College of Education
Department of Educational Psychology

Educational Psychology Doctoral Practicum Guidelines

Doctoral emphases in Counseling Psychology and School Psychology require several practica experiences which are a vital and necessary aspect of professional training. Details for the School Psychology practica experiences are outlined below.

Program Field Experiences In School Psychology

The field experiences at NAU are designed to be in accordance with the Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology as set forth by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and the American Psychological Association (APA). Both the practica and internship experiences are regarded as integral aspects of the NAU training program and are considered essential to the development of well-rounded school psychologists. The practica experiences at NAU typically involve placements at traditional school settings in northern Arizona. These placements provide a wide range of relevant experiences with assessment, consultation, intervention, and counseling. Additionally, school psychology candidates gain practica experiences in settings that focus on diverse populations, specifically Native American or Hispanic children. Practica and internship experiences are distinct entities in that the practica experience is designed to address specific skill development while the internship is a culminating experience in the training program. During any field experience the students are expected to adhere to the professional code of conduct and ethics of psychology (NASP and the APA). Students will conduct themselves in a professional manner and exhibit appropriate interpersonal skills. The specifics of these distinct experiences will be detailed below.

Practica Experiences

Formal practica experiences for school psychology students are offered through the course entitled Psychoeducational Assessment Practicum (EPS 675) and Doctoral Practicum in School Psychology (EPS 741). The student earns three semester credits each semester upon completion of the courses. EPS 675 is typically taken in the second year of study and the timing of the doctoral practicum is decided with your program advisor (typically in the third or fourth year of study). Additional experience is gained in conjunction with other courses in the curriculum that require the students to build specific professional skills. The formal practica are taken at the point in the students' program at which they have completed course work geared toward specific skill development and acquisition of a solid knowledge base in education and psychology. Completion of EPS 675 and 741 is required prior to placement in an internship site. The experience is designed to provide opportunities to operationalize these skills, principles, and concepts. Activities performed by students compliment the specific training objectives of the school psychology program at NAU. During the practica experience, students function in a professional capacity in the delivery of psychological services in a public school setting under the close supervision of program faculty and school personnel who are certified school psychologists. One school psychology faculty member is assigned to each practicum class.
Each practicum section has a maximum of six students. In addition, group supervision and instruction related to best practices and critical issues in the field of school psychology is offered on a weekly basis by the faculty at NAU, usually at the practicum site. Additional meetings are also held throughout the experience. These meetings may have presentations from guest speakers, case study discussions, information about legal and ethical issues, and professional practice. Sessions may also provide students with information about securing an appropriate internship and internship requirements.