

Southern Utah University
Doctorate of Psychology in Clinical Psychology (Psy.D.)
Pathways to Discipline Specific Knowledge
June 20, 2022

Discipline Specific Knowledge: Discipline-specific knowledge serves as a cornerstone of identity as a psychologist and orientation to health service psychology. Therefore, all students in accredited doctoral programs shall demonstrate knowledge in the discipline of psychology, broadly construed. This discipline-specific knowledge base includes: 1) the history and systems of psychology, 2) basic knowledge in scientific psychology, 3) integrative knowledge in scientific psychology, and 4) methods of inquiry and research. The Southern Utah University doctoral clinical psychology program engages in continuous efforts to ensure that, consistent with our program aim and philosophy, all students acquire a general knowledge base in psychology foundational to successful professional practice. The following subsections describe the program pathways through which students achieve specific experiences with each category or discipline specific knowledge.

Category I: *History and Systems or Psychology*

History and Systems of Psychology Content knowledge that includes the origins and development of major ideas in the discipline of psychology.

Program Pathways

Students will review classic and foundational psychological theories in the initial Foundations of Psychotherapy intervention course (PSY 6300). These theoretical models are then integrated into all remaining intervention courses (PSY 6310, and PSY 6320), Group Interventions (PSY 7250), Child and Adolescent Interventions (PSY 7350), and Addictions Treatment (PSY). Seminal theories and classic empirical studies are reviewed in Advanced Social Psychology (PSY 6400), Memory and Cognition (PSY 7100), Motivation and Emotion (PSY 6470), and Applied Personality Assessment (PSY 6255). The Psychopathology (PSY 6450) course covers theoretical, clinical, and empirical knowledge about the history, classification, and treatment of mental disorders. These historical insights and principles are integrated into a comprehensive treatment of the topic in the History and Systems course (PSY 7200). Students will show proficiency in this topic by passing more than 70% of questions related to history and systems psychology in Phase II of their Comprehensive Examination (Foundational Knowledge Exam)

All relevant courses must be passed with a “C” grade or better. Students falling below a C are placed on Formal Probation and must follow the [Student Improvement, Remediation, and Formal Probation](#) policy.

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outlined in the [Student Improvement, Remediation, and Formal Probation policy](#). Should they fail to pass 70% on that section(s) a second time, they will create and submit a Remediation Plan as outlined in the [Student Improvement, Remediation, and Formal Probation](#) policy and retake that section of the exam. Should they fail to pass 70% on that section(s) a third time, they will create and submit a be placed on Formal Probation as outlined in the [Student Improvement, Remediation, and Formal Probation](#) policy, and may retake that section of the FKE after completion of the Formal Probation Plan.

Category 2: Basic Content Areas in Scientific Psychology

As evidence-based practitioners, graduates from the Southern Utah University Psy.D. program in clinical psychology are immersed in the scientific literature from the beginning of their studies. Throughout the curriculum, classes emphasize primary sources for content. Students begin writing a comprehensive literature review as an initial phase in their Qualifying Examinations. In preparation for a scholarly Comprehensive and Integrative Professional Project, students take a two-semester course in doctoral-level research design and statistical analysis. Clinical training sites are carefully selected to immerse emerging clinicians in empirically supported assessment and intervention strategies. In the program, we attempt to foster a scientific ideology and identity in every student through both curricular and extracurricular activities. The American Psychological Association recognizes five primary areas of emphasis.

Affective Aspects of Behavior -Includes topics such as the impact of affect, mood, and emotion on behavior.

Program Pathways

Students complete an advanced Psychopathology course (PSY 6450) that covers mood and affective disorders. More advanced theories in emotion and motivational principles provide elemental content in the Motivation and Emotion course (PSY 6470). Conceptual ideas about emotion, affect, and mood as they relate to substance abuse and addiction are thoroughly covered in the Addictions Treatment course (PSY). Students will show proficiency in this topic by passing questions related to affective aspects of behavior in Phase II of their Qualifying Examination (Foundational Knowledge Exam).

Biological Aspects of Behavior -Includes multiple biological underpinnings of behavior, such as neural, physiological, anatomical, and genetic aspects of behavior.

Program Pathways

Biological aspects of behavior are introduced in the Human Development Through the Lifespan course (PSY 6610), and are reinforced throughout the curriculum. Many courses draw from historical and contemporary knowledge about neurobiological systems and processes, including; Memory and Cognition (PSY 7100), Psychopathology (PSY 6450), Motivation and Emotion (PSY 6470), and Child and Adolescent Interventions (PSY 7350). Courses that focus extensively on bio-affective influences include Biological Bases of Behavior (PSY 7450), Applied

Clinical Neuropsychology (PSY 7400), and Neuropharmacology (PSY 7300). The brain-behavior relationship and systemic functioning of the nervous systems are endemic to each of these courses, as is a comprehensive knowledge of neuroanatomy and neurophysiology. Assessment and remediation of brain-based pathology along with pharmacological effects of psychotropic drugs are imperatives for health services psychologists. Students will show proficiency in this topic by passing more than 70% of questions related to biological aspects of behavior in Phase II of their Qualifying Examination (Foundational Knowledge Exam).

Cognitive Aspects of Behavior, -Includes topics such as learning, memory, thought processes, and decision-making. Cognitive testing and cognitive therapy do not, by themselves, fulfill this category.

Program Pathways

Seminal theories in cognitive aspects of behavior appear in the initial Foundations of Psychotherapy (PSY 6300) course, and are reinforced and practiced in each of the two subsequent psychotherapy courses (PSY 6310, and PSY 6320). Cognitive theories and concepts through developmental processes are detailed and reviewed through class discussion and empirical readings for the Human Development through the Lifespan (PSY 6610) course. In the second semester, students take Memory and Cognition (PSY 7100) in preparation for the Applied Assessment I (PSY 6250) course that helps them attain skills in intellectual and cognitive assessment. Students gain further theoretical and practical knowledge in Motivation and Emotion (PSY 6470) and in Applied Clinical Neuropsychology (PSY 7400). Students will show proficiency in this topic by passing more than 70% of questions related to cognitive aspects of behavior in Phase II of their Qualifying Examination (Foundational Knowledge Exam).

Developmental Aspects of Behavior -Includes transitions, growth, and development across an individual's life. A coverage limited to one developmental period (e.g., infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, or late life) is not sufficient.

Program Pathways

In the first semester students take the Human Development Through the Lifespan (PSY 6610) course. Scientifically derived developmental theories, concepts, and principles are further reinforced and refined for clinical work in the Psychopathology and Assessment Across the Lifespan (PSY 6630) course, and in the Child and Adolescent Interventions and Family Systems (PSY 7350) course. Developmental factors are also crucial to better understanding the impacts of neurological insult or injury in the Applied Clinical Neuropsychology (PSY 7400) and the Addictions Treatment (PSY 6810) courses. Students will show proficiency in this topic by passing more than 70% of questions related to developmental aspects of behavior in Phase II of their Qualifying Examination (Foundational Knowledge Exam).

Social Aspects of Behavior- Includes topics such as group processes, attributions, discrimination, and attitudes. Individual and cultural diversity and group or family therapy do not, by themselves, fulfill this category.

Program Pathways

Knowledge of social aspects of behavior is addressed in multiple courses. Social development and cross cultural perspectives appear in the Human Development Across the Lifespan (PSY 6610) course. Competence in this area is also demonstrated in the Individual and Cultural Diversity course, also taken during the first semester of study. Reinforcing social influence and group dynamics in a clinical setting occurs in the Group Interventions (PSY 7250) course. Students delve deeper into social processes, social theories, attributions, attitudes, discrimination, and other psychosocial elements in the Advanced Social Psychology (PSY 6400) course. Learning how social concepts and principles are involved in work or industry occurs in the Industrial and Organizational Psychology (PSY 7050) course. Students will show proficiency in this topic by passing more than 70% of questions related to social aspects of behavior in Phase II of their Qualifying Examination (Foundational Knowledge Exam).

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Category 3: Advanced Integrative Knowledge in Scientific Psychology

Advanced Integrative Knowledge in Scientific Psychology including graduate-level scientific knowledge that entails integration of multiple basic discipline-specific content areas identified in Category 2 (i.e., integration of at least two of: affective, biological, cognitive, social, or developmental aspects of behavior). Advanced integrative knowledge in Category 2 areas can be acquired in either of two ways: 1) an evaluated educational experience that integrates at least two Category 2 content areas that have been previously covered through other methods; or 2) an evaluated educational experience that provides basic coverage in two or more areas and integration across those areas

Program Pathways

There are many areas throughout the curriculum where integration of scientific knowledge bases is required. For example, scientific knowledge of human development, biological influences on behavior, psychometric testing and assessment, and clinical interventions are detailed in the Applied Clinical Neuropsychology (PSY 7400) course. Similarly, concepts and theories in human development and therapeutic intervention are synthesized and integrated in the Child and Adolescent Interventions (PSY 7350) course. Students design and conduct a Comprehensive and Integrative Professional Project, where they specifically articulate how concepts and empirically supported theories are infused and integrated. Case presentations in the Clinical Practicum courses and during vertical supervision will require students to In the third Phase of their Qualifying Examination, students compile and present a comprehensive case conceptualization. In this presentation, they integrate and then report on relevant information about cultural relevance, clinical assessment, social dynamics, and developmentally appropriate intervention strategies in their work with a client. In addition, they select at least two Category 2 DSK areas and present, at a graduate level, scientific understanding of how concepts and principles relate to their case conceptualization and how to integrate the two into their overall conceptual framework. Depth of graduate-level and scientific knowledge and the integration of the chosen DSK areas will be evaluated by qualified content experts as outlined in the [Comprehensive Examination Policy](#).

Category 4: Research Methods, Statistical Analysis, and Psychometrics

Research Methods and Statistical Analysis-Includes topics such as strengths, limitations, interpretation, and technical aspects of rigorous case study; correlational, experimental, and other quantitative research designs; measurement techniques; sampling; replication; theory testing; qualitative methods; mixed methods; meta-analysis; and quasi-experimentation.

Program Pathways

Scientific inquiry is a basis for all courses and programmatic activities. Students read, cite, and critique primary source research articles in each class. In the second year, students take a two-course series that incorporates research design and statistical analysis (PSY 6700, PSY 6705). These courses cover sampling theory, experimental rigor and design, qualitative methods, case studies, correlational designs, experimental within and between subjects designs and mixed methods designs. Students learn statistical principles such as power and estimation, sampling, hypothesis testing, etc. They also learn and practice conducting various types of statistical analyses such as statistical description, power estimations, meta-analyses, and linear modeling, along with univariate and multivariate analysis techniques. These concepts are further practiced and mastered during their third year, when they take Applied Research and Program Development (PSY 7010). Now in possession of advanced knowledge in research design and statistics in applied settings, students design and conduct a Comprehensive and Integrative Professional Project in which some form of data collection and analysis are required. These projects are typically applied and programmatic in nature, but could include basic research inquiries as well. Students will show proficiency in this topic by passing 70% of

questions related to research methods and statistics in Phase II of their Qualifying Examination (Foundational Knowledge Exam).

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Psychometrics -Includes topics such as theory and techniques of psychological measurement, scale and inventory construction, reliability, validity, evaluation of measurement quality, classical and contemporary measurement theory, and standardization.

Program Pathways

During the first year, students take courses in psychometrics and applied clinical assessment (PSY 6250, PSY 6255). These courses cover measurement theory, sampling theory, scale development, inventory construction, and psychometric analysis. The course covers elemental concepts like reliability and validity, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, multi-trait-multi-method designs, etc. Students learn to appropriately select, administer, score, interpret, and report on standardized assessment tools. These concepts are further practiced and mastered in the Psychopathology and Assessment Across the Lifespan (PSY 6630), Applied Clinical Neuropsychology (PSY 6530), and in Applied Research and Program Evaluation (PSY 7010) courses. Students will glean experience and expertise in psychometric assessment with a wide variety of clients during clinical practicum training, and on their predoctoral internship experience. Students will show proficiency in this topic by passing 70% of questions related to psychometrics in Phase II of their Qualifying Examination (Foundational Knowledge Exam).

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