

VISION STATEMENT

Through research, academic, and clinical activities, the School and Applied Child Psychology Program emphasizes the inherent strengths of all learners and strives to develop optimal outcomes for children, youth, families, educators, communities, and society.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the School and Applied Child Psychology program is to prepare school psychologists to be contributors to and effective collaborators in enhancing learning and mental health outcomes for all individuals within a wide variety of settings. Graduates of our program are positioned to serve as educational leaders in the effective application of educational and psychological principles to the learning environment at both the individual and systems levels. To achieve these goals, our program cultivates students who are theoretically- and scientifically-informed critical thinkers and who understand and respect the diversity of human characteristics and conditions in order to demonstrate excellence as providers of high-quality, evidence-based prevention, assessment, intervention, and research services. Our graduates are scientist-practitioners who benefit from learning experiences enriched by empirical investigation and supervised training experiences within both the clinical and school environments.

PRINCIPLES

Several overarching guiding principles are ever-present in all aspects of our School and Applied Child Psychology program and have been developed in alignment with the Professional Practice Guidelines for School Psychologists, Canadian Psychological Association, American Psychological Association, and the National Association of School Psychologists.

1. Psycho-educational interventions are needed to prevent, remediate, and alleviate child learning and behavior problems

We believe that schools have powerful influences on child health and well-being and can provide them with opportunities to improve their satisfaction with life and their ability to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Schools today face growing challenges in addressing the complex needs manifested by children exposed to socioeconomic, cultural, linguistic, and societal adversities. The critical question for the 21st century is not “What do children need to succeed?” but “Who bears responsibility for creating those facilitative conditions?” As advocates for children, school psychology program graduates must focus their commitment to children’s well-being by developing a robust child- and family-centered service-delivery model that responds directly to need in the most appropriate manner – a model that reaches out to children and families where they live, learn, and play through evidence-based prevention, direct and indirect intervention and remediation, and community promotion and development.

2. Focus on assets and strengths

All children have self-righting potentials and strengths for resilient outcomes. For children to thrive, they need supportive, caring, and economically stable families, positive educational

experiences, healthy and safe communities and environments, and enduring positive peer relationships. When children successfully overcome challenges, this provides a foundation of competence and resilience that will maximize potential and foster successful outcomes

3. Appreciation of the interdependence of individual and systems-level aspects of development

Learners live in rich physical and social contexts that affect all aspects of individual development. Our School and Applied Child Psychology students develop a solid understanding of normal and atypical development; appreciate the diverse individual learning, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of children and adolescents; and understand that these needs and behaviors must be situated within the larger context of the family, school, social, and cultural environment in which they live. Overall child development, well-being, and thriving are highly dependent on the interconnections and reciprocal influences of these multiple influences.

4. Sound ethical orientation

Although the same ethical principles that apply to psychology in general also apply to the practice of psychology in schools, the relationships between psychologists, teachers, parents, and children may be less easily defined or understood by those receiving service. Moreover, unique ethical issues and dilemmas occur in a school-based setting, as well as specific ethical issues in regard to the provision of services to children in schools. School Psychologists must have sound ethical and legal knowledge and the ability to successfully integrate ethical standards and best practices into their work with diverse student populations in schools and other settings.

5. The integration of theory, research, and practice across the content areas of School and Applied Child Psychology.

The School and Applied Child Psychology program strongly endorses the scientist-practitioner model. We emphasize that theories and research on typical and atypical child development provide the foundation for sound, effective psychological and educational practices with children. We acknowledge that it is essential to harness theory and research on child development and psychological and pedagogical practices to shape policies that support children's needs and well-being. Graduates are competent researchers but also practitioners who adhere to scientific methods, procedures, and research in their day-to-day practice with children and youth. Graduates use scientific methodology in their practice-decisions; they develop and test hypotheses using scientifically valid methods, tools, and techniques and inform their clients of scientifically-based findings and approaches to foster optimal outcomes for all children.

The School and Applied Child Psychology program embraces the production of innovative empirical research and theory as a desirable goal in professional psychology within the graduate training framework. We seek to nurture and shape positive attitudes toward and investment in research among graduates. This will ensure that their practices will be based on scientific findings and evidence-based theories and to facilitate research that is clinically meaningful. We are strategic about the research experiences offered and where, when, and how research training experiences are situated to maximize learning experiences for graduate students. A focus on evidence-based strategies that enhance student research attitudes and practices includes encouraging academic staff to: a) model appropriate scientific behavior and attitudes; b) formally and informally reinforce scientific activity; c) involve students early in their training in research; d) and adopt and value various approaches to research methods and procedures.

6. Evaluation and improvement through critical thinking and a commitment to the scientific approach and reflective practice

In embracing the scientist-practitioner model, graduate psychology programs face a major challenge – that of preparing stewards of the discipline (i.e., graduates committed to generating new knowledge and defending knowledge claims, conserving the most important ideas and findings that are a legacy of past and current work; transforming knowledge that has been generated and conserved by teaching others, and assuming a role that has an ethical and moral dimension) and stewards of the profession (i.e., graduates who possess the knowledge, skills, and moral imperative to intervene and solve problems of practice, employ evidence-based inquiry to inform their decisions, are agents of individual and system-level change, and possess an ethical obligation to engage in critical examination). Our commitment to full realization of the scientist-practitioner model is embraced through incorporating elements of both these disciplinary and professional frameworks.

Our focus on the practitioner element is enhanced through creating a participatory and collaborative climate; using inductive pedagogical approaches that take a critical, creative, and reflective stance to solve authentic problems; and practicum and internships that provide structured experiences of authentic practice which serve as sources of inquiry and professional learning. We seek to enhance the disciplinary and research components through the development of a community-wide commitment to help students develop into the best scholars possible; to foster an intellectual community that stimulates new ideas and development; and to embrace multiple perspectives in the development of new knowledge by encouraging scholarly debate and intellectual risk-taking.

TRAINING MODEL

To achieve our mission and vision, as well as to shape our actions to reflect our values, we support preparation that is grounded in the *scientist-practitioner model* of training. We seek to produce graduates and trainees who are prepared to pursue academic or clinical careers. Our graduates create new scientific knowledge and engage in evidence-based practices that enhance the lives of children, families, school, and allied personnel.

Scientist: Scientific knowledge and research serves as a foundation for all aspects of our school psychology program. Students acquire in-depth knowledge of theory and research related to diverse areas of psychology in general and school and applied child psychology in particular. They are introduced to the scientific and theoretical literature in the biological, cognitive, academic, social-emotional, behavioural, and environmental bases of individual behaviour through psychological assessment, intervention, learning and instruction, and systems-level methods. Moreover, our research-stream students are prepared to be competent scholars who have knowledge and skills in the critical evaluation of empirical literature, research design, research methodologies, and dissemination of findings in oral and written form. This knowledge base permits them to be critical consumers of research and to use their acquired knowledge and skills to inform school psychology practice.

Practitioner: We prepare practitioners who are wedded to the notion that science must inform practice. Our students develop and test hypotheses at the individual, group, and systems-levels to foster outcomes for all learners. Students acquire a strong research and theoretical conceptual foundation in core content areas that they systematically apply through problem-solving to ensure empirically-based school psychology practice. We are also committed to preparing students who actively engage in the ethical decision-making process, have the competencies to navigate diverse

interpersonal relationships and maintain a positive working alliance with their clients, and collaborate effectively with others in planning and decision-making processes that lead to positive outcomes.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals	Objectives
1. To prepare graduates to have a sound understanding of the broad base of psychology, as well as the historical, theoretical, and empirical knowledge base in school psychology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Students will demonstrate a broad knowledge of psychology literature, in areas of biological bases of behavior, cognitive-affective bases of behavior, social bases of behaviours, individual behavior, and historical and scientific foundations (K) b) Students will demonstrate mastery of foundational school psychology literature (K)
2. To prepare graduates who understand and demonstrate ethical and professional conduct in psychological research and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Student will gain knowledge of standards of practice and jurisprudence (K) b) Students will apply their knowledge of ethics to their research and practice (S)
3. To prepare graduates to be competent in assessing clients and in the selection and use of appropriate assessment methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Students will demonstrate knowledge about the psychometric properties of the assessments they use including strengths and limitations (test construction and psychological measurement) (K) b) Students will demonstrate proficiency in administering a wide range of evidence-based assessments including norm-referenced and curriculum-based measures (S) c) Students will examine and evaluate multiple data sources within a developmental context for case conceptualization and intervention recommendations (S) d) Students will demonstrate proficiency in communicating assessment results in a comprehensible and integrated manner (written and oral) (S)
4. To prepare graduates to attend to, address, and advocate for the complete range of human diversity in all areas of psychology research and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Students will be self-aware when working with others from diverse backgrounds (A) b) Students will apply their knowledge about issues of diversity as they pertain to coursework, publications, research, presentations, and clinical practice (A, S)
5. To prepare graduates to be competent in planning, conducting, evaluating, disseminating, and advancing research and practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Students will plan, implement, and evaluate a real-world program evaluation (S) b) Students will demonstrate understanding of a range of research designs and methods (K) c) Students will develop, implement, and evaluate quantitative or qualitative research (S) d) Students will demonstrate proficiency in disseminating research literature and results both in oral and written form (S)
6. To prepare graduates to be competent in the use of a variety of individual and group approaches to implement psychological and educational interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Students will demonstrate knowledge of a broad range of evidence-based interventions including academic, psychological, and behavior (K) b) Students will demonstrate basic skills in problem-solving and consultation with children, families, school personnel and agencies (S) c) Students will demonstrate knowledge of implementing a tiered approach of increasingly differentiated instruction and intervention to optimize academic, behavioral, and socio-emotional functioning for all learners (K) d) Students demonstrate knowledge of the importance of systems-level prevention to promote mental health and resilience (A) e) Students will understand and utilize different modalities to promote, address, or treat mental health issues based on individual client needs (K + S)

SACP Vision, Mission, Principles, & Goals

7. To prepare graduates to be self-aware, knowledgeable about, and skilled in developing positive interpersonal relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Self-knowledge of the impact of professional/ clinician characteristics on professional relationships (A)b) Demonstrate professional conduct in all aspects of their program including interpersonal relationships (K, A, S)
8. To prepare graduates to be knowledgeable and skilled in planning, conducting, and evaluating clinical supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Understand the duties, obligations, and responsibilities of a supervisor and the ethical issues pertaining to supervision (K)b) Design supervision relative to the strengths and weaknesses of a given supervisee (S)c) Apply ethical decision-making processes in the practice of supervision (S)d) Apply at least two current models of supervision and be able to develop one's own model of supervision (S)
9. To prepare graduates for independent practice in school psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Students will espouse and incorporate a personal orientation to the practice of school psychology that is empirically based (A, S, K)b) Students will complete a 1600-hour predoctoral internship either accredited by CPA or an internship that meets equivalent standards and requirements as the final component of their clinical training (A, S K)