

FAQs about the Ph.D. in School Psychology

1. Q: I am interested in obtaining a Ph.D. in school psychology, but I don't have a masters degree. How should I proceed?

A: You should obtain the application materials for the M.Ed./Ph.D. program of study, and apply to this program. Check the box on the application marked M.Ed./Ph.D., and complete all the application requirements for this program of study. You will first be admitted into the M.Ed. program. Upon successful completion of this degree, you will matriculate into the Ph.D. program; no additional application is necessary.

2. Q: Why would I want a Ph.D. in school psychology rather than an Ed.S. degree?

A: Here are reasons given by Ph.D. students in school psychology:
 1. to expand career options, including hospital or university settings;
 2. to acquire advanced clinical or research skills;
 3. to fulfill a personal goal;
 4. to enhance preparation for a leadership position in schools;
 5. to fulfill the education and pre-doctoral internship requirements for Ohio licensure as a psychologist.

3. Q: I already have a specialist-level/Ed.S. degree in school psychology. What would my Ph.D. program consist of?

A: Your previous coursework/internship will be evaluated for currency and relevance, but here's a rough idea:
 1. 8 courses in psychological and educational foundations (frequently fewer if specialist-level coursework is recent and includes courses in the Psychology Department);
 2. 5 courses in research (2 of which will consist of individual research under faculty mentorship, resulting in a publication or presentation);
 3. 3-4 courses in professional role and practice;
 4. doctoral internship; and
 5. dissertation.

4. Q: Wow, that sounds like a lot; how long does that take?

A: That depends on how many courses it ends up being for you, and how many you're able to take each year. Most students complete coursework in 2 to 5 years, followed by internship and dissertation. In 5 years, you'll be 5 years older, and you also could be on your way to a Ph.D.!

5. Q: How is it decided what coursework I must take?

A: These decisions are made by your *Advisory Phase Committee*, a group of 4 or more faculty members representing School Psychology, the Psychology minor area, and one or more outside areas. The committee, with leadership from your major advisor, will evaluate your previous coursework against major area, minor area, and college core requirements and craft your doctoral coursework.

6. Q: I have a masters degree in community counseling, but am interested in the Ph.D. in school psychology. Is it possible for me to apply to the Ph.D. program?

A: Yes! Applications are welcome from those who have specialist-level training in school psychology, from individuals who have at least a masters degree in a related field, AND from those who have an undergraduate degree. Upon admission, you will be assisted to complete specialist-level requirements in school psychology through the substitution of advanced course work that is applicable to doctoral study, as well as completion of the other doctoral requirements outlined above.

7. Q: I am in the first year of coursework in the school psychology M.Ed./Ed.S. program and am considering applying to the Ph.D. program when I complete my M.Ed. Would this be advantageous?
- A: There may be several advantages to applying for doctoral study following the completion of the M.Ed. These include:
1. the possibility of selecting courses that meet both the Ohio Department of Education's School Psychology licensure and Ph.D. requirements;
 2. crafting your specialist-level internship to meet requirements for the doctoral practicum; and
 3. obtaining your ODE license to work in the schools within 3 years, so that you can gain experience (and earn a salary!) while completing Ph.D. requirements.
8. Q: I am working full-time; is it possible for me to do doctoral study on a part-time basis?
- A: Part-time study may be possible under some circumstances for applicants who have previously completed specialist level training in School Psychology. Students should be aware of several issues when considering pursuit of the Doctorate in School Psychology on a part-time basis. Please refer to The Doctoral Program in School Psychology Program Handbook for more information.
9. Q: I worry that I may not have the "right stuff" for doctoral study. What are characteristics of successful doctoral students?
- A: Once certain "threshold" characteristics are met – such as those reflected in such application requirements as GRE scores, GPA, and writing samples – personal qualities are important for success in doctoral study. These characteristics, which include persistence, organization skills, self-directedness, a sense of humor, and the ability to reframe, predict success in a number of endeavors, including graduate study.

10. Q: I've heard about something called "comprehensive exams;" what are these?

A: Comprehensive exams are taken following the completion of the coursework phase of the program. These are designed to demonstrate your synthesis and integration of coursework and your readiness to proceed to the dissertation. Students respond to questions in writing following option 1 or 2 described in the Ph.D. Handbook. Written comprehensive exams are followed by an oral exam with members of your advisory phase committee. The program faculty assists students in preparing for comprehensive exams. Following satisfactory completion of written and oral "comps," the student proceeds to "candidacy," and may enroll in Dissertation.

11. Q: What about completing the dissertation? Is it true that a lot of students get "stuck" there?

A: It is true that some students feel daunted by the idea of the dissertation. For others, however, the dissertation phase is the easiest to manage, because the self-directed research eliminates the need to adhere to a coursework calendar. Several strategies are in place to facilitate successful completion of the dissertation, including:

1. Independent research courses, taken early in the coursework phase, to provide mentored research experience;
2. Mentorship from the Dissertation Chairperson(s) and the other members of the dissertation phase committee.

12. Q: What about the doctoral internship – what does this consist of?

A: The doctoral internship provides intensive application of skills under the supervision of a licensed psychologist. It is designed to complement each individual student's previous training and experience. Internship settings must be approved by program faculty to insure adherence to hour, experience, and supervision requirements. Students complete internship following all coursework and practicum, and either before, after, or concurrently with dissertation.

There are two ways to complete the doctoral internship:

1.) If students have previously completed a specialist-level internship in the schools, they may choose to do the doctoral internship either in a school-based setting under the supervision of a doctoral-level, licensed psychologist/school psychologist, or in a different setting such as a hospital or mental health facility. These students are responsible for obtaining their own internships, which may include APA/APPIC approved internships or paid, supervised positions in schools or other settings. This type of internship may be completed over a 2-year period.

2.) It may be appropriate for a student to complete a single internship which fulfills both ODE and doctoral requirements. In such instances, program faculty match students to school district settings that can provide the necessary breadth and depth of internship training.

13. Q: What are admission requirements?

A: The admission requirements include:

- An undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher; a graduate GPA of 3.5 or higher (if applicable);
- A Graduate Record Examination (GRE) verbal score of 550;
- Two copies of the Graduate School of Education Application for Admission;
- Check or money order (payable to Kent State University) for the \$30.00 non-refundable application fee.
- One official transcript from each college or university (except Kent State University) in which 12 quarter hours (8 semester hours) or more were earned;
- Verification of moral character form;
- At least two letters of recommendation from individuals who can evaluate the applicant's potential for doctoral study;
- Personal data form;
- At least two interviews with doctoral level school psychologists who provide feedback about candidates;
- Sample of written work;
- Evidence of excellent interpersonal skills and ability to work effectively with people;
- Evidence of leadership traits important for school psychologists, including persistence, flexibility, and positive mental attitude;
- Interviews with program faculty (arranged by the Program Coordinator when all other application materials have been received).

The graduate Program in School Psychology is committed to the recruitment and retention of persons from diverse backgrounds. A holistic review of applicants' materials is conducted by program faculty, and performance below the criterion listed in a single area will not eliminate a candidate from consideration.

14. Q: Well, now that I know more, I think I may be interested in applying. What is the application procedure?

A: Applicants should submit (a) [an application packet for the Ph.D. in the Graduate School of Education](#) AND (b) an application for the [Ph.D. program in School Psychology](#) to Kent State University, Graduate Student Admissions & Services, Kent State University, 418 White Hall, Kent, OH 44242. For a complete hard copy of the School Psychology application, send an email to rcowan1@kent.edu or call 330.672.4450.

15. Q: What are the application deadlines?

A: Applications for admission to the school psychology Ph.D. degree program are reviewed in March, July, and November. **Complete applications are necessary approximately one month prior to these dates so that faculty interviews can be arranged.** Hence, application deadlines are as follows:

For admission decision in:

November
February
July

All materials due by:

October 15
January 10
June 15

Program faculty will initiate interviews with applicants when completed files have been received. For questions about the status of application materials, contact the Graduate Student Admissions & Services, Kent State University, 418 White Hall, Kent, OH 44242 at 330.672.0558.

Have further questions? Please contact Dr. Richard Cowan at 330-672-4450 or rcowan1@kent.edu.