SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY, EDUCATION SPECIALIST

Offered by Department of Counseling and School Psychology (http://catalog.unk.edu/graduate/departments/counseling-school-psychology)

Program Information and Admission Requirements

Accreditation
The Education Specialist Degree is accredited by the National Association of School Psychology (NASP) and the International School Psychology Association (ISPA). The program is also accredited by the Nebraska State Department of Education and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

The following program meets the academic requirements for the Nationally Certified School Psychologist regulated by the National Association of School Psychologists and school psychologist endorsement requirements by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE).

Admission Requirements
Those planning to be full-time students in the School Psychology should obtain full admission to their chosen program of study the semester prior to their enrollment by completing the following steps:

1. Complete the UNK Department of Graduate Studies online application. All materials listed below are uploaded with the online application:
   a. $45 non-refundable application fee
   b. Academic history-official transcripts of all previous academic work
   c. Vita with requested information
   d. "Motivation for becoming a counselor, school psychologist or student affairs professional" essay
   e. Three Electronic References (Forms are automatically sent to recommenders when application is submitted).

2. When all materials have been received, the Office of Graduate Studies and Research will conduct an initial evaluation. Applicants meeting admission requirements for graduate study will be forwarded to the Department for consideration and recommendation.

3. Applicants must participate in the CSP Department admission interview/intake process which occurs each semester. When the application is complete, the CSP Department secretary will send the applicant a confirmation of this meeting via electronic mail to the preferred email address indicated on the application. Applicants to the Student Affairs program do not participate in the interview/intake process.

4. Department recommendations for admissions are submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

5. Admission decisions are mailed from the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies (i.e. an unconditional/full status, conditional/provisional status, or denial).

Advising
All students are assigned an academic advisor within the department upon admission.

Application for Candidacy
To be eligible for candidacy (i.e. approval to continue coursework and "stand" as a candidate for the degree), the student must have fulfilled the following requirements:

1. If you were conditionally admitted, this condition must have been met.
2. Application for Candidacy must be made prior to completion of half of the required credit hours on the student’s program of study.
3. A grade of B or higher in CSP 855 with a B or higher.
4. A cumulative GPA of at least 3.00.
5. Demonstrate professional fitness and competencies.
6. Adhere to ethical standards.

Failure to meet any of these conditions can result in denial of the Application for Candidacy.

Comprehensive Examinations
All students seeking degrees and/or endorsements are required to complete comprehensive examinations. The examinations may be written, oral or both. Additionally, in order to successfully complete a degree program, students must meet the expectations outlined in department academic progress and ethical conduct policies (see respective Program Handbook for more detailed information).

School Psychology Information

School psychologists help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. They collaborate with educators, parents, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community for all students.

School Psychology was rated one of the 50 Best Careers of 2011 by US News and World Report and is said to have strong growth over the next decade. It has been projected by The Labor Department that the number of jobs held by school psychologists is likely to increase by 11 percent between 2008 and 2018, creating 16,800 more positions with growth being particularly strong in schools, hospitals, and mental-health centers, among others.

School Psychology is one of the fastest growing areas of professional psychology. School Psychologists bring psychological perspectives to individual, group and system issues in schools; that is, they deliver mental health services in educational systems. The framework of the UNK School Psychology Program is an ecological and developmental approach, which focuses upon human strengths to maximize positive outcomes. Human diversity is recognized as a strength. If the school psychology student attends full time, the student takes two years of academic coursework and related field experiences, followed by a year long, 1200-hour internship. Upon successful completion of degree requirements, the student is eligible for endorsement as a School Psychologist in Nebraska.

To provide the student with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to meet the demands of the profession, the School Psychology Program has adopted an ecological training approach. In the ecological approach, the student practitioner learns to collect and interpret data
from a variety of sources in order to meet the needs of the individual within the school system. As a component of this approach, students are taught to be skilled at problem solving, consultation, interviewing, observation, assessment, and intervention development.

The School Psychology Program encourages the integration of experience and skills with knowledge of psychology and education to prepare graduates to serve as education team members. Acting in this role, the school psychologist is concerned with promoting teacher effectiveness, creating a positive classroom environment, and influencing educational philosophy in the school system to enhance student learning potential.

The School Psychology Program at the University of Nebraska at Kearney strives to provide the most current and comprehensive practitioner training within the midstates region of the country. As such, participating in 300 clock hours of Professional Development activities is a program requirement. This assures exposure to a wide variety of contemporary issues, skills, and knowledge beyond what can be covered in courses. These hours must be accrued after admission to and prior to graduating from the program. Ample opportunities are provided for students via Professional Development Seminars, partner school staff development, state and national conferences. Graduates are eligible for certification and endorsement as a School Psychologist in Nebraska and have enjoyed high levels of professional employment in this state as well as many others.

"It is the responsibility of graduate training programs in school psychology to provide students with the building blocks for 'effective practice'" (Ysseldyke, Dawson, Lehr, Reschley, Reynolds & Telzrow, 1997, p. 6). Therefore, the program of preparation for endorsement shall include training in practices that permeate all aspects of service delivery in the following areas:

- Data based decision making and accountability;
- Consultation and collaboration;
- Direct and indirect student level services;
- Direct and indirect systems level services;
- Family-school collaboration;
- Diversity of development and learning;
- Research, program evaluation, legal, ethical and professional practice.

**Counseling and School Psychology Mission Statement**

The Department of Counseling and School Psychology (CSP) promotes a field-based scientist/practitioner model in order to prepare culturally competent and compassionate professionals at the graduate level to provide service and leadership in school psychology. The focus of the scientist/practitioner model within the CSP department is to create practitioners who understand, critically evaluate and effectively use the research base within their profession in order to make decisions and guide practice. CSP is an interdisciplinary department committed to work towards equity and social justice within the College and University, our professions, and throughout the broader society.

*This program is offered on campus only.*

All students are required to complete an exit survey during the semester of graduation or program completion.
internship. The program values employment experiences of its students and offers flexibility in meeting these requirements.