



**The term “focus” should be used to describe opportunities in areas of training which are not recognized specialties. Training programs should strive to provide explicit explanations of the type of training provided in these non-specialty areas.

Approved by CoS Board of Directors, 8/19/2023

Common Definitions and Criteria Across All Recognized Specialties
Clarifications to help recognized specialties use the APA-Taxonomy* in a consistent manner

- Broad and general training forms the core of education and training in health service psychology. Programs are accredited by the American Psychological Association or Canadian Psychological Association. Programs integrate the broad and general training with those educational and training activities related to recognized specialties as determined by the specialty and described in a specialty taxonomy. In addition, each specialty will have education and training guidelines consistent with its specialty area. Specialty training may be acquired at the doctoral, doctoral internship, postdoctoral, or postlicensure stages as defined by the specialty.
- By definition, postdoctoral education and training is a Major Area of Study in a specialty recognized by the Commission for the Recognition of Specialties and Subspecialties in Professional Psychology (CRSSPP) and requires that 80% or more of time be spent in the specialty area. At the postdoctoral training stage, as per above, it is recognized that training in the Major Area of Study will be consistent with the education and training guidelines set forth by the specialty.
- A course is typically defined as 3 semester-credit hours (or equivalent) in a health service psychology training program accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) or the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA).
- A practicum is typically defined as the equivalent of one academic year (e.g., 9 months, in semester or quarter systems) consisting of supervised training for at least 8 hours per week, or its equivalent, with at least 50% of time in the provision of clinical services.
- Consistent with what is described in *CoA Standards of Accreditation*, supervision should be provided by persons with competencies in the specialty demonstrated by appropriate training, credentials, and qualifications for training in the specialty as defined by the specialty.
- Additional training experiences can also include, but are not limited to, research experiences, lab meetings, brown bags, lecture/colloquia series, and grand rounds, as defined by the specialty.
- For definitions of continuing education (CE) and continuing professional development (CPD) see the APA [Quality Professional Development and Continuing Education Resolution](#). A continuing education (CE) course is defined as an organized program by the American Psychological Association or Canadian Psychological Association, a State Psychological Association, or other major provider of CE (e.g., Society of Behavioral Medicine).

* Taxonomy; www.apa.org/ed/graduate/specialize/taxonomy.pdf

Specialty Specific Definitions and Criteria

Use superscripts in table entries above to reference footnotes provide in this section which expand upon or clarify table entries as needed.

¹ School psychology applies the science and practice of psychology to children, youth, adults, and families, and the schooling process. School psychology practice promotes the protection and fosters the promotion of the educational and personal development of all students. School psychologists are prepared to provide a range of services to include, psychological diagnosis, assessment, consultation, individual, group, family intervention, prevention, health promotion, program development, evaluation, crisis intervention and response, and research services with a special focus on the developmental processes of children and youth within the context of schools, families, and other systems. School psychologists intervene at the individual and system levels to develop, implement, and evaluate prevention and intervention programs in a variety of settings such as public and private schools, clinics and hospitals, forensic settings, universities, and independent practice within the scope of practice of school psychology. Core knowledge is rooted in psychology and education and includes knowledge of psychoeducational assessment and diagnosis, and special education decision making; and intervention, prevention, health promotion, and program development focusing on children and youth development with the context of schools, families, and other systems. Knowledge of cultural contexts to address culturally or linguistically diverse individuals, and in learning and effective instruction, and family and parenting processes are critical. School psychologists have knowledge of federal law and regulations, case law, and state statutes and regulations for schools and psychological services and appreciate historical influences of educational, community, state, federal, and organizational dynamics on academic, social and emotional functioning. (c.f., additional information see the CRSPPP description of school psychology; <https://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/specialize/school>)

² A graduate course is typically considered to be 3 credit hours within a semester (or equivalent quarter credit hours) with a total of approximately 78 hours exclusive of credit for the supervised doctoral internship experience and a terminal doctoral project. A minimum of 4 years of full-time study, including an internship at the graduate level, or the equivalent if part-time. At least one course must include professional identity as a school psychologist (e.g., understanding learning processes; school law, procedures, and policy). Academic programs in SP aspire to be consistent with the National Association of School Psychologist (NASP) *Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services* as a professional norm (see <https://www.nasponline.org/x55315.xml>).

³ School Psychology Practicum is defined as a practicum experience of supervised training, with at least 50% of clinical service with school psychology focused concerns. Field experiences are completed for academic credit or are otherwise documented by the institution, with practica preceding and in preparation for internships. At a minimum, activities must include opportunities to build professional competencies in (a) data-based decision making, including psychoeducational assessment with recommendations; (b) the design, implementation, and evaluation of services that support cognitive and academic skills; and (c) the design, implementation, and evaluation of services that support socialization, behavioral and mental health, and emotional well-being (e.g., counseling, behavior analysis and intervention, social-emotional learning). The services can be implemented at the individual, class-wide, and/or systems level.

⁴ Research project—Empirical investigation, extended case studies, literature critiques and analyses, or capstone projects that the graduate program requires.

⁵ Requires ≥600 hours of supervised experience in SP

⁶ Supervised experience/practice in the specialty at the Doctoral, Internship and Postdoctoral stages of training includes didactic activities (e.g., seminars, grand

rounds) and clinical service delivery (e.g., assessment, treatment, consultation) to children, adolescents, and their families and caretakers with supervision by a credentialed school psychologist or licensed psychologist (at the doctoral level supervision may be provided by other appropriately credentialed professional with competencies in school service delivery as demonstrated by appropriate training, credentials, and qualifications). Primary supervisors of SP supervised experience and/or post licensure should have training, qualifications, or credentials (e.g., ABPP, NCSP, credentialed SP) with competencies in SP.

⁷ SP has requirements that are generally established by state credentialing laws and regulations (see <https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/school-psychology-credentialing-resources> for requirements specific to each state). Continuing Education (CE) is intended to build upon a completed doctoral program in school psychology. It is not a substitute for the basic academic education and training needed for entry to the field of psychology, nor should it be the primary vehicle for career changes from one APA-recognized specialty to another. NASP provides guidance on Respecialization and Professional Retraining (see <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-psychology/shortages-in-school-psychology-resource-guide/recruitment/recruiting-practitioners/respecialization-and-professional-retraining>) and NASP provides guidance for post graduate mentorship and professional support within *Guidance for Postgraduate Mentorship and Professional Support* (NASP, 2021)."

⁸ Post-licensure Major area of Study for programs of training to re-specialize in School Psychology when doctoral degree is received in a different specialty and psychologist is already licensed.

⁹ Continuing Education must be approved by APA, NASP, State Departments of Education, or by a major mental health or medical organization. It may be earned for verified attendance at or participation in any program given by one of the following sponsors: 1. American Psychological Association or Canadian Psychological Association or their affiliates; 2. The National Association of School Psychologists; 3. The National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology; 4. Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards; 5. American Medical Association or its affiliates; 6. Any regionally accredited school, college or university; 7. State Psychological or School Psychology Associations with CE permission; 8. State Departments of Education.

¹⁰ CE opportunities at these levels are not designed for respecialization. They are meant to be descriptive of the programmatic offerings with different levels and intensity of learning opportunities. The programmatic offerings may be designed to acquaint psychologists trained in other recognized specialties with courses or practical training in school psychology (e.g., *Exposure* level) or provide learning opportunities for school psychologists (e.g., *Experience* and *Emphasis* levels).

Examples of Program Descriptors for Each Stage of Training

Doctoral

While there is no one training model at the doctoral level, the following example of a doctoral program in school psychology is instructive.

The School Psychology doctoral training program at XXX follows the recommendations of the American Psychological Association for broad and general education and training for Health Service Psychologists and offers a **Major Area of Study** in SP. The SP training at XXX includes evidence-based assessment and intervention that can assist in health development and optimal learning in the learning environments including, but not limited to school settings. The doctoral training program at XXX uses a problem-solving model to address assessment, intervention development and monitoring, and consultation with parents, teachers, and other care givers of individuals birth to 21 years. Training is afforded in collaborating with other healthcare researchers and practitioners, including service providers such as (a) speech/language, occupational and physical therapists; (b) regular and special educators and school administrators; (c) physicians; (d) behavior specialists, and (e) others. **Major Area of Study** in SP at University XXX requires students to complete at least four courses following discipline-specific domains. Core school psychology courses available in the program address: (a) data-based decision making; (b) consultation and collaboration; (c) academic interventions and instructional supports; (d) mental and behavioral health services and intervention; (e) school-wide practices to promote learning; (f) services to promote safe and supportive schools; (g) family, school, and community collaboration; (h) equitable practices for diverse student populations; (i) research and evidence-based practices; and (j) legal, ethical, and professional practice. In addition, at least two practica in sites where students can work with children and youth in learning situations are required. Current practica sites include public K-12 schools; community mental health centers; and a local Boys and Girls Club. At least one major school psychology paper or research project with public presentation is also required.

Doctoral internship

Our APA-accredited internship program at XXX offers a **Major Area of Study requiring at least 1200 hours of** training in school psychology which consists of two five-month rotations of 50% supervised experience in a K-12 school. The training will provide opportunities for assessment and eligibility determination, teacher consultation, and individual treatment for children who exhibit academic, social, and/or behavior difficulties in the school environment. The internship program also provides **Experience** level training in Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology through a rotation in the XXX where SP interns work with other mental and behavioral health professionals in the provision of services in an out-patient setting for 20-25% supervised experience (1 to 1 ½ days per week).

Interns conduct psycho-educational assessments (e.g., diagnostic, cognitive, academic, and adaptive functioning); teacher consultations for individual and class-wide interventions; and provide brief, goal-focused individual psycho-educational therapy. The interns participate in conducting behavioral assessments and behavioral observations, developing/implementing behavioral intervention plans, providing staff training for multi-tiered intervention; development, implementation, and monitoring of behavior plans; and implementation of multidisciplinary intervention team meetings. There also may be opportunities in the SP Major area of study for interns to co-lead a social skills group for children with aggression and other peer difficulties.

Postdoctoral residency

The postdoctoral fellowship at XXX offers a **Major Area of Study** in school psychology. At least 80% of resident time will be devoted to training in providing support services to individuals in the learning environment. For all residents, individualized, mentored clinical and research training is combined with a curriculum that emphasizes a comprehensive approach to service delivery, education, and implementing change for individuals, birth to 21 years.

Residents may select from the following rotations: (a) an in-patient facility to assist the individual in making educational gains identified in their IEP during their intensive treatment; (b) a pediatric unit associated with XXX to assist in the development of a treatment plan for development behavior, social, emotional, and developmental goals determined by a multi-disciplinary team of which they are a member; or (c) an outreach program supported by the local school district to provide after school care for individuals with severe disabilities where the intern will develop, implement, and monitor intervention plans to prepare the individual for independent and assisted living post-secondary education.

Post- licensure training

The XXX State School Psychology Association at the annual spring convention is offering two- SP CE courses. **Experience level** training in *Best Practices of Assessment and Interpretation* consists of 20 hours of CE. **Exposure level** training in *Effective Strategies for Building Social Skills in the School Environment* consists of 8 hours of CE. These courses provide approved CE (i.e., XXX Dept of Education and APA/NASP).