



Program in School Psychology

**Student Handbook
2025-2026**



Welcome to Towson University (TU), a Top 100 Public University! And welcome to the TU Graduate Program in School Psychology. We are pleased you will be joining us as you prepare for an important and rewarding career. You are entering the program as part of a cohort of talented and dedicated graduate students and we are confident that you will find a high level of support and camaraderie as you progress through the program together.

This handbook contains information that will be helpful for getting started with and moving through your studies in school psychology. In addition, you will find general information about TU services and resources that are important for our graduate students. The handbook provides policies and guidelines on a range of subjects for the school psychology student as well as descriptions of various activities and requirements. It is hoped that use of this document will inform students of the scope of the program, important transition points, and responsibilities towards satisfactory completion of the program requirements.

The handbook is divided into the following sections: Program Overview, Advancement through the Program, Portfolio Process, Practicum, Internship, Recommendation for Certification, Student Assessment, Department of Psychology Ethics and Remediation Policies, and Contact Information.

Please read the Handbook carefully and keep it as a reference. In addition, faculty are always available to answer your questions and help you with any concerns.

Go Tigers!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Candice Aston', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Candice Aston
TU Program in School Psychology
Nationally Certified School Psychologist
Licensed Psychologist

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Program Overview

Philosophy, Goals, and Mission

The Towson University Graduate Program in School Psychology is fully accredited by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and is dedicated to producing school psychologists who are well prepared to function effectively in a growing and evolving profession. Graduate students in our school psychology program are trained to view themselves as part of the larger school system and to make contributions relevant to the goals of the institutions in which they are employed. The program emphasizes early intervention and the use of data-driven, systematic problem-solving to address the needs of children and adolescents in the school setting. Students are trained to provide consultation to teachers, families, and administrators as well as direct counseling and intervention to children and adolescents. As part of the intervention process, we believe in the importance of evaluating outcomes of all services provided to ensure that they are effective.

Students are trained to conceptualize “assessment” in a comprehensive manner that extends beyond a search for pathology within a student. They are trained to complete traditional and nontraditional assessments and to utilize a variety of methods to evaluate intellectual, academic, behavioral, and social/emotional characteristics of students and to assess the learning environment. Students complete multidimensional evaluations that address the specific reason for referral and that are linked directly to recommendations for intervention. The program promotes the use of intervention and evaluation techniques that are empirically sound and sensitive to culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. Students learn and comply with the ethical principles of psychologists and with legislation relevant to children in school environments.

It is our expectation that, upon graduation, students will demonstrate the following skills and competencies:

- Understand basic principles of psychology and human development contributing to normal and atypical development of children;
- Understand and assess the culture and norms of schools in order to optimize entry into schools and make important contributions to the school system;
- Conduct ecological evaluations of classroom and school environments as well as psychological evaluations of children and adolescents who present with academic, behavioral, social and/or emotional difficulties to assist in placement decisions and to provide recommendations that address the reason for referral;
- Plan and implement empirically sound interventions, and use data to evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions

- Address the mental health needs of students through individual, group, and crisis counseling; use data to provide evidence of the effectiveness of such counseling;
- Provide individual and systemic consultation to families, teachers and administrators with a focus on improving professional/family relationships;
- Serve as members of multidisciplinary problem-solving, special education, and crisis intervention teams and begin to take leadership roles on those teams;
- Develop awareness of and sensitivity to cultural differences among all clients, including families, teachers and students; provide services that demonstrate this sensitivity;
- Plan and conduct action research to answer specific questions within the school environment.
- Provide in-service programs to assist school staff in understanding and applying psychological principles and techniques to improve the academic and behavioral functioning of students.
- Serve as change agents to improve the quality of education for all students.
- Adhere to legal and ethical guidelines for our profession throughout training and practice.

Onboarding

Below, are some important points for getting started as a new school psychology graduate student at TU:

- Read the information from Graduate Admissions for newly admitted graduate students at <https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/admissions/admitted/graduate-student.html>.
- Make sure you read any additional information sent to you from the TU Graduate Admissions Office about signing your contract, paying a tuition deposit, and obtaining a TU ID and email account, which effectively enrolls you as an official TU graduate student to begin in the Fall.
- After you have signed your contract, paid the tuition deposit, and obtained a TU ID and email account, you can look at and apply for GA positions. Information on GA positions and how to apply through the TU Handshake system can be found at <https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/assistantships/>. You also will be forwarded any GA positions that that we become aware of that are not currently listed on Handshake. Please note that although you can apply for GA positions once

you are enrolled, you cannot formally sign a GA contract until you have registered for Fall classes.

- After you pay your deposit, you will receive seat codes that will allow you to register for Fall school psychology courses. A list of courses for each semester of the program can be found in the Program of Study.
- At the start of the Fall semester, you will be assigned an official advisor. However, the program director (Dr. Aston, caston@towson.edu) will be your initial main point of contact and will effectively serve as your advisor until advisors are determined.
- **The following link will take you to the Towson University Graduate Student Resource Guide that provides a consolidated source of information about Towson University services for graduate students that can be useful now and as you move through the program, particularly incoming students. Hyperlinks within the Guide give you access to current web sites of University programs and services. The Guide can be found at:**
<https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/gsa/documents/gs-resource-guide.pdf>

Policies and Procedures

Course Sequence

The School Psychology Program emphasizes a cohort model that allows students to develop strong and positive working relationships with others as they progress through the program. The program provides students with a carefully designed sequence of study and all students are required to follow this sequence. All required courses must be completed prior to beginning the 1200-hour internship. Courses have been developed to assure that all NASP Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists (<https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/nasp-2020-professional><https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/nasp-2020-professional-standards-adopted/nasp-2020-domains-of-practice>) are comprehensively addressed. Also see included Program of Study.

Program Completion Timeline

Students will complete the requirements for the CAS in three years as outlined in the Program of Study. Degree-seeking students in the School Psychology Program are expected to register for courses each semester (including summers) on a continuous basis and to adhere to the degree requirements in effect at the time of their initial enrollment. The School Psychology Program faculty recognizes, however, that a student may encounter unexpected circumstances that require a temporary interruption of studies. Under such circumstances, the student may be absent for a maximum of two consecutive semesters (including summer) without jeopardizing continuous enrollment status.

If a student will be absent for more than two consecutive semesters, she or he must submit a written request for a leave of absence to the program director in order to maintain continuous enrollment. Upon reviewing the reasons for the request, and in consultation with

other program faculty, the director may grant an approval for a leave of absence. Prior to the student's return (and within the necessary time frame to complete remaining program requirements within the University required 7-year maximum), the student will meet with the program director. At that time, it will be determined if courses already completed remain sufficiently current or if the student must retake one or more courses when the content of a course has been significantly updated. All program requirements in effect at the time of the student's return must be completed even if they differ from those in effect when the student initially enrolled. If a student who is absent for more than two consecutive semesters does not obtain an approved leave of absence, the student will be required to apply for readmission and must fulfill the admission requirements and degree requirements set forth in the catalogue in effect at the time the student seeks to re-enroll in the school psychology program.

For students attending classes on a part-time basis, the Practicum courses must be completed in the same manner as full-time students and must be completed during Fall and Spring semesters immediately prior to beginning the Internship. The Internship may be completed on a part-time basis over the course of two consecutive years provided the district in which the intern is working will support a part-time option. Students must disclose their intention to complete the internship part-time when they interview for the internship position.

Outside Employment

While program faculty recognize that students may seek out outside employment during their time in the program, it is important for students to understand that specific scheduling requests due to outside employment cannot be accommodated due to the structure of the full-time program. In addition, students should be aware that changes in class schedules may occur due to faculty availability or department needs. The program will aim to inform students of changes to schedule within a reasonable amount of time. Students will also be required to complete a 1.5 day practicum during the 2nd year of the program and a full 5 day internship during year 3.

Advising

Students are assigned an advisor upon acceptance to the program (initially, the advisor will be the program director). It is the goal of the faculty to assist students in completing the program and mastering the skills necessary to be capable and skilled school psychologists. This is a joint effort between faculty and students. It is expected that students will make appointments to meet with their advisor at least once per year. Students may also be asked to meet with their advisors to discuss issues that affect his or her ability to function in a professional manner during classes or while engaged in field experiences. Incoming students will meet with their advisors during the Welcome Back Gathering held the week prior to the start of classes. The advisor/advisee relationship is an important and valuable aspect of graduate training. Possible deficiencies in preparation, adjustment to graduate life, clinical competency, administrative paperwork and red tape, personal issues that impact progress, etc. are all concerns with which the advisor can be helpful. If applying for GSA funding, please address your application to your assigned advisor.

New Graduate Student Orientation

An orientation for new students enrolled in one of Towson's psychology graduate programs is held annually the week before school starts. Enrolled students are informed of the meeting by email. Additionally, our student organization, [The Student Affiliates of School Psychology of Towson University \(SASP TU\)](#) will also be present at this meeting to orient students to the student organization, to provide initial supports like peer mentoring, and to offer opportunities for cross-cohort relationship building.

Ongoing School Psychology Program-wide Meetings

Students will be invited to attend at least one program-wide meeting each year for cross-cohort collaboration and information-sharing. The agenda for this meeting typically includes: program updates, practicum and internship updates, providing program-feedback, and upcoming professional development opportunities.

TU Email and ID

Once you have enrolled, you will be provided with a Towson ID user name and e-mail account. The TU email address is your official email account for all University and School Psychology Program communication and is the account from which class distribution lists will be generated. You are responsible for checking this account, even if you continue to use others. *It is strongly advised that you check your Towson email daily as that is the primary way faculty will communicate with you about courses and programmatic issues or situations.* The TU ID will be your primary identification number and will be used for numerous official TU purposes.

Online Course Registration

As a student at Towson University, you will be able to go online to manage your Student Records, accept and modify Financial Aid, Register for Classes, and confirm your Personal Demographic Information as well as many other features. More information can be found at <http://students.towson.edu>. Prior to the start of each semester, program graduate assistants will email each cohort of students to confirm classes that students should be registering for.

Course Fees

Students will be asked to pay a one-time mandatory lab fee when they enroll in PSYC 720. The fee will cover the cost of tests and test protocols necessary for evaluating cognitive, academic, and social/emotional/behavioral functioning of children and adolescents in each assessment course (e.g., 720, 761, and 703). The fee will also cover materials for counseling courses such as treatment manuals and psychoeducational materials. The fee is not related to the graduate school fee imposed during registration, nor will it be paid through a graduate assistantship.

Additional fees (e.g., use of the Watermark platform starting the second year) may also be required. A fee may also be applied to provide your practicum supervisor with a stipend for providing students with supervision.

Ethical Practice and Professional Behaviors

Students must conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. Ethical principles, including the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)' Principles for Professional Ethics will be discussed in the first course that students take upon entering the program (PSYC 713 Role of the School Psychologist), in (PSYC 790 Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues), and during other courses where relevant. Students should seek immediate assistance from their advisor whenever they are unsure what to do in a given situation, or when requests made by field supervisors or others conflict with professional ethics or University guidelines. During the first semester in the program (prior to shadowing a school psychologist) students will be asked to sign a statement agreeing to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with standards set forth in the Towson University Professional Behavior Policy (<https://www.towson.edu/coe/centers/documents/professional-behavior-policy.pdf>) and may be required to be signed at other points throughout the course. Students may be warned and dismissed based on this policy and other policies set by the Program in School Psychology. The Towson University Professional Behavior Policy includes steps for removal, remediation, reinstatement, dismissal, and appeal.

Work Outside of the Classroom

Some students work 20 hours per week in graduate assistantships or other employment settings. Working 20 hours per week allows students to complete all course requirements and to participate in all required experiences outside of the classroom (e.g., school visits, classroom observations, conference attendance). While we do not mandate limiting one's work hours to 20, the program faculty feels *strongly* that working more than this typically has a detrimental effect on the quality of student work and their ability to participate fully in the graduate student experience. *During the fulltime internship, secondary employment is strongly discouraged, as your priority is your responsibility to your field placement schools.*

Maintaining Records

Student records, including forms related to practicum and internship, will be maintained for a finite period. After that time, they will be destroyed consistent with ethical standards for disposal of records. Students are advised to maintain copies of all forms and syllabi they might need for certification or licensure.

Student-Faculty Meetings

From time to time, there may be meetings with Program students and faculty.

Eligibility for Graduation

Students must have completed all program prerequisites prior to beginning the program and must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 with no more than two C's at the time of request for graduation. Students must also pass the Comprehensive Examination (Praxis II Examination in School Psychology with a score greater than 155 and submit a satisfactory Portfolio consisting of products created during internship) to earn the Certificate of

Advanced Study in School Psychology. All degree requirements including resolution of incomplete grades must be completed by the last day of classes of the semester in which the student is applying for graduation. The application for graduation must be filed by the date published in the Graduate Catalog.

Master's (MA) degree. After successful completion of the first 30 credits, students will apply for the Master's degree in Psychology for August graduation of the summer of their first year. Deadlines for applying for graduation are publicized in the Graduate Catalogue and on-line. You do not need to "walk" in the graduation ceremony but may do so if you wish.

Certificate of Advanced Study in School Psychology. After the MA has been conferred, you do not need to re-apply for the CAS in school psychology program; you have already been accepted into the MA/CAS program. However, you will need to apply for graduation again for the spring of your internship year, again adhering to all deadlines. At this second graduation, the CAS will be conferred.

Program Curriculum

The 66 semester-hour program is made up of 22 courses, which includes a six-credit Practicum and twelve-credit Internship. Students also participate in non-credit Pre-Practicum activities beginning the first semester. Program coursework begins with introductory courses and builds to the full-year internship where students integrate previously learned competencies and knowledge bases to serve children and youth in the schools. The following list includes the coursework grouped by type but not necessarily in chronological order.

Full-Time Course Sequence

The sequence of courses for each year of the program are outlined below:

	Fall	Spring	Summer
Year 1	PSYC 733: Exceptional Child: Advanced Issues	PSYC 720: Assessment of Intelligence	PSYC 651: Interventions in School Settings
	PSYC 611: Developmental Psychology	PSYC 761: Social/Emotional Assessment and Behavioral Assessment	PSYC 790: Ethics, Legal and Professional Issues
	PSYC 713 : Role of the School Psychologist	PSYC 625: Functional Behavior Assessment	
	PSYC 687: Advanced Experimental Design	PSYC 605: Counseling Technique	

Year 2	PSYC 678: School-Wide Prevention and Intervention	PSYC 703: Preschool Assessment	
	PSYC 771: School Psychology Practicum I	PSYC 622: Advanced Multicultural Psychology	
	PSYC 730: Advanced Child and Adolescent Therapy	PSYC 773: School Psychology Practicum II	
	PSYC 735: Direct Assessment of Academic Skills	PSYC 731: School-Based Consultation	
Year 3	PSYC 791: Internship Seminar I	PSYC 792: Internship Seminar II	
	PSYC 794: Internship I	PSYC 796: Internship II	

***Internship Year Details**

Fall, Winter and Spring (1200 hours, full-time; 12 credits total)

PSYC 791 Internship Seminar I (Fall) (1 ½ credits)

PSYC 794 Internship I (Fall) (4 ½ credits)

PSYC 792 Internship Seminar II (Spring) (1 ½ credits)

PSYC 796 Internship II (Spring) (4 ½ credits credits)

Program Requirements

In the following sections, students will be guided through program requirements, timelines, and contact information. Successful navigation towards the goal of certification requires the student to be mindful of course sequence, required activities and other program characteristics designed to provide the students with a carefully designed set of learning experiences. This section of handbook focuses on important activities that students must engage in before embarking on the culminating experience of the full-year internship.

Pre-Practicum Activities

Beginning with the first semester, students are expected to engage in out-of-classroom activities that are intended to broaden their knowledge of school systems, education personnel, community resources and additional information relevant for work in the schools. This may include interviewing or shadowing current school psychologists and observation of children.

Practicum

After acceptable completion of the first year of study, school psychology graduate students participate in two consecutive practicum experiences in a public-school setting during their second year in the program for a minimum of 150 hour each semester for a total of 300 hours. Both practica must be completed with grades of B or higher prior to beginning internship. If a grade of C is earned in either Practicum I or Practicum II, remedial activities (which may include repeating one or both semesters of Practicum) will be required prior to beginning the Internship. Practica focuses on understanding school systems and schools as organizations, conducting thorough psychodiagnostic evaluations, and developing and providing direct and indirect interventions. Practica placements are a cooperative effort between the program, students, and schools systems and are ultimately assigned by the TU Center for Professional Practice (CPP). Students are asked for their preferences in terms of location and this is taken into account to as great an extent as possible by the CPP. Factors which are used to determine practica sites and supervisors are (1) the opportunity for school psychology students to be exposed to practices that are consistent with our training philosophy, including gaining experiences working with diverse populations of students and families; (2) the opportunity at the site for students to fulfill course requirements; and (3) availability of appropriately trained field supervisors. Before beginning practica, more information on practica will be provided to students (and supervisors) in the practica Syllabus and Handbook.

The syllabus for PSYC 771 and PSYC 773 will provide a detailed account of the objectives and requirements of this experience. Following the guidelines set out in the syllabus students record the number of hours they spend in the various Practicum activities using the *Activity Log for Practicum*.

Several evaluation measures provide feedback about the Practicum performance. The University Supervisor provides specific feedback for course assignments (i.e. psychoeducational reports). The Field Supervisor evaluates the student on dispositions and competencies twice during the practicum.

In order to ensure that students have the requisite skills and dispositions to engage in the practicum field experience, the School Psychology faculty meet monthly in order to review student progress and readiness for practicum experience. Students deemed not recommended for practicum may be required to engage in a remediation program to ready them for the practicum experience.

Internship

The school psychology internship is the culminating experience of the school psychology graduate program. Its purpose is to provide students with the opportunity to participate in the provision of a full range of psychological services in an educational setting. Upon completion of the internship (minimum of 1200 hours), it is expected that students will possess entry-level skills to begin employment as school psychologists. Students will demonstrate the ability to provide a broad range of outcome-based psychological services.

Consistent with NASP Standards, the internship is provided at the end of the formal training period (after the completion of at least 54 graduate credit hours, including at least 300 supervised practica hours in school settings). The sequence of courses students must complete, and knowledge and skills they are expected to have attained prior to internship are described in the most recent version of the *Graduate Program in School Psychology Student Handbook*. Before beginning internship, students will have earned a Master's Degree in School Psychology and passing scores on the Comprehensive Examinations (Praxis Score of 159 or higher). After successfully completing the internship, students will earn a Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS). Students earning a grade below a B for either semester of Internship or Internship Seminar will be required to repeat the internship and complete any other remedial activities deemed necessary by the school psychology faculty, including Internship Seminar, prior to obtaining the Certificate of Advanced Study.

Interns are responsible for working the dates and hours specified by the site. Interns are typically asked to sign a 10-month contract (e.g., August to June). Although most students work on a full-time basis for one year, students may elect to work on a part-time basis over two consecutive years (four contiguous semesters). At least one-half of the internship (e.g., 600 hours) must occur in a school setting.

While on internship, students must attend twice-monthly seminars at Towson University. The purpose of the internship seminars is to provide students with the opportunity to share experiences from their field placements and to discuss relevant issues that arise during the field placement. Seminars may also include didactic instruction, test demonstration and guest speakers. Students completing the internship part-time will attend all seminars while on internship. Students will earn a total of 12 credit hours for internship over two semesters (4.5 credits each semester for the field experience and 1.5 credits each semester for the accompanying seminar). Many but not all the internships are paid, with stipends typically ranging from \$20,000 to \$25,000. See "Internship Overview" on page 30.

Several evaluation measures provide feedback about the Internship experience. The University Supervisor provides specific feedback to the student about the course projects. The Field Supervisor(s) evaluates the student on dispositions and competencies twice during the internship (*School Psychology Internship Evaluation*). Students also complete an evaluation of the field supervision experience which is turned into the University Supervisor (*Student Evaluation of Supervisor*).

Conference Attendance

All students are required to attend a state-level or national conference specifically for school psychologists prior to completing their internship. This might include attendance at one of the two annual Maryland School Psychologists Association conferences or the National Association of School Psychology Annual Convention. Documentation of attendance will be required and will be given to the internship coordinator. Conference attendance is allowed at any point in the program, including summers. Attendance at such a conference provides students with the opportunity to develop relationships with colleagues and other graduate students and to begin developing a professional identity as a school psychologist.

In many instances, students can apply to the Graduate School Association (GSA) for financial assistance to help cover travel or registration fees:

<https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/gsa/awards.html>.

Social Justice Training

All students are required to participate in a mandatory social justice training facilitated by program faculty during the spring semester of their first year in the program. This training will take place outside of class time.

Evaluation of Competencies

Students are evaluated at various points throughout the program (in addition to assessments that are part of specific courses) to ensure that they are developing and mastering skills necessary to practice as school psychologists. In addition to formal evaluations, students will be asked to meet with their advisors, as needed, to discuss interpersonal skills, professional characteristics, writing skills, time management, etc. Students are also encouraged to seek out such feedback from faculty. At times, remedial activities may be required in order to ensure that students are progressing successfully towards development of specific competencies.

Professional Dispositions. Successful practice as a school psychologist requires not only the demonstration of knowledge and skills, but also values, beliefs and attitudes, i.e., dispositions, which supports effective delivery of services. Through the *Annual Student Evaluation* form, Program faculty members evaluate students at the end of each academic year and provide feedback to students regarding their skills and general dispositions. Students also have an opportunity to complete a self-rating of this form. When a student's professional dispositions are inadequate, faculty members (often including the advisor) meet with the student to discuss the deficiency. Based on this discussion the student submits a letter to the School Psychology Program Director. A remediation plan is then developed by the graduate faculty and the student's advisor and/or other faculty members as appropriate are assigned to work with the student. Regardless of students final course grades, failure to address significant concerns related to professional dispositions and or unethical behavior can impede a student's ability to progress to practicum or internship.

Evaluation of competency for practicum. Performance will be evaluated near the end of the second semester of the program (the semester in which students are required to take "Assessment of Intelligence" and "Social/Emotional Assessment"). The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that students have the necessary skills to administer and score psychological tests prior to beginning their Practicum. [NOTE: In the case of students whose progress through the program has been delayed, competency must be demonstrated *immediately prior* to beginning the Practicum rather than at the conclusion of the courses listed above]. Students who earn grades of "C" in PSYC 605, 625, 651, 720, 761 or 790, or who do not demonstrate competence on the evaluation of competency for practicum, may be required to repeat courses or complete remedial activities prior to beginning practicum. This may entail delay of practicum for one year, depending on which course(s) need to be repeated.

Evaluation of competency for internship. Students must demonstrate competency for internship by earning grades higher than C in both semesters of Practicum (PSYC 771 and 773), and in PSYC 703, PSYC 730, PSYC 735, and PSYC 622. Students who earn grades of “C” in any of these classes may be required to repeat courses, repeat practicum, or complete remedial activities. In order to be deemed competent for internship, students must also pass the comprehensive examination described below.

Praxis examination. All students are required to take the Praxis Examination in School Psychology prior to beginning their internship year. The Praxis examination also serves as the Comprehensive exam and is a requirement for obtaining the Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) credential after graduation. *Students must list Towson University as a recipient of the scores when applying to take the exam.* In addition, students must provide the program director with a copy of their scores, including their overall performance and the breakdown of specific scores. Further information about the exam can be found at www.ets.org/praxis. **The required score for the TU Program in School Psychology is the Maryland state cutoff score.**

***Students are not cleared to begin internship before completing this requirement and submitting all documentation needed to clinical coordinator.**

Portfolio evaluation. All CAS candidates are required to submit a professional portfolio as a requirement for graduation. A written document specifying contents and standards for portfolios is provided to students early in the Internship year. All portfolio products must be completed during internship as the purpose of the portfolio is to ensure that interns can apply skills that lead to positive outcomes for students, their families, and school staff. The faculty of the School Psychology Program also use portfolios to assess the effectiveness of the training program by reviewing and analyzing results yearly to make program improvements. The portfolio consists of work samples created entirely during Internship. Specific guidelines and grading rubrics are provided to interns early in the internship year. The following is a brief description of contents:

- **Academic case study and behavioral consultation case study.** The inclusion of case studies is to provide evidence that interns (1) are aware of how children learn, (2) can identify factors that may impact a child or adolescent’s academic or social/emotional functioning, (3) can design and implement empirically-based interventions that enhance academic performance and social/emotional functioning and that are sensitive to the diverse needs of children and their families, (4) can collaborate with parents and/or teachers to develop and implement intervention plans with integrity, and (5) can measure the effectiveness of interventions and use data to modify interventions as needed.
- **Counseling case study.** The inclusion of an individual counseling analysis is to provide evidence of understanding of social and life skill development and to demonstrate that interns can use data to measure the effectiveness of mental health services. It is an opportunity to display cultural awareness and sensitivity. It also provides evidence that

interns recognize the importance of planning for generalization of skills learned in the counseling setting to general education settings.

- **System change project.** The inclusion of a system change project is to provide evidence that interns are able to (1) use systematic methods to determine school priorities, (2) conduct gap and force field analyses to explore supports and restraining factors, (3) determine steps to reduce barriers to change and to meet overall goal, and (4) measure change in both barrier reduction and progress towards the overall goal.

Assessment of Student Readiness

Towson University graduate faculty members have an ethical obligation to monitor the skills and competencies of future mental health professionals both on an objective as well as a subjective level. The School Psychology Program has an ethical responsibility to the society at large to protect the public welfare by graduating competent students qualified to assume the roles and functions of entry-level school psychologists. The Program faculty members are committed to developing competent school psychologists who will possess the technical and interpersonal skills to be an asset in their work settings.

Student progress in the Program is carefully monitored with multiple points of assessment including both internal and external reviews. At designated points in the Program, the competence levels of students are reviewed and decisions are made about the readiness of the student to proceed to the next level of training.

The following section reviews specific information about grading policies, Program examinations and reviews and external evaluations. Student and faculty responsibilities are described.

Internal Performance Review

Course Grades. The first method of evaluation is the course grade. In content courses, grades are determined by the student's ability to demonstrate to the instructor's satisfaction that the subject has been mastered. In addition, several courses are skill-oriented; grades are based not only on mastery of academic content, but also on the instructor's evaluation of the student's demonstration of appropriate clinical skills and professional dispositions. Satisfactory grades fall within the range of A to B-; specific details for requirements to earn the grades are outlined in each course syllabus.

To identify students who may be experiencing academic difficulties, the School Psychology Faculty meet monthly to discuss student concerns. The committee is composed of Program faculty and other adjunct faculty members who teach students in the psychology graduate programs. For students identified as experiencing academic difficulties, a plan is developed, and the student's advisor and other faculty members as appropriate are assigned to work with the student.

Grades of C. If a student receives a grade of “C+” or below, the student’s overall performance is reviewed by the graduate faculty. A student receiving a grade of “C” should first have a conference with the instructor who gave the grade. The purpose of this conference is to reach an understanding of the reasons behind the “C” grade. Additionally, the student is required to write a letter to the School Psychology Program Director indicating (a) the student’s perception of the problems (s) that led to their poor grade, and (b) what he/she intends to do to correct those problems and prevent recurrence. A remediation plan will then be developed by program faculty. Students that receive two C grades will face dismissal from the program.

Grades of Incomplete. A grade of “incomplete” will only be given to provide the student with the opportunity to complete unfinished work. Students will be informed in advance, if possible, about the pending grade of “incomplete.” A mutually acceptable written agreement between the instructor and the student receiving the grade must be created to specify the deadline to complete the requirements, content of the requirements and default grade if requirements are not met by deadline.

Portfolio Review. Students submit their portfolio documents via Watermark platform by the third Friday in April. Portfolio items rated as not acceptable must be revised and resubmitted.

External Performance Review

Field Supervisor Evaluations. In addition to evaluations by the university field supervisor, practicum and internship students are evaluated by field supervisors. These supervisors provide regular feedback to the student according to the conditions of the practicum and internship agreements as well as completing rating forms to provide both the student and the Program faculty information concerning student performance.

Required Examinations. Students who seek an education certification are required to take the Praxis exam. Students are required to check the PDE website for updates and changes.
www.education.state.pa.us

Program Evaluation. To monitor the ability of the Program to develop the skills and professional dispositions of our students, formal and informal data collection methods are in place. When doing whole Program evaluation, assessments that provide specific information about student performance are aggregated to see how well our students do as a group and to provide input for program improvement.

Sources of data for aggregation begin with course grades. Additional indicators include the Praxis exams, both subject and area, as they provide a relative comparison to national norms

Remediation Plan. It is the belief of the Program faculty that many students who encounter difficulties in attaining skills or dispositions have the potential to be competent school psychologists given additional guidance and a plan that allows them to develop the necessary competencies. The purpose of the remediation plan is to identify activities that will help students remediate deficiencies and demonstrate the necessary behaviors important to the profession of school psychology. The remediation plan involves input from the student but is ultimately guided

by decisions made by Program faculty and other members of the department's Graduate Committee. Elements of a remediation plan may include but are not limited to retaking or auditing courses, receiving tutoring, writing assistance, and/or counseling.

- + A maximum of two courses with an earned grade of C are allowed in a program of study for graduation.

Students who encounter academic difficulties as signaled by grades of "C+" or below or weak demonstration of dispositions are required to complete a remediation plan. In each case, the student is required to write a letter to a designated program faculty member. The following are actions required of students when in situations requiring a remediation plan:

Grade of C+ or below.

1. Conference with instructor.
2. Write letter to the School Psychology Program Coordinator.
3. *Student may also be required to Retake course at next opportunity.*

Failure to develop dispositions.

1. Meet with faculty members and advisor to discuss disposition concerns.
2. Submit letter to the School Psychology Program Coordinator.
3. Schedule appointment (s) with Program Faculty to discuss progress towards development of dispositions.
4. Follow remediation plan developed by Program faculty

Failure of Meeting Required Score for Praxis Exam.

1. Follow remediation plan developed by Graduate Program Faculty.
2. Retake the praxis exam or complete alternative written comprehensive exam.

Unsatisfactory Evaluations from practicum or internship field-based supervisor.

1. Conference with internship instructor.
2. Remediation plan
3. Student may also be required to Retake additional courses and or, repeat the internship or practicum field placement

It is the expectation of the Program Faculty that students will view the remediation plan as an opportunity to improve their performance to an acceptable level. Failure to follow the remediation plan and to develop the necessary skills and dispositions will result in dismissal from the Program.

Grievance Procedures

Procedures have been developed that allow students to grieve a grade or sanction. Students who wish to challenge a course grade should first meet with the instructor. If the student wishes to proceed, they may also meet with the Program Director. The next step would be to follow the formal appeal process detailed here: <https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/resources-current/appeals.html>

NASP Domains of Training and Practice

Source:

<https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/nasp-2020-professional-standards-adopted/nasp-2020-domains-of-practice>

Table 1.1
NASP 2020 Domains Linked to Courses

Domain 1: Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability	PSYC 605 PSYC 625 PSYC 651 PSYC 713 PSYC 720 PSYC 771 PSYC 773 PSYC 794 PSYC 796
Domain 2: Consultation and Collaboration	PSYC 625 PSYC 651 PSYC 731
Domain 3: Interventions and Instructional Support to Develop Academic Skills	PSYC 720 PSYC 611 PSYC 703 PSYC 735
Domain 4: Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop Social and Life Skills	PSYC 605 PSYC 625 PSYC 651 PSYC 761 PSYC 730
Domain 5: School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning	PSYC 625 PSYC 651 PSYC 678
Domain 6: Preventive and Responsive Services	PSYC 605 PSYC 625 PSYC 651 PSYC 761 PSYC 703 PSYC 730
Domain 7: Family–School Collaboration Services	PSYC 625 PSYC 761 PSYC 731

Domain 8: Diversity in Development and Learning	PSYC 625 PSYC 720 PSYC790 PSYC 611 PSYC 622
Domain 9: Research and Program Evaluation	PSYC 687 PSYC 794 PSYC 796
Domain 10: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice	PSYC 605 PSYC 625 PSYC 713 PSYC 720 PSYC 733 PSYC790 PSYC 771 PSYC 773 PSYC 794 PSYC 796

Important Contacts

Core Full-Time Faculty

Candice N. Aston, Ph.D., MA, MS Associate Professor (she/her)
Program Director

Craig Rush, Ph.D., NCSP, Associate Professor (he/him)

Shanye Phillips, Phd Assistant Professor (she/her)

Lauren Kaiser, Phd Clinical Assistant Professor (she/her)/Practicum Coordinator

Additional Student Support Contacts

Kerri Goodwin-Department Chair

Email: Kgoodwin@towson.edu

Office of Inclusion and Institutional Equity (OIEE)

Email: OIIE@towson.edu.

School Psychology Mentor Program: As a first-year student in the program, you will be assigned a mentor from the 2nd year cohort as an additional support. It is expected that you meet with your mentor at least once each semester.

Services and Resources

Professional Organizations

The faculty of the School Psychology Program strongly believes in continuing professional development for our students. One excellent way for students to receive further professional development is by joining school psychology organizations and attending professional conferences. *Students are required to attend a minimum of one professional conference while enrolled in the program.* When a conference topic is particularly relevant to a specific course, it may be a requirement of that course to attend the conference. Otherwise, it is the responsibility of the student to arrange for attendance. Notice of all state conferences is provided to students through the School Psychology Newsletter.

Maryland School Psychologists Association (MSPA). Membership in MSPA not only shows support for the profession of school psychology, but also affords students other benefits. These include: The Protocol, a quarterly newsletter, which will be sent to students at no additional charge; and student rates for the Fall and Spring MSPA conferences. MSPA conferences are renowned for bringing nationally known speakers to Maryland. Registration forms are available on-line at www.msponline.org.

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). For a greatly reduced “student rate,” students receive the Communiqué, a newsletter that is published eight times per year, and *School Psychology Review*, a peer-refereed journal published quarterly. Students can obtain registration forms on-line at www.nasponline.org.

TU Student Organizations

Graduate Student Association (GSA). The GSA (<https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/gsa/>) is an organization created to address the unique needs of graduate students across all University programs. When funding allows, the GSA may provide competitive grants to help defray costs of attending professional conferences or of conducting research. The GSA represents graduate student views on several University committees and distributes a newsletter that addresses various topics specific to the needs of graduate students. All graduate students automatically become members of the GSA.

Student Services and Resources

Accessibility and Disability Services (ADS). ADS provides services and accommodations to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are encouraged to call ADS and register as soon as possible after their admission to the University. Recent documentation from a qualified professional as to the nature of the disability is required for registration with ADS. Accommodations and services are provided based upon individual need. To receive these accommodations, please provide each instructor with a copy of the

statement you receive from ADS. More on ADS can be found at <https://www.towson.edu/accessibility-disability-services/>.

Parking. Students may obtain information regarding parking on campus at <https://www.towson.edu/parking/student/>.

Health Center and immunizations. The Health Center's priority is to keep our students and campus community healthy. All students taking classes on the main TU campus or any of our affiliated campus locations (Shady Grove, Southern Maryland Higher Education Center, HEAT and Hagerstown) are required to complete the Towson University Immunization and Tuberculosis screening requirements. Vaccine requirements are established to protect the health of the student and the entire Towson University community. Only medical and religious exemptions are permitted. In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, the University Health Officer may exclude students who cannot prove immunity from campus for the duration of the outbreak. Any resulting withdrawal from classes will be the student's financial responsibility for non-medical exemptions. Students may obtain all required vaccines (MMR, Tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis, Meningitis vaccine), blood titers, and tuberculosis testing by appointment at the Health Center. Charges will be billed to your tuition account or your private insurance. More information about the Health Center and its services, including information about TU repose and requirements pertinent to COVID-19, can be found at <https://www.towson.edu/healthcenter/> or by calling 410-704-2466.

Online and Technology Platforms and Services

Online course registration. As a student at Towson University, you will be able to go online to manage your Student Records, accept and modify Financial Aid, Register for Classes, and confirm your Personal Demographic Information as well as many other features. More information can be found at <http://students.towson.edu>.

Blackboard. Blackboard is a course management platform used by TU faculty and students. More on using Blackboard at TU can be found at <https://www.towson.edu/technology/training/blackboard/students.html>.

Online Tracking of Field Placements. Consistent with College of Education requirements, student will be required to track their practica and internship experiences using an online database (Watermark).

Technology services. Information about the TU Office of Technology Services (OTS) can be found at <https://www.towson.edu/technology/>.

Financial Aid and Scholarship Resources

Financial aid. For more information on financial aid, visit <https://www.towson.edu/admissions/financialaid/apply/graduate.html>.

TU Department of Psychology Scholarships. Information about scholarships offered to psychology students in the TU Department of Psychology can be found at <https://www.towson.edu/cla/departments/psychology/resources/scholarships.html>.

MSPA Minority Scholarship. The Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA) offers a scholarship to encourage promising graduate minority students to enter the profession of school psychology in the state of Maryland. Visit <http://mspaonline.org/SPAM> for more information.

NASP Minority Scholarship. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) offers a scholarship to students interested in pursuing a graduate degree in the field of psychology. Each year, NASP awards at least one minority student with a \$5,000 scholarship. Visit <http://www.nasponline.org/membership-and-community/awards-scholarships-and-grants/minority><http://www.nasponline.org/membership-and-community/awards-scholarships-and-grants/minority-scholarship-program> for more information.

GSA funding. More information for funding from the GSA can be found at <https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/gsa/awards.html>.

Additional scholarships resources. In addition to searching for assistantships via the TU Handshake system (<https://www.towson.edu/careercenter/hire/>), you can also search TU's Scholarship Seeker Web site for scholarships. For more information, visit <http://inside.towson.edu/scholarshipSeeker/TU><http://inside.towson.edu/scholarshipSeeker/TU-Scholarships.html>. If you have any questions, please contact the Scholarship Office at 410-704-2647 or scholarship@towson.edu.

Other University, CLA, and Program Information

Other useful information regarding services and resources for TU students can be found via the links and contact information below:

- The general TU website can be accessed at www.towson.edu.
- The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) website can be accessed at <https://www.towson.edu/cla/>.
- The Office of Graduate Studies website can be accessed at <https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/office/>.
- The Department of Psychology website can be accessed at <https://www.towson.edu/cla/departments/psychology>.

- The TU Program in School Psychology website can be accessed at www.towson.edu/schoolpsychology and the Program Facebook page can be accessed at <https://www.facebook.com/TUSchoolPsych>.
- Students are referred to the Graduate Catalog for updated and additional information on various services and resources at TU, which can be found at (<https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/catalog.html>).
- Information on reporting child abuse can be found at <https://www.towson.edu/public-safety/police/report-crime/child-abuse.html> and *The Policy on the Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect* can be found at <https://www.towson.edu/about/administration/policies/06-01-50-policy-reporting-suspected-child-abuse-neglect.html>.
- Information on the TU Police Department (TUPD) can be found at <https://www.towson.edu/public-safety/police/contact.html> and the phone number for PUPD is (410) 704-444.
- Information on Office of Inclusion and Institutional Equity (OIIE), including information on Title IX, can be found at <https://www.towson.edu/inclusionequity/>.
- Information about TU Division I sports and student sports and recreation activities can be found at <https://www.towson.edu/studentlife/activities/recreation/>.
- The Psychology Test Library, which houses testing kits and related materials and apparatus for the Department of Psychology, including the Program in School Psychology, is located in room 1107. To check out materials, you must present your TU ID.

AI USAGE POLICY (effective fall 2025)

Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines expectations for the ethical, appropriate, and legally compliant use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools by students in the MA/CAS program. These expectations apply across all domains of training, including academic work, clinical practice, and research. While the program recognizes the educational potential of AI tools—particularly large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini—student use must reflect the professional values of school psychology and comply with ethical and legal standards, particularly those related to client confidentiality and academic integrity.

Students are responsible for the content of all academic, clinical, and research work they submit, regardless of whether AI tools were used. Any work supported by AI must be critically reviewed, edited, and appropriately attributed. AI tools must not replace the student's own academic writing, clinical reasoning, or research decision-making. Students are encouraged to consult with faculty or supervisors before using AI tools in any new or uncertain context.

Confidentiality and Client Information

Under no circumstances should students enter information about real clients into AI tools that are not institutionally approved. This includes both identified and de-identified clinical material. Most publicly available AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) are not HIPAA- or FERPA-compliant, and their use to process clinical information constitutes a serious breach of ethical and legal standards. Students may not use AI tools to draft psychological reports, treatment plans, clinical notes, or emails involving client material.

Academic Use

AI tools may be used in coursework with instructor permission and within the following guidelines:

- Permitted uses include outlining, grammar checking, brainstorming, or reviewing APA formatting.
- Students may not submit AI-generated content as their own.
- When AI tools are used to assist with academic work, students must include a brief note of disclosure indicating when and how the tools were used. For example:

"Portions of this paper were assisted using ChatGPT on July 7, 2025 for outlining and grammar checking. All written content reflects the student's own original work."

- Use of AI tools during in-class assessments or exams is not permitted unless explicitly approved by the instructor.

Clinical Use

Given the ethical and legal responsibilities associated with practicum and internship placements, students may not use AI tools to support clinical casework. Specifically:

- Students may not input clinical, client-related, or school-based case material into AI tools.
- AI tools may not be used to write, revise, or summarize psychological reports or clinical notes.
- AI tools may not be used to simulate counseling, create behavior management plans, or generate diagnostic impressions, even hypothetically, unless part of a structured educational activity involving no real client data.

Students may use AI tools to explore academic content related to school psychology (e.g., reviewing intervention strategies or theoretical frameworks), provided that no client information is included. Students may also use AI to help them improve templates or to generate suggestions related to a general referral concern (e.g., identifying evidence-based reading fluency interventions), but they must not include specific case details.

Violations

Misuse of AI tools may result in remediation, academic discipline, or removal from practicum or internship settings, depending on the severity of the situation. Repeated or serious violations may lead to dismissal from the program.