserv of alumni to share program newsletters and Program events.

Student Orientation and Opening Event. Prior to the beginning of Fall classes, first-year students will participate in an orientation to Program policies and procedures. There will also be a welcoming event for new students within the first several weeks of classes.

Faculty

The Program is supported by 10 core faculty members representing clinical and school psychology specializations with wide-ranging research interests and clinical expertise. Five (5) faculty members are licensed psychologists or provisionally licensed psychologists. The MA program is further supported by departmental faculty members with expertise in cognitive, experimental, educational, developmental, and social psychology.

PMA program faculty are actively involved in research, clinical supervision, and graduate teaching. The faculty represent a wide range of content expertise, including children and adolescents, adult psychopathology, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and trauma, among others. Likewise, faculty clinical expertise includes various specialties, such as Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), ASD diagnosis and intervention, forensic practice, and child neuropsychological assessment, among others.

Core Program Faculty

Kia Asberg, Ph.D., Department Head

University of Central Florida

Area of Specialization: Clinical Psychology

Research Interest: stress and resilience; child maltreatment and trauma; substance misuse

Candace Boan-Lenzo, Ph.D.

University of Alabama

Area of Specialization: School Psychology

Research Interest: gender issues, self-concept, concept acquisition, behavioral assessment

Jonathan M. Campbell, Ph.D.

University of Memphis

Area of Specialization: Clinical Psychology, Child concentration

Research Interest: autism spectrum disorder (ASD), inclusive education, peer relationships

L. Alvin Malesky, Jr., Ph.D.

University of Memphis

Area of Specialization: Forensic and Counseling Psychology

Research Interests: Expert witness testimony; sex offenders and internet usage

David M. McCord, Ph.D. (Professor Emeritus)

University of Alabama

Area of Specialization: Clinical Psychology

Research Interests: Personality theory and assessment, evolutionary psychology

Mickey Randolph, Ph.D.

University of South Carolina

Area of Specialization: School Psychology

Research Interests: Family issues, incest, family violence, tattoos, gender issues

Courtney B. Rogers, Ph.D.

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Area of Specialization: Clinical Health Psychology

Research Interests: Body image, eating disorders, treatment accessibility, perinatal health equity

Nathan Roth, PhD

University of Kentucky

Area of Specialization: School Psychology

Research Interests: Animal assisted therapy, psychosocial adjustment of adolescents

David Solomon, Ph.D., Director of Clinical Training

Central Michigan University

Area of Specialization: Clinical Psychology

Research Interests: Interpersonal trauma, LGBT issues

Lori E. Unruh, Ph.D.

University of Kansas

Area of Specialization: School Psychology

Research: Educational program evaluation, assessment issues

Affiliated Faculty

Within the Department of Psychology:

Kathleen Armstrong, Ph.D., NCSP

University of South Florida

Area of Specialization: Pediatric and School Psychology

Research Interests: Early childhood, maternal and child health, parent training, developmental disabilities

Alleyne P. R. Broomell, Ph.D.

Virginia Tech

Area of specialization: Neuroscience and Biological Psychology, Developmental Psychology

Research interests: Frontal lobe development, executive function, social cognition, Autism Spectrum Disorder

Hannah Buala, Ph.D.

University of Arizona

Area of Specialization: Neuropsychology

Research Interests: Underlying cognitive and biological bases of behavior

Ashley Cresswell, Ph.D.

University of Georgia

Area of Specialization: Educational Psychology

Research Interests: College student motivation, case-based learning teacher's emotions.

David de Jong, Ph.D.

University of Rochester

Area of Specialization: Social Psychology

Research Interests: Human sexuality; sexual well-being in couples and individuals

Tom Ford, Ph.D. (Professor Emeritus)

University of Maryland

Area of Specialization: Social Psychology

Research Interests: Disparagement humor, prejudice, person perception

Meghan Gangel, Ph.D.

UNC Greensboro

Area of Specialization: Developmental Psychology

Research Interests: Development of health in adolescent and emerging adulthood

Bruce B. Henderson, Ph.D. (Professor Emeritus)

University of Minnesota

Area of Specialization: Developmental Psychology

Research Interests: development and exploration of curiosity

Erin Myers, Ph.D.

University of Southern Mississippi

Area of Specialization: Social-Personality Psychology

Research Interests: Status-signaling properties of self-esteem, fragile self-esteem.

Ellen Sigler, Ed.D.

Texas Tech University

Area of Specialization: Educational Psychology

Research Interests: Metacognition, judgment of learning, study strategies, special education.

Outside of the Department of Psychology:

Please note that additional faculty from education, criminology and criminal justice, political science, and other areas in the behavioral sciences are available to mentor students.

Cathy Grist, Ph.D.

College of Education and Allied Professions

Department of Human Services

Research: Social-emotional interventions for pre-school children, emotion regulation in children

Kimberly S. Gorman, Ph.D.

Director

Counseling and Psychological Services

Western Carolina University

Interests: Women's issues, eating disorders, mental health stigma

Norman Hoffman, Ph.D.

Affiliate Professor of Psychology

Department of Psychology

Research: Substance abuse assessment, substance use among juvenile and adult offenders, substance use treatment

Jamie Vaske, Ph.D.

College of Arts and Sciences

Criminology and Criminal Justice Department

Research: Biosocial criminology, corrections, gender and crime, quantitative methods

Al Kopak, Ph.D.

College of Arts and Sciences

Criminology and Criminal Justice Department

Research: Substance use among juvenile and adult offenders, substance use treatment

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Appendix A: Documentation of Receipt and Review of Student Handbook

Student Confirmation of Participation in Program Orientation and Review of Program Handbook

Western Carolina University – Clinical Psychology Program – MA

Program Orientation: As an entering MA student in the Clinical Psychology Program at Western Carolina University, you are responsible for participating in a faculty-led program orientation. By signing below, you are acknowledging participation in an orientation to the MA Clinical Psychology Program.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date of Orientation: _____

Review of Program Handbook: As an entering MA student in Health Services Psychology at Western Carolina University, you are responsible for reviewing the student handbook. By signing below, you are acknowledging review of the MA Clinical Psychology Program Handbook.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date Completed Review: _____

Appendix B: Academic Integrity Policy Acknowledgement Form

Western Carolina University**Department of Psychology Graduate Programs****Academic Integrity Policy**

The following is the official academic honesty policy of Western Carolina University and the official honesty policy of the Department of Psychology graduate programs.

Academic Integrity Policy. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators of Western Carolina University (WCU) strive to achieve the highest standards of scholarship and integrity. Any violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is a serious offense because it threatens the quality of scholarship and undermines the integrity of the community. Academic integrity violations include:

1. Cheating - Using, or attempting to use, unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
2. Fabrication - Creating and/or falsifying information or citation in any academic exercise.
3. Plagiarism - Representing the words or ideas of someone else as one's own in any academic exercise.
4. Facilitation - Helping or attempting to help someone to commit a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy in any academic exercise (e.g. allowing another person to copy information during an examination).

Any student engaging in one or more of the above, risks immediate dismissal from Western Carolina University and the Psychology graduate program.

Please sign below designating that you fully understand the Academic Integrity Policy at WCU, that you will fully abide by the policy, and fully accept any consequences if you are found guilty of violating the academic integrity policy.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Appendix C: Competency Benchmark Rating Scale – Master’s Practicum (CBRS-MA)

Name of Student: _____

Supervisor, Site: _____

Semester, Year: _____

Practicum Type (Circle): Internal (McKee) External

Directions: Compared to other students at the same developmental level, please evaluate The Student using the following scale:

- 5 - Expert. Student’s performance is **outstanding**.
- 4 - Proficient. Student’s performance **exceeds expectations**.
- 3 - Average. Student’s performance is **satisfactory and within range of competence; Student is ready for supervised practice at LPA level**
- 2 - Intermediate. Student’s performance is **minimally satisfactory and needs improvement**.
- 1 - Novice. Student’s performance **needs considerable improvement**
- N/A - Not Applicable or not enough information to evaluate

Note: Students are required to be receiving an average score of 3 in each competency area by the end of the Spring Semester, year 2 to be meeting program expectations.

Competence in Research (i)

Critically evaluates research or other scholarship related to clinical work.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Utilizes relevant research literature in clinical work.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Competence in Ethical and Legal Standards (ii)

Demonstrates good knowledge of ethical principles and acts in accordance with appropriate laws and guidelines.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Recognizes ethical/legal dilemmas as they arise and applies ethical decision-making processes to resolve dilemmas.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Conducts self in an ethical manner in all professional activities.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Seeks consultation regarding ethical issues as needed.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Competence in Individual and Cultural Diversity (iii)

Demonstrates awareness and sensitivity to cultural and other individual differences.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Applies considerations of cultural and other individual differences to clinical work.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Demonstrates an understanding of how own personal/cultural history, attitudes, and biases may affect understanding and interactions with people different from themselves.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Works effectively with individuals whose group membership, demographic characteristics, or worldviews create conflict with own.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Competence in Professional Values, Attitudes, and Behaviors (iv)

Takes on responsibility for key client care tasks, autonomously ensuring that tasks are completed promptly.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Maintains appropriate client notes and other clinical documentation (e.g., contact logs).

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Demonstrates positive coping strategies for managing personal and professional stressors so that professional functioning is maintained.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Demonstrates self-awareness; engages in ongoing self-assessment to evaluate and enhance professional practice.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Competence in Communication and Interpersonal Skills (v)

Consistently achieves good rapport with clients.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Interacts professionally and appropriately with treatment teams, peers, and supervisors.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Negotiates differences and handles conflict constructively; Provides effective feedback to others and receives feedback nondefensively.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Competence in Psychological Assessment (vi)

Collects relevant data using multiple sources and methods appropriate to the identified goals and questions of the assessment.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Appropriately evaluates immediate concerns such as suicidality, homicidality, and other safety issues and makes appropriate contingency plans, if needed.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Proficiently selects and administers evidence-based assessments.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Interprets the results of tests accurately.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Exhibits appropriate case conceptualization and diagnoses while guarding against decision-making biases.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Writes a well-organized report, answering the referral question clearly and providing specific recommendations for care.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Clearly communicates assessment findings

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Competence in Psychotherapeutic Interventions (vii)

Formulates a useful case conceptualization that draws on theoretical and research knowledge.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Formulates appropriate therapeutic treatment goals in collaboration with the patient.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Implements interventions that are well-timed, effective, and consistent with empirically supported treatments.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Demonstrates flexibility in implementing interventions, particularly when a clear evidence base is lacking.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Evaluates intervention effectiveness and adapts interventions and goals accordingly.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Competence in Supervision (viii)

Is prepared for supervision sessions (e.g., is able to provide updates and answer questions related to clients; has prepared questions for the supervisor).

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Effectively implements supervisor directives and feedback for improvement.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Seeks consultation or supervision as needed outside of scheduled supervision sessions.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Is familiar with supervision requirements of the organization and the NC Psychology Board

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Competence in Consultation and Interprofessional/Interdisciplinary Skills (ix)

Demonstrates knowledge and respect for the roles and perspectives of other professions.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Engages in indirect service via collaborating with professionals from other disciplines.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Communicates techniques required for other professionals to implement suggested intervention.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Competence in Rural Mental Health (x)

Demonstrates awareness and understanding of unique needs of rural communities regarding mental health.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Adopts/modifies service delivery to rural communities as needed.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Summary Evaluation Comments

Summary of strengths:

Areas in need of Additional Development or Remediation, including thoughts on recommendations:

Appendix D. Patient Satisfaction Survey

**WCU McKee Assessment and Psychological Services Clinic
Patient Satisfaction Survey**

We would like to thank you for visiting the McKee Assessment and Psychological Services Clinic at Western Carolina University. We would appreciate your feedback.

Thinking about the evaluator, please indicate how you would rate the following:

1 2 3 4 5 n/a
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Not Applicable

The evaluator was prepared for each visit	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
The evaluator was attentive and listened to what I/we had to say	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
The evaluator understood my/our concerns	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
The evaluator appeared competent and knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
The evaluator stayed in contact with me/us throughout the process	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
The evaluator provided clear feedback related to the test results	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
The evaluator provided thoughtful, applicable recommendations	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
The evaluator addressed my/our concerns	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
The evaluator was willing to coordinate with other providers/professionals	1	2	3	4	5	n/a

Thinking back to the initial phone call/referral to the McKee Clinic, please rate the following statements:

1 2 3 4 5 n/a
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Not Applicable

The person I talked with was friendly and helpful	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
The person I talked with answered all of my initial questions and concerns	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
The person I talked with reviewed the clinic process with me	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
The person I talked with called me back in a reasonable amount of time	1	2	3	4	5	n/a

Please rate the following on a scale of 1-5:

1 2 3 4 5
Would Not Recommend Would Consider Undecided Would Definitely Would Recommend

Would you recommend this evaluator to a friend or family member?	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
Would you recommend the McKee Clinic to a friend or family member?	1	2	3	4	5	n/a

Overall, how satisfied are you with the services provided at the McKee Clinic? Please circle

1 2 3 4 5 6
Very Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Slightly Dissatisfied Slightly Satisfied Satisfied Very Satisfied

Additional Comments: We value your input. If you have any suggestions for improvement or would like to make additional comments about your experience at the McKee Assessment and Psychological Services Clinic, please use the space on the back of the page. Thank you!

Appendix E: Thesis Prospectus Examination Form

Candidate: _____ Date: _____
 Committee Member: _____

Written Document Evaluation:

- A. Thoroughness and relevance of literature review _____
- B. Clarity of Statement of Problem and its relevance to the literature reviewed. _____
- C. Clarity and thoroughness of proposed methodology. _____
- D. Appropriateness of research design for testing the hypotheses presented in the Statement of Problem. _____
- E. Overall quality of written expression. _____

Total points: _____

Each item should be rated on the following scale:

4 = Very good

3 = Adequate

2 = Weak

1 = Unacceptable

Criteria for passing written component: The student’s score on the written document must be 15 or greater from at least 2 committee members with no score less than 13 from any members. The thesis chair will notify the committee members and student of passing/failing the written component.

If the student does not pass the written component: The student will still meet with the thesis committee prior to the last week of the spring semester and orally present the thesis topic. The committee will give feedback for improving the written component. The student must then resubmit and pass the written prospectus examination prior to the start of the fall semester. The thesis chair can determine if the student will also need to reattempt the oral component.

Thesis Prospectus Examination Form

Candidate: _____ Date: _____
 Committee Member: _____

Oral Presentation: To be completed immediately after the oral presentation and submitted to the Committee Chair)

- A. Conceptual understanding of the purpose and relevance of the research. _____
- B. Ability to articulate literature review. _____
- C. Demonstrated understanding of methodology and research design. _____
- D. Demonstrated breadth and depth of knowledge in proposed research area. _____
- E. Overall quality of presentation. _____

Total points: _____

Each item should be rated on the following scale:

- 4 = Very good
- 3 = Adequate
- 2 = Weak
- 1 = Unacceptable

Criteria for passing oral component: The student's score on the oral defense must be 15 or greater from at least 2 committee members with no score less than 13 from any members.

Final criteria for passing prospectus examination: The student must successfully pass both the written and the oral components of the prospectus as outlined above

Appendix F: Thesis Defense Examination Form

Candidate: _____ Date: _____
 Committee Member: _____

Written Document Evaluation:

- A. Thoroughness and relevance of literature review _____
- B. Clarity of Statement of Problem and its relevance to the literature reviewed. _____
- C. Clarity and thoroughness of proposed methodology. _____
- D. Appropriateness of research design for testing the hypotheses presented in the Statement of Problem. _____
- E. Overall quality of written expression. _____

Total points: _____

Each item should be rated on the following scale:

4 = Very good

3 = Adequate

2 = Weak

1 = Unacceptable

Criteria for passing written component: The student’s score on the written document must be 15 or greater from at least 2 committee members with no score less than 13 from any members. The thesis chair will notify the committee members and student of passing/failing the written component.

If the student does not pass the written component: The student will still meet with the thesis committee prior to the last week of the spring semester and orally present the thesis topic. The committee will give feedback for improving the written component. The student must then resubmit and pass the written prospectus examination prior to the start of the fall semester. The thesis chair can determine if the student will also need to reattempt the oral component.

Candidate: _____ Date: _____
 Committee Member: _____

Oral Presentation: To be completed immediately after the oral presentation and submitted to the Committee Chair)

- A. Conceptual understanding of the purpose and relevance of the research. _____
- B. Ability to articulate literature review. _____
- C. Demonstrated understanding of methodology and research design. _____
- D. Demonstrated breadth and depth of knowledge in proposed research area. _____
- E. Overall quality of presentation. _____

Total points: _____

Each item should be rated on the following scale:

- 4 = Very good
- 3 = Adequate
- 2 = Weak
- 1 = Unacceptable

Criteria for passing oral component: The student’s score on the oral defense must be 15 or greater from at least 2 committee members with no score less than 13 from any members.

Final criteria for passing final thesis examination: The student must successfully pass both the written and the oral components of the prospectus as outlined above