

# **EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

## **MASTER'S PROGRAM 2008-2009**

**Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling Psychology**

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**<http://education.wsu.edu/graduate/specializations/edpsychology/>**

## **Educational Psychology Master's Programs**

The Ed.M. and M.A. degrees with specialization in educational psychology are a concentration in research, evaluation, psychometrics, and cognition. While students at the Master's level in educational psychology complete a common core of courses, a portion of each Master's degree program is composed of courses selected by the student and his/her advisory committee to tailor the program of study around the student's personal interests and professional aspirations. M.A. or Ed.M. recipients in educational psychology are well prepared to continue doctoral level training if so desired. However, an M.A. or Ed.M. would give access to entry level positions in this intriguing field that presents an ever-changing, challenging, and rewarding work environment. The M.A. and the Ed.M. are both options available to a student. The M.A. does require the completion of a written thesis, whereas the Ed.M. requires an examination. The former is encouraged if a student is considering the pursuit of a doctoral degree. The work in such areas may include for example, the opportunity to make contributions to the improvement of educational settings (e.g., schools, universities), to have some influence on individuals through consultation on programs, methods,, or to provide information through analysis to individuals who shape policy. Experienced individuals in this profession can expect to earn a good salary and maintain an interesting and fulfilling career in employment in private firms, school districts, business, industry, or state agencies as program evaluators, student assessment coordinators, research technicians, or data analysts, as examples.

### **Admission to the Program**

Application to the Master's program in Educational Psychology is a two-step process. One, application is made directly to the **WSU Graduate School** (<http://www.gradsch.wsu.edu/future-students/admission/apply.html>). It should be noted that students may begin classes any semester. Students admitted to the program have completed a bachelor's degree in a relevant field such as education, psychology, sociology, public policy, or business, prior to application.

The second step is to complete the **Educational Psychology Supplemental Information Form** (<http://education.wsu.edu/graduate/apply/edpsychology/>). In addition, there are seven requirements to be met before one can be considered for admission to the educational psychology doctoral program:

1. 1. A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
2. A minimum score of 1000 on the Graduate Record Examination (Total of Verbal and Quantitative sections). The department does not accept scores older than five years.
3. Three letters of recommendation with contact information (When submitting online application to the Graduate School, you must provide the names and email addresses of your recommenders. Recommenders submit the letters online.)
4. Brief statement of your long-range professional goals and a 500-1000 word summary on a topic relating to the program.
5. Vitae
6. Copies of published or unpublished articles authored or co-authored if available (Thesis, paper presentations, technical reports, etc.).
7. Official transcripts of all colleges attended submitted to the WSU Graduate School.

Note: Interviews are not required but could be beneficial to acceptance.

Important factors considered in admissions decisions are:

- previous academic achievement;
- recommendations, especially references from professors who are familiar with the applicant's academic performance and potential;
- the relevance of the applicant's interests and commitment to the goals and curriculum of the program; and

Admission to Washington State University is granted without regard to age, gender, race, religion, color, creed, disability, national or ethnic origin, or marital status. Members of ethnic minorities, women, Vietnam-era or disabled veterans, persons in protected classes, with disability and/or persons aged 40 and over are encouraged to apply.

### **Program Admission**

**In order to complete the application process, the following materials must be submitted:**

1. Materials to be submitted to the **WSU Graduate School** at the address listed below:  
Graduate School  
PO Box 641030  
French Administration Bldg., Rm. 324  
Washington State University  
Pullman, WA 99164-1030
  - a. Graduate School online application form and \$50.00 application fee submitted online (<http://www.gradsch.wsu.edu/future-students/admission/apply.html>).
  - b. **Official transcripts of all** previous college and university course work. These transcripts must be sent directly to the WSU Graduate School by the Registrar of each issuing institution.
  - c. Names and email address of three people submitting letters of recommendation. When the Graduate School application is submitted, the recommenders will receive an email prompting them to submit a letter. The College of Education Office of Graduate Studies can view and print these letters from your electronic file at the Graduate School.
  - d. Official report of scores on the general aptitude section of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)
2. Materials to be sent directly to the **College of Education Office of Graduate Studies** at the address listed below:

College of Education  
Office of Graduate Studies  
P.O. Box 642114  
252 Cleveland Hall  
Washington State University  
Pullman, WA 99164-2114

- a. Supplemental Information Form (<http://education.wsu.edu/graduate/apply/edpsychology/>).
- b. Current resume or vita documenting any educational psychology related work or research experience. This can now be uploaded into Graduate School application
- c. Brief statement of the student's professional objectives (not more than two typed pages.) This can now be uploaded into Graduate School application

Inquiries and requests for application materials from the College of Education may be sent to the address above or by phone [(509) 335-7016/335-9195] or email ([gradstudies@wsu.edu](mailto:gradstudies@wsu.edu))

A variety of information is also available on WSU's web site at <http://www.wsu.edu/>. This web site has links to general information about WSU and provides access to the Graduate School web site.

All students are required to complete the Institutional Review Board (IRB) research training requirements within the first semester of study and before working on any research projects. See the WSU IRB website for information on the CITI training and the university specific training. Please ask your major professor if you have questions about this training.

### **Core Requirements for Ed.M. and M.A. Degrees**

EdPsy 502	Learning Theories	3 credits
EdPsy 505	Research Methods I	3 credits
EdPsy 508	Educational Statistics	3 credits
EdPsy 509	Educational Measurement	3 credits
EdPsy 510	Assessment for Learning	3 credits
EdPsy 570	Introduction to Program Evaluation	3 credits

### **Additional Requirements for the Ed. M. Degree**

1. A minimum of 23 credits of approved course work beyond the core requirements, of which a minimum of 12 are graded\*\* credits.
2. Two credits of EDPSY 702 (Master's special Problem, Directed Study, and/or Examination) associated with the taking of a comprehensive six clock-hour written examination at the end of the program of study.

### **Minimum Total credits: 45**

### **Additional Requirements for the M.A. Degree**

1. A minimum of 19 credits of approved course work beyond the core requirements, of which a minimum of 12 are graded\*\* credits.

2. A minimum of 4 credits of EDPSY 700 (Master's Research, Thesis, and/or Examination) associated with the writing and oral defense of a formal thesis.

**Minimum Total credits: 41**

NOTE: Selection of courses beyond those specified in the above core will be made in conjunction with the student's advisor and should result in a coherent program of study.

\*\*Grade credit does not include S/F graded courses.

### **Research Productivity Expectation**

Consistent with the scientist-practitioner model of professional training in psychology, students in the master's program in educational psychology are required to integrate the theoretical and research offerings of the university with internship experiences. The purpose of the internship is to provide actual supervised experience in the professional role for which the student is preparing. The Learning and Performance Research Center provides unique opportunities to apply theoretical concepts and methodologies to specific practical projects in various educational settings. In that context, students are required to develop at least one paper for presentation at a national meeting (e.g., AEA or AERA) and, or publication in a journal. Scholarly writing can be an invigorating and at the same time, an arduous process that typically requires substantial mentoring. Students will work under the guidance of faculty members to develop ideas, conduct literature reviews, and perform research. The experience however, offers the rewards and challenges inherent in having a proposal accepted for presentation or a manuscript published in a peer-reviewed journal. In addition, students will gain insight into the importance of having their work published as a member of the educational psychology profession.

### **Developing the Individualized Program**

As soon as possible after admission to Graduate School, the student should obtain an advisor. Typically, the department will assign a temporary advisor until the student starts classes the first semester of his/her program. A letter will be sent to the student from the department communicating this assignment. The student may change advisors if needed or desired. After obtaining an advisor, each graduate student is required to submit a proposed program of study that includes desired course work and the research activities he/she wishes to pursue to complete the requirements of the degree.

Proposed programs of study should be submitted on forms provided by the Graduate School no later than the end of the first year of study **the most current form should be used and is available from the Graduate School (<http://gradschool.wsu.edu/current-students/formsfordegree.html>).**

Preparation of the program is the responsibility of the student in consultation with the advisor and doctoral committee. The plan should include the most advanced courses appropriate for the Master's degree and the field of study listed in the Graduate Course Catalog or approved for graduate credit subsequent to the printing of the catalog. **Courses graded S/F many NOT be used in the core program. Any course included in the advanced degree program in which a grade of "C-" or below is earned must be repeated but not on a pass/fail basis.**

Upon completion of the forms for the proposed Program of Study, **route the form** to the respective committee, department chair, and Office of Graduate Studies. The Office of Graduate Studies will forward the form to the Graduate School for approval. The Graduate School will send email notification to the student and the Office of Graduate Studies once the Program of Study has been approved.

### **Forming a Committee**

A crucial step in successfully completing the Master's is the selection of a committee if completing a thesis. Your committee will include at least three (3) individuals: the chair and at least two other members who are Graduate Faculty, i.e., have "Graduate Faculty Status." Minimum requirements for the chair include:

- Ph.D. or Ed.D. in Educational Psychology
- Assistant Professor or above
- Previous service on at least two completed dissertation committees in this or another department
- Member of the College of Education Graduate Faculty

In addition to the above criteria, a chair for a proposed thesis should have research skills, experiences and expressed interest in sponsoring study and research in the proposed area. This will be reflected in the faculty member's record of research and publication, teaching field(s), and professional involvement with the field. A list of thesis topics and their respective committee members is available in the Department office, as is the faculty bibliography. A scan of the faculty bibliography is particularly helpful in identifying faculty who meet this criterion.

### **Procedures for Completion of the Master's Exam if not completing a thesis project (Ed.M. degree)**

The Master's examination for students in the educational psychology specialization are scheduled for the end of the second year of study. The exam is comprised of two components: a sit-down examination of questions and an oral defense of the written responses to those questions. **The student must complete the Examination Scheduling Form found on the Graduate School's website** (<http://gradschool.wsu.edu/current-students/formsfordegree.html>) **and forward the form to the Office of Graduate Studies. The form must be submitted to the Graduate School at least 10 working days prior to the oral examination date.** Students wishing to take the examination must sign up with the Office of Graduate Studies at least four weeks in advance and must formally schedule the examination with the WSU Graduate School according to established procedures. A student must be enrolled for a minimum of two credits of EdPsy 702 credit during the semester in which he/she desires to take the comprehensive examination.

The written component of the examination is completed within 2-3 days. The student will respond to 3-4 questions and will have 4 hours to complete each question. The questions given for the written component will reflect approximately 75% of the students' primary area of

concentration and 25% of their supporting area of concentration. Questions will be developed by the committee with input for the student (e.g., reading lists). The questions will ask the student to demonstrate an understanding of a body of knowledge (including theory, methods, and empirical research) in a particular area. The examination is to be completed independently with minimal resources. All responses must be typed and follow the APA 5<sup>th</sup> edition manual.

The oral portion of the exam should be scheduled no less than 2 and no more than 4 weeks after the written component is complete and given to the committee. The oral exam should not be held during the last week of classes. Remember that all requests for appointment of an examining committee must be made to the Graduate School *at least 10 days before* the oral exam is scheduled.

The oral portion of the exam has two goals: (1) to give a student the opportunity to respond to any specific questions concerning the written component of the exam; and (2) to give the student's advisory committee an opportunity to evaluate how well the individual responds to specific or general questions about related literatures or beginning conversations about the focus of the dissertation. Grading is on a pass/fail basis.

### **Comprehensive Exam Retake Policy**

If a student fails the examination, he/she must consult with his/her advisor before petitioning to retake the examination. Upon appropriate removal of deficits and approval by the student's advisory committee, he/she may petition to be allowed to retake the examination. The petition must be approved by the Graduate Faculty of the Educational Psychology Program. Failure of a second administration constitutes formal basis for dismissal from the program. At least three months must lapse between a failed examination and a re-examination. There is no automatic right to a second examination.

### **Thesis (M.A. degree)**

#### **Developing a Precis**

Typically by the end of the second semester of course work, the student has acquired some knowledge about their topic of interest and thought about researchable questions related to that topic. The next step is to organize one's ideas into coherent brief statements about the proposed research. This step is likely to be undertaken in the summer of the first year if the student intends to complete the thesis the following year. The precis is typically 8-10 double spaced, typed pages depending on the complexity of the topic. The precis is not a detailed literature review, but a convincing rationale for the need for the project. The format should adhere to the style set forth in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), Fifth Edition.

The precis should include answers to the following questions:

- 1) What is the rationale for the study?

- 2) What is the problem, issue, question, or hypothesis?
- 3) What have others speculated, asserted, found, and/or concluded about this problem, issue, or question?
- 4) What do you propose to do to investigate it?
  - a) To whom will you make observations (subjects)?
  - b) What instruments or measures will be employed to make those observations?
  - c) How will you make those observations (procedures)?
  - d) How will you organize or analyze the resulting data (analysis)?
  - e) What does your experimental intervention consist of?
- 5) What knowledge will be added to the literature that we didn't know before?

When the student has completed the precis, he/she should submit it to the faculty sponsor or intended chair, allow him or her sufficient reading time, and schedule a meeting to obtain feedback. Use the feedback comments and questions to revise the precis. When the student and committee chair are satisfied with the substance of the precis, a meeting should occur to make plans for future dissertation work. The precis is then made available to targeted committee members.

### **Writing the Thesis - Thesis Proposal**

Writing the thesis proposal occurs in the context of an independent study by registering for Master's credit (EdPsy 700). Thesis topics are generally selected in meetings with members of the student's advisory committee. After a relevant research topic has been identified, the graduate student will conduct a careful review of the literature and formulate a research design in consultation with the members of his/her committee. The candidate will prepare, in accordance with APA style, a formal thesis proposal consisting of an introduction, statement of the problem, survey of literature, methodology, and plans for data analysis. The student's thesis advisory committee will review the candidate's dissertation proposal and make recommendations for further refinement. Proposals typically address in greater detail the questions addressed in the precis. Please see your major professor for possible formats of the thesis dissertation.

The formal thesis proposal will be presented orally in a departmental colloquium. The thesis meeting must be formally scheduled using the appropriate forms which can be found on the College's website and in the COE Office of Graduate Studies. Following the colloquium presentation, the student's advisory committee will meet to recommend acceptance or rejection of the thesis proposal. Typically, the committee will make additional recommendations to the student to improve the proposed research. The student may begin the thesis work when the advisory committee has formally approved the proposal and signed the form

### **Final Approval of the Thesis**

Each member of the student's advisory committee will examine the thesis dissertation and indicate preliminary approval or disapproval with comments and suggestions for improvement. When all members of the committee have given their preliminary approval, the student will submit final copies of the thesis according to the guidelines for the Graduate School. All faculty members are invited to read the thesis before the final examination.

The final oral examination will be scheduled through the College Office of Graduate Studies and the WSU Graduate School. The final examination will be conducted by the student's advisory committee. The examination generally lasts from two to two and a half-hours, and focuses on the student's defense of the thesis. All faculty members are invited to attend thesis examinations, but only the members of the Graduate Faculty and the student's advisory committee are eligible to vote. After the thesis has been accepted the student has five working days to make appropriate revisions and submit a final draft to the Graduate School.

### **Preparing the Final Thesis for Submission**

Once the final document is completed, the thesis must be submitted digitally, in PDF format to the Graduate School. Two hard copies of the signature, title and abstract pages must also be submitted to the Graduate School. One of these copies must be on 100% rag bond paper. Requirements for digital submission can be found on the Graduate School's website (<http://gradschool.wsu.edu/current-students/formsfordegree.html>). Additional bound copies are presented to the Department and Chair of the Committee. As a courtesy, members of the dissertation committee are each given final copies.

### **Awarding of the Degree**

When all requirements for the M.A. degree have been met, the candidate may request a letter from the Graduate School certifying that the candidate has successfully completed the degree. The diploma will be awarded at the next commencement ceremony, with the official diploma mailed directly to the person within 6 to 8 weeks.

*This program does NOT lead to certification as a school psychologist or licensing as a Limited Licensed Psychologist. Those interested in obtaining certification as a school counselor contact the respective Area Coordinator for information on the school and community counseling programs.*