UWRF School Psychology Program Assessment Plan

I. Introduction:

The program in school psychology is housed in the Department of Counseling and School Psychology, within the College of Education and Professional Studies, of the University of Wisconsin – River Falls. The program in school psychology is dedicated to providing students with professional, specialist-level training, while providing schools and educational institutions with high quality school psychologists. In this regard, the school psychology program conducts ongoing evaluations of student progress and outcomes. The evaluation process begins with the student’s application to the program, is maintained throughout their education at UWRF, and ends when the student fulfills all program requirements. The program surveys graduates and employers to assess the quality of training, and to determine appropriate areas of emphasis within training.

The School Psychology program monitors and evaluates its course offerings as well as overall program effectiveness. The training standards within the program are consistent with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction training standards (DPI) for school psychologists, and training standards and expected outcomes promoted by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). The School Psychology program is accredited by the National Association of School Psychologist (NASP). The Wisconsin content standards for school psychologists are found in Appendix A of this document, while the NASP standards are found in Appendix B. There is overlap and consistency between DPI and NASP standards.

II. Program Philosophy:

The School Psychology Program at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls is founded on the scientist-practitioner model of professional psychology. The program is committed to training competent professional psychologists to provide the following services in public schools and mental health settings:

1) academic, behavioral, and cognitive interventions;
2) consultation and problem solving on student needs with parents, teachers, and other professionals;
3) assessment and of individual needs;
4) development of interventions to aid students
   and
5) applied research.

Students are encouraged to engage in reflective practice utilizing a problem-solving approach from a child advocacy perspective, to engage in preventive as well as remedial practices, and to work with a broad cross-section of the student population, including regular education students. Decisions are made based upon best practices and from a data-based model. Respect for diverse populations is promoted.

III. Assessment Components:

There are a variety of assessment components imbedded with the school psychology program, used at various stages of the student’s education at UWRF. These assessment components are consistent with the goals of reflective practice, as many of them are designed to provide an opportunity for the student and their
instructors to engage in dialogue about the student’s development, and to identify goals that would enhance the student’s education, or increase their ability to have a positive influence upon the audience they desire to serve. These assessment components are also designed to provide opportunities to measure the students acquisition of skills or knowledge that is consistent with Wisconsin DPI and NASP content or training standards.

Table 1 provides an outline of the assessment components found within the school psychology training program. Various data points are available to aid in evaluating the overall effectiveness of the program.

Table 1
Assessment System:
M.S.E/Ed. S. - School Psychology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Point</th>
<th>Assessment Components</th>
<th>Evaluation Procedures</th>
<th>Data</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Continuous Progress Monitoring</td>
<td>Satisfactorily maintain GPA 3.0/Above</td>
<td>Course Progress</td>
<td>Academic Grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Initial Program Assessment</td>
<td>Satisfactorily complete M.S.E. requirements.</td>
<td>Research project approved by Institutional Research Board for Human Subjects</td>
<td>Core Course Grades M.S.E. Checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Practicum - Application</td>
<td>Faculty Rating Form</td>
<td>Recommendation from faculty that students possess appropriate professional skills to work with students, teachers, and parents.</td>
<td>Rating Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-practicum Self-assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Practicum - Internship Evaluations</td>
<td>Field Observations Supervisor</td>
<td>Practicum/Internship Evaluation Scales</td>
<td>Evaluation Results Group Summary Data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. NASP Exam</th>
<th>Assess knowledge of key domains of practice</th>
<th>Achieve score of 660 or higher on national exam</th>
<th>Exam Score Group Summary Data</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>7. Reflective Faculty Review Portfolio</td>
<td>Faculty Review of DPI/NASP standards</td>
<td>Assess for evidence DPI/NASP Standards</td>
<td>Portfolio of DPI/NASP standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Post-Program Review</td>
<td>Alumni Assessment</td>
<td>Post-training surveys Survey Results</td>
<td>Supervisor Assessment Assess employment skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment Components:**

There are a variety of assessment components imbedded with the school psychology program, used at various stages of the student’s education at UWRF. These assessment components are consistent with the goals of reflective practice, and are also designed to insure that students obtain competency in the major areas defined by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, content guidelines for school psychologists.

Many of the assessment components used throughout the program are designed to provide an opportunity for the student and their instructors to engage in dialogue about the student’s development, and to identify goals that would enhance the student’s education, or increase their ability to have a positive influence upon the audience they desire to serve. These assessment components are designed to provide opportunities to measure the students acquisition of skills or knowledge that is consistent with Wisconsin DPI and NASP content or training standards.

**Assessment Components found within the school psychology program include the following:**

1. **Program Application**

The assessment of students begins with their application to the school psychology program. Multiple factors are considered and reviewed when persons apply to the training program at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls. Among the factors assessed are undergraduate and graduate grade point average (GPA), the student’s letter of intent, and evidence of involvement with children or families with special needs, and recommendations or letters of reference. These components are designed to provide initial information about the students awareness of the field that they seek to enter, and as a baseline measure of the skills and expertise with which they enter the school psychology program.
Students who apply to the program are rated by faculty on the following standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Letter of Interest</th>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.50 - 4 = 3</td>
<td>Excellent¹ = 3</td>
<td>Significant² = 3</td>
<td>Exceptional³ = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 3.49 = 2</td>
<td>Average⁴ = 2</td>
<td>Average = 2</td>
<td>Average = 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;3.0 = 1</td>
<td>Fair = 1</td>
<td>None = 1</td>
<td>Fair = 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Continuous Progress Monitoring

Students are expected to maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or better throughout the program. As well as maintaining a minimum GPA, students are also expected to demonstrate behaviors that could lead to successful functioning as a member of a special education services team. These behaviors include appropriate skill in interpersonal communication, verbal expression, written expression, punctuality, attendance, respect for diversity, and involvement with others. In the event that faculty have concerns that a student is not demonstrating appropriate skills, the program has the ability to initiate a remediation plan to identify goals for the student to enable them to perform at an expected level.

3. Initial Program Assessment: Designation of Research Project and Completion of Core Classes

Students are evaluated continually through the classes they complete. Core classes in school psychology contain assessment practices to insure that students develop competencies in several areas to effectively practice as school psychologists. Respect for diversity, as an example, is infused throughout the curriculum and classes in the program. Through case study learning, and practical experience through practicum and internship, students develop an awareness of and respect for individual differences.

Course expectations also include objective examinations, essay examinations, and assessment of student presentations. Students are also video-taped, and faculty critique student’s performance as shown by the video-tapes.

All students within the program are expected to conduct research as a part of a final program product. All research is presented in a manner consistent with the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th edition. Research projects help students understand how to use and interpret data, and assist in developing decision making skills that are based on accurate understanding and use of data.

The School Psychology student may elect the Directed Research option to fulfill the research requirement of the School Psychology Program. This project involves the design, implementation, analysis and dissemination in writing of an original research investigation. Students electing this option participate in the Directed Research class and engage in individual consultation with faculty. Students may complete the directed research project on an individual basis or work in small groups of two to four students. By using the small group format, more comprehensive research studies can be completed, and collaboration skills can be fostered. Students must submit a proposal with a thorough review of literature, and achieve a grade of B or A before they can proceed to the practicum experience. The status of students in the program is continuously monitored.

¹ Excellent in terms of clarity of presentation, discussion of experience, and clear understanding of the profession, also grammatically superior
² Several volunteer or work related activities with persons with disabilities or diverse needs
³ Described as top 10%, or best student in class
⁴ For a student
evaluated throughout their master’s level work to determine readiness for their field-based practicum experience. This evaluation is initially based upon grades achieved in their classes.

4. Practicum Application:

At the end of their second year in the program, those students who have achieved 32 credits or more are eligible to apply for the practicum experience. All students must first apply to the practicum and must have successfully completed specified coursework. The practicum requires completion of 600 hours of supervised experience. In addition, students must possess a Master's degree before beginning the practicum. A GPA of 3.0 is required for admittance to the practicum. Acceptable professional skills and ethical behavior must be present to qualify for admittance to the practicum. Faculty ratings of the student’s professional skills and readiness for the field-based experience are obtained (Appendix B). As can be seen by the practicum evaluation form, students are assessed in domains involving ethical behavior, communication skills, understanding of diversity, and ability to adapt.

The practicum evaluation form can be used by the student and their professor to set goals, should any areas of concern be identified. While on practicum, students are expected to experience the various duties held by a school psychologist. The university completes 5 observations of the student while they are completing their practicum experience. The observations are designed to give feedback on performance to enable the student to develop their professional skills. The specific practicum requirements are found in the student handbook.

5. Field Based Evaluations:

Students in Practicum and Internship settings are supervised by university instructors and on site certified school psychologists. Once in a school setting, students on practicum and internship are evaluated twice per year by their field supervisor. The students’ evaluations are also reviewed by their university supervisor. When necessary or appropriate, specific goals can be defined to correct any problems identified with the student’s performance.

The Internship is a total of 1200 hours over the course of an entire school year. The internship is maintained and evaluated in a manner consistent with the principles established by the National Association of School Psychologists. Interns are regularly supervised and evaluated by their field supervisor and a university supervisor.

6. National Exam In School Psychology

All students seeking a certification as a School Psychologist are required to pass the National School Psychology Examination. This examination is designed and administered by the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. Students from the School Psychology Program are required to achieve a score of 660 or higher to demonstrate minimum competency as far as their knowledge base of school psychology issues. The examination covers the content categories of (1) Assessment (purposes, methods and application of assessment) (2) Prevention and Intervention (consultation, cognitive-behavioral strategies, crisis intervention), (3) Evaluation and Research (methods, program evaluation), (4) Professional Practice (ethics, legal foundations, public laws), (5) Applied Psychological Foundations (biological basis of behavior, cultural issues, social basis of behavior) and (6) Applied Educational Foundations (instructional methods,
characteristics of exceptional learners). The test consists of 135 multiple choice questions. Core courses in the school psychology program and support course in teacher education and counseling are all designed to enable the student to develop basic competency to enter the field of school psychology. The core areas covered by the national exam are consistent with the content guidelines promoted by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Since requiring the test, all students that have all students but two have passed the test on the first administration. The other two students passed on the second attempt or third. This information clearly indicates that UWRF school psychology students have met basic competencies for entering the profession of school psychology. Table 2 provides a summary of results on the national exam by UWRF school psychology students.

7. Reflective Portfolio

Each student in the school psychology program is required to develop a portfolio designed to show evidence of acquisitions of skills and knowledge that will enhance their ability to be effective advocates for children, and to work collaboratively with parents, teachers, administrators and other professionals. The content of the portfolios submitted by the students must show evidence of both the Wisconsin DPI content guidelines for school psychology. A review and critique of the portfolio by program staff prior to exiting the program is required.

Wisconsin Content Guidelines and NASP guidelines for School Psychologist are provided to the students during their first course, Introduction to School Psychology, and consistently referred to with all courses in the program. The attached document (Excel Worksheet), shows where Wisconsin DPI content guidelines for school psychology is met by core classes at the M.S.E. and Ed.S. levels. Students will begin to acquire content for their portfolios during their first year, and continue developing materials throughout their training at UWRF. Students will develop a paper portfolio. The program will eventually move to portfolio’s in an electronic format. Students will meet periodically with their university advisor to review and discuss portfolio content. One purpose of the portfolio is to help students engage in reflective practice, with the goal of engaging in such practice throughout their career as a school psychologist. The final portfolio contains evidence associated with the Wisconsin DPI content standards for school psychologist, and NASP performance-based domains.

8. Post Program Reviews: Student/Alumni Surveys

On a periodic basis a comprehensive program review and audit is conducted. At these times students, graduates, employers and practicum supervisors are surveyed with respect to a number of issues. Courses are evaluated as well as research and practice facilities. The outcome of this audit and review is sent to an outside evaluator and consultant and recommendations for change and improvement are made and subsequently acted upon.