Assessment Plan

Program: PsyD in Combined and Integrated School and Clinical Psychology
College: Nathan Weiss Graduate College
Kean University

Mission Statement: A combined doctoral training program in psychology prepares general practice, primary care, and health service psychologists who are competent to function in a variety of professional and academic settings and roles. Kean University’s Psy.D. Program in Combined and Integrated School and Clinical Psychology achieves this goal by intentionally combining and integrating education and training across the two practice areas of school psychology and clinical psychology, providing students with a wide breadth and depth of training in both psychological practice areas. By deeply integrating these two practice areas throughout the curriculum, the combined training program model prepares students to function as clinical or school psychologists in a wide variety of professional and academic positions, thus increasing career flexibility and marketability. The Psy.D. program is conceptualized as a competency-based curriculum that seeks to promote professional competencies in a graded, sequential, and cumulative manner across different levels of doctoral training. The Psy.D. program at respects a scientific approach to the practice of professional psychology, and endorses the application of an evidence-based practice of psychology. The program has adopted a practitioner-scholar training model and provides multiple opportunities for clinical and research experiences. Our training model emphasizes our belief that science informs practice and in turn practice informs science. As such, training in both research and practice is integrated and interwoven throughout the program, and faculty support students every step of way toward becoming competent and ethical practitioners and scientists. The program strives to offer a balance of professional training opportunities that fit well with the practitioner-scholar model, fit with each student’s individual career goals, and prepare them for competitive internship placements and successful careers in professional psychology.

The PsyD Program at Kean University has an overarching goal that are aligned with the University Mission.

PsyD Program Goal: The preparation of school and clinical psychologists capable of the ethical delivery of effective evidence-based assessment/diagnostic and therapeutic/intervention services across a variety of settings, in a variety of professional roles, and to diverse client populations in need of such services.)

Assessment Process:

In its operation the program values the integration of theory, research and practice and promotes this integration from the first semester in the program through the entire curriculum sequence. The program thus provides students with a sound theoretical and scientific base from which to acquire professional competence and knowledge. This is accomplished in coursework and other activities through a critical examination of basic psychological areas and methodologies.

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The PsyD Program is intended to:

- Prepare students to be knowledgeable consumers of research who recognize; a) the importance of science for the informed and ethical practice of school and clinical psychology, and 2) the value of professional practice for the further development of the science of psychology.
- Provide a mode of training that recognizes the uncompromising value of ethically sensitive, culturally informed and respectful professional practice.
- Emphasize and develop a set of core competencies essential to effective school and clinical practice with diverse clients and in varied situations and settings.
- Provide sequential opportunities for students to apply their learning through skills courses and supervised practicum experiences.

Curriculum and Training Plan:

In order to fully comprehend, assess, and treat dysfunctional behavior and emotional states or to improve the performance and functioning of individuals or systems, it is first necessary to understand the essentials of functional human behavior. The foundations of knowledge in the diverse disciplines of psychology provide the base for this broad understanding. The curriculum provides for exposure to such foundational areas as developmental psychology, social psychology, cognitive psychology, emotion science, learning theory, and biopsychology. In addition, students are provided the necessary context by which they can appreciate the development and rich history of our field. Students are also provided exposure to the systems, foundations, and multidisciplinary nature of the educational system within which children develop as functioning members of society. This base is the scientific foundation upon which clinical and scholarly pursuits of the contemporary school and clinical psychologist can and should occur. At the end of the first program year, students must successfully pass a comprehensive examination that is modeled after the national licensing exam for psychologists, and covers the foundational material covered in the first year curriculum.

In our program, we conceptualize scientific inquiry as a systematic approach to generating, accumulating, and evaluating a body of empirical research, analyzing and understanding clinical situations, and as a methodology for the development of professional critical thinking. As such, scientific inquiry is seen as the foundation for systematic and empirically grounded (i.e. data-based) clinical decision-making. Students develop the capacity to continually evaluate the evolving scientific and theoretical literature and thus inform professional practice in an empirical manner, think systematically and critically about case material, and generate original scholarly work that advances the profession of psychology. Students are therefore encouraged to become outcome oriented, to continuously consider evolving data, to weigh systematic evidence from a variety of sources, and to seek empirical validation for their psychological assessments, consultations and interventions. In addition, these skills and abilities serve as the foundation for self-reflective lifelong learning and development as professional school and clinical psychologists. From the first semester of the program through the time students begin internship they are part of faculty-led research teams. Each core faculty has his or her own research team, which engages in systematic empirical study of relevant topics in the field of school and clinical psychology.
Students will be on two research teams in their first program year, and ultimately will choose at least one team of which they will be a regular and consistent member. Research teams are vertical teams that incorporate faculty research, student dissertation research, and student pre-dissertation research activities. Students and faculty of each team will meet weekly to engage in theoretical and empirical discussions; engage in research planning and implementation; analyze data; and prepare conference submissions/presentations and journal manuscripts. These research teams provide encouragement and support for scholarly activity, and allow students to learn first hand the ways in which research and practice can be and should be seamlessly interwoven. The culmination of this skill development, and our fundamental assessment of student learning in this area is the doctoral dissertation, which must be completed prior to being conferred with the PsyD.

The curriculum also provides students with a broad array of assessment, consultation and intervention models in preparation for the general practice of school and clinical psychology. While the faculty emphasizes those assessment, consultation and intervention models that have demonstrated empirical support, other theoretical models are presented and discussed. Students are encouraged to systematically examine alternatives, critically evaluate the applicability of theories, assessments, interventions, and associated empirical literature, and apply these perspectives to a diversity of clinical and educational issues, populations, and settings. This approach encourages students to develop an evaluation, consultation and intervention style consistent with their own thinking yet grounded in the empirical tradition of professional psychology. As our primary mission is the education and training of competent generalists capable of engaging in the independent practice of school and clinical psychology, the ongoing development of professional skills is a major focus of the Program. The development of core competencies in the professional relationship, assessment, intervention, professional ethics, the appreciation for human diversity and its impact on professional practice, consultation/program evaluation, and supervision/management are emphasized in the curriculum and evaluated regularly and systematically throughout the Program. Specifically, during the second year students must submit and pass the Assessment Competency Exam (an extensive written case report), an Individualized Educational Plan Project, and a Positive Impact Project, all designed to insure competency in psychological and psychoeducational assessment and intervention planning.

Necessary for the integration of theory, scientific inquiry and professional practice is the practicum sequence which is fully integrated into our curriculum plan, beginning in the first year of study with pre-practica experiences and sequentially continuing over the next three levels of our Program. The pre-practica experience begins during the fall, spring, and summer semesters of the first year with students gaining experience in the administration, scoring and interpretation of a variety of psychological and psychoeducational assessments at the Kean University Psychological Services (Training Clinic). The pre-practicum experience also includes closely supervised experiences conducting psychological and psychoeducational assessments of training clinic patients. The practicum sequence, including both external placements (externships) and an ongoing Training Clinic caseload, provides students with supervised clinical experiences that build upon their coursework to develop and refine professional competencies. The integration of health-care services between Kean University’s Psychology Training
Clinic, Student Counseling Center, Child Study Institute and Communication Disorders Center allows students to develop an appreciation of, and experience in, an integrated multidisciplinary health care delivery system. The practica also provide students with clinical material to enhance their critical thinking regarding the application of theory, research, ethics, and issues of human diversity presented in courses and seminars. Supervision provided during practica, including close faculty supervision of all Training Clinic activities, is a critical factor in the development of clinical skills, provides additional practitioner-scientist models, and begins the development of students’ own consultation and supervisory skills. In combination with on-site supervision, the program-based professional seminar allows the student to continue development of case conceptualization, ethical awareness, sensitivity to issues of diversity and professional communication skills. The capstone of our clinical training is the Internship, which is a one-year full time or two-year part time experience. Assessment of student clinical skill development occurs through practicum supervisor evaluations (completed 3 times per academic year), the Intervention Competency Exam, completed during the third program year, and internship supervisory ratings completed twice during the fifth and final program year.

Students who graduate with a PsyD in combined and integrated school and clinical psychology should be able to:

**SLO1:** The preparation of practitioners of school and clinical psychology who understand the scientific body of knowledge that serves as the foundation of practice in school and clinical psychology. Students will acquire and demonstrate knowledge of the following core areas of the scientific foundations of psychology.

- Learning, Personality and Individual Differences
- Social Bases of Behavior
- Cognitive-Affective Bases of Behavior
- Developmental Bases of Behavior
- Biological Bases of Behavior
- History and Systems of Psychology
- Psychopathology and Human Exceptionalities
(KU 1-5; S 1-5)

Direct Measure: 1. Comprehensive Examination (at end of first program year)
Indirect Measure: Graduating Student Survey

**SLO2:** The preparation of practitioners of school and clinical psychology who demonstrate understanding of and competency in core clinical skills essential for effective professional practice across settings and populations. Students will acquire and demonstrate an understanding of, and proficiency in, the following
Core Competencies as defined by the National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology (NCSPP) guidelines:

- The Professional Relationship
- Assessment
- Intervention
(KU 1-5; S 1-5)

Direct Measure: 1. Assessment Competency Exam (during second program year); 2. Response to Intervention Project (completed during the second program year); 3. Individualized Educational Plan (completed during the second program year); 4. Intervention Competency Exam (completed during the third program year); 5. Practicum and Internship supervisory ratings of clinical skills (completed throughout program years 2-5)

Indirect Measure: Graduating Student Survey

**SLO3:** The preparation of practitioners of school and clinical psychology who demonstrate understanding of and competency in professional standards and ethics as well as the impact and importance of issues of cultural and individual diversity on professional practice. Students will acquire and demonstrate an understanding of, and proficiency in, the following Core Competencies as defined by NCSPP guidelines:

- Diversity in Clinical Practice
- Professional Ethics
(KU 1-5; S 1-5)

Direct Measure: 1. Professional Ethics and Diversity sections of the Assessment and Intervention Competency Exams; 2. Ethics seminar and Diversity seminar grades; and 3. Practicum and Internship supervisory ratings (specific to ethics and diversity).

Indirect Measure: Graduating Student Survey

**SLO 4:** The preparation of practitioners of school and clinical psychology who demonstrate understanding of, and competency in, emerging and expanded roles for the professional psychologist in a wide range of multidisciplinary systems. Students will acquire and demonstrate an understanding of, and proficiency in, the following Core Competencies as defined by NCSPP guidelines:

- Consultation and Program Evaluation
- Supervision and Management
(KU 1-5; S 1-5)

Direct Measure: Successful completion of 1. Program Evaluation Project; and 2. Supervision Project (in the fourth program year).

Indirect Measure: Graduating Student Survey
SLO 5: The preparation of practitioners of school and clinical psychology able to contribute to and effectively utilize the existing body of knowledge and empirical findings in the science of psychology, to inform and enhance the applications of school and clinical psychology and to view the professional practice of school and clinical psychology as requiring life-long learning. Students will acquire and demonstrate proficiency in research and evaluation/scientific inquiry as well as attitudes and behaviors necessary for lifetime learning.
(KU 1-5; S 1-5)

Direct Measure: 1. Research productivity through conference presentations and publications (during the first four years of the program); and, 2. the Doctoral Dissertation to be completed prior to conferral of degree) in most cases during the fifth program year).
Indirect Measure: Graduating Student Survey