

Request to Plan a Doctoral Program in Applied and Experimental Psychological Science at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington

Introduction

This is a request from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington for approval to plan a doctoral program in Applied and Experimental Psychological Science (CIP: 42.0101).

Program Description

The major emphasis of the program will be to provide doctoral training in areas related to persistent cognitive and behavioral disorders (including addictions, dementias, autism and other developmental disabilities, and mental illness in corrections). The establishment of such a program is consistent with and would support the UNCW mission and would particularly address core values and goals related to academic excellence, regional engagement, and diversity. UNCW is well-positioned to develop this program because it builds on the strengths of the department's successful undergraduate and master's programs and the high profile research productivity of its outstanding faculty in the program areas. There is a strong demand for doctoral training in psychology in these areas and a great need for professionals to work with these underserved populations in our region. No universities in North Carolina offer training with a focus on the psychology of persistent cognitive and behavioral disorders.

Concentrations in both clinical and experimental psychology will be offered. *The clinical concentration requires specific coursework and practica necessary for students to be eligible to obtain licensure.* The purpose of this program will be to provide doctoral-level training in research and treatment of contemporary mental health/behavioral problems that are most pressing at both state and national levels. The major goal of the program is to generate professionals who will develop and deliver evidence-based practices for severe and persistent cognitive and behavioral disorders in underserved and diverse populations in North Carolina and nationally. Training will follow a "translational" model. In this model, application/treatment issues guide basic research questions, and basic research in turn informs application and treatment. Training in basic science and evidence-based treatments are the ultimate goals of the program. Graduates will be qualified to serve in a variety of scientific and professional settings including universities, hospitals, state & local government agencies, community mental health & counseling centers, legal settings, and research laboratories. A key feature of the program is to train professionals to work with the increasingly diverse population of North Carolina through Spanish language training and coursework related to cross-cultural/diversity in psychology.

Students choosing either the clinical or experimental concentration will have the opportunity to focus their training in one or more specific areas of expertise. The following areas of expertise represent complementary approaches to severe and persistent cognitive and behavioral disorders.

Addictions/Psychopharmacology. Alcoholism and other forms of drug addiction are debilitating and persistent disorders, but there are few programs in the U.S. that offer specialized clinical training in this field. Students in the program will have the opportunity

to engage in coursework and training in addictions/psychopharmacology that will meet American Psychological Association Substance Abuse Proficiency requirements. Students in either the experimental or clinical concentration will have the opportunity to work with faculty who approach the problem of substance abuse from many perspectives (e.g., neuroscience, behavioral, and social psychological).

Dementias/Cognition and Aging. The number of older North Carolinians is rapidly increasing, and one of the primary mental health concerns cited by older individuals is memory loss. This creates a critical need for research, training, and intervention related to psychological problems associated with cognitive aging. Students in either concentration will have the opportunity to conduct research on dementia and related problems of cognitive aging, basic cognitive and neuroscience approaches to the study of memory, and on various aspects of normative development through the life-span.

Mental Illness in Corrections/Forensic Psychology. Expansive growth in prison populations, combined with deinstitutionalization policies that resulted in the criminalization of the mentally ill, has created a significant demand for professionals uniquely trained to work with individuals within the criminal justice system—particularly in corrections (e.g., jails and prisons). Students in either concentration will have the opportunity to receive training in forensic psychology critical to the field including violence and aggression, factors impacting the courts such as expert testimony and jury decision-making, and assessment and treatment of mental illness in criminal justice settings. No doctoral level training in forensic psychology is currently available in North Carolina.

Developmental Disabilities/Behavior Analysis. Individuals with mental retardation and autism represent a growing and significantly underserved clinical population in North Carolina. Students in either concentration will have the opportunity to work with faculty with expertise in experimental and/or applied behavior analysis, developmental disabilities, and basic normative processes of cognitive and social development. There is a critical need in North Carolina for professionals who are eligible for licensure as clinical psychologists and certification as applied behavior analysts, but no doctoral programs in North Carolina currently provide such training.

The aim of the proposed program is to train psychologists for the 21st century. The UNC Wilmington doctoral program in Applied and Experimental Psychological Science will be a recognized leader in the training of professionals ideally equipped to address the needs of underserved populations nationally and across North Carolina in particular.

UNC Tomorrow Relevance

The proposed doctoral program is a response to demonstrated regional and statewide needs for more educated professionals to deal with a range of addiction and mental health issues with attention to special populations who are susceptible to these conditions. The US Labor department recognizes the need for more clinical psychologist especially as the health care focus highlights the cost of unhealthy life styles and the need for earlier interventions.

Disciplinary Panel

The disciplinary panel was held on January 16, 2010 by videoconference and had participation, in addition to UNCW representatives, by representatives from ASU, ECU, UNC-CH, and UNCC as well as General Administration.

The panel discussion was lively, informative and focused on many of the features of the program. There was a consensus among the panelist from other universities that the proposed program had many strengths and was well done. All agreed that the populations indentified to be served were currently underserved and a clinical program to prepare highly skilled professionals to address the needs of these populations would be highly appropriate. This focus of the program meant there was minimal overlap of this proposed program with existing doctoral programs in psychology.

The one area in which there was some concern was the program's plan to prepare both clinical psychologist and experimentalist. Their proposed programs translational model seeks to prepare clinicians who are evidence based in all their clinical services so research in the areas is necessary to inform the work and research of the clinicians. The strengths in the arguments for the program lie in the needs to be addressed by clinical psychologist, and given the size of the program there is a question of offering a non-clinical approach.

All agreed that Spanish language training for the future clinicians is a strong point of the program.

Student Demand

Psychology as a field is very popular for graduate school, due to the large number of undergraduates who major in psychology, so it is highly likely that a strong pool will be available from which to choose the relatively small number of admits (5) each year.

Opportunities for Graduates of the Program

The panel agreed that there was substantial need in this areas of focus of the program so clinical graduates should have no problem finding positions in the field in the region and across the state as well as nationally. The US Labor Department indicates that the employment of psychologist is expected to grow faster than average for all occupation or by 15% in the ten-year period ending in 2016.

Resource Implications

The resources needs are typically specified more fully in the proposal for establishment. By the time the program is fully ramped up which would likely be 6-8 years from now, the estimated cost to be provided by state funding would be approximately \$600,000. The implementation would be spread over a five year period and would be approximately \$120,000 per year.

Issues to Address in Planning

While it was a thorough discussion and many suggestions were made by the panel, the issue of a dual focus on producing students in either the clinical area or the experimental area would appear to be one needing further assessment by the department. The power of the

argument for the need for the clinical portion of the program would seem to point to an overriding need to produce clinicians. On the other hand the department wishes to produce clinicians well ground in research and sees the presence of both experimentalists and clinicians in the graduate population as contributing to that goal.

Recommendation

The staff of the General Administration recommends that the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs approve the request from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington to plan a doctoral program in Applied and Experimental Psychological Science.

Approved to be Recommended for Planning to the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs



Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

March 29, 2010

General Information Template for Academic Program Review

Degree Area and Level:

Ph.D. in Applied and Experimental Psychological Science (CIP 42.0101) at UNC Wilmington

Addressing UNC Tomorrow:

This proposed program would address several Recommendations within the UNC Tomorrow Report including the components to enhance our Global Readiness (Recommendation 4.1), Our Environment (Recommendation 4.6), and Our University's Outreach and Engagement (Recommendation 4.7).

Role of Program in Relation to State and Regional Needs:

According to the American Psychological Association, "As might be expected, the highest paid and greatest range of jobs in psychology are available to psychology doctorates. The number of doctoral graduates has remained stable over the past decade, and supply continues to meet demand. Unemployment and underemployment remain below what is noted for other scientists and engineers. Few drop out of the field. The greatest expansion of career opportunities for doctoral psychologists in the last decade has been in the for-profit and self-employment sectors, including, but not limited to, health service provider subfields, industrial–organizational psychology, educational psychology, and other fields with applications in these settings. Although fewer new doctorates have headed into faculty positions compared to past decades, it is the case that about one third of doctoral-level psychologists today are employed in academe, and more than half of new doctorates in the research subfields head into academe following graduation." Source: <http://www.apa.org/topics/psychologycareer.html#gettingready>

According to the proposal, "Given that the areas of specialization (addictions/psychopharmacology, dementias/cognition and aging, mental illness in corrections/forensic, developmental disabilities/behavior analysis) represent areas of increasing need both in the state and nationally, we anticipate demand for training in these areas to be particularly strong and are projected to grow."

US Labor Department Analysis:

- *Summary* – Employment of psychologists is expected to grow 15 percent from 2006 to 2016, faster than the average for all occupations. Employment will grow because of increased demand for psychological services in schools, hospitals, social service agencies, mental health centers, substance abuse treatment clinics, consulting firms, and private companies. Employment growth will vary by specialty. The rise in health care costs associated with unhealthy lifestyles, such as smoking, alcoholism, and obesity, has made prevention and treatment more critical. An increase in the number of employee assistance programs, which help workers deal with personal problems, also should lead to employment growth for clinical and counseling specialties. Clinical and counseling psychologists also will be needed to help people deal with depression and other mental disorders, marriage and family problems, job stress, and addiction. Industrial-organizational psychologists also will be in demand to help to boost worker productivity and retention rates in a wide range of businesses. Industrial-organizational psychologists will help companies deal with issues such as workplace diversity and antidiscrimination policies. Companies also will use psychologists' expertise in survey design, analysis, and research to develop tools for marketing evaluation and statistical analysis.
http://www.occsupplydemand.org/OSD_UnitOfAnalysis.aspx?CLUSCODE=167A-10&ST=NC&PathNo=1

Availability of Program Statewide (Enrollment and Degrees Awarded in Last 3 Years):

- *Public universities* – Not available.
- *Private universities* – Not available.

Available or not from Academic Common Market:

Not available.

UNC Wilmington Campus enrollment and degrees awarded in similar programs at the Doctoral level:
(Based on two CIP digits – 42 CIP is the summary group for Psychology under which Applied and Experimental Psychological Science is a program) UNC Wilmington does not offer another Doctoral program in the 42 CIP category.

Campus Average of enrollment and degrees awarded in this degree area at the Doctoral level:
(Based on two CIP digits – 42 CIP is the summary group for Psychology under which Applied and Experimental Psychological Science is a program - over the last 3 Academic Years, Fall 2006-Spring 2009)

Campus Average			
	Number of Active Programs	Enrollment per Semester	Degrees Awarded per Year
ECU	1	8	Approved in 2006 - No graduates yet
NCSU	2	56	6
UNCC	1	21	Approved in 2005 - No graduates yet
UNC-CH	2	73	16
UNCG	1	30	7
Campus Average:		38	10

UNC Wilmington Campus Degree Programs added in the past three years:

- Bachelor
 - BS Community Health Education (06/13/2008)
- Master
 - MA Environmental Studies (01/11/2008)
 - MA Spanish (01/11/2008)
 - MS Applied Gerontology (06/08/07)
 - MA Criminology and Public Sociology (03/16/2007)
- Doctoral
 - EdD Educational Leadership and Administration (05/11/2007)

UNC Wilmington Degree Programs discontinued in past three years:

- Bachelor
 - BA Special Education, Cross-Categorical (03/20/2009)
 - BA Special Education, Behaviorally/Emotionally Handicapped (03/20/2009)
 - BA Special Education, Mental Retardation (03/20/2009)
 - BA Special Education, Learning Disabilities (03/20/2009)
 - BA History, Teacher Licensure (03/20/2009)
- Master
 - MA Mathematics (03/20/2009)
- Doctoral
 - N/A