

# Master of Science in Applied Psychology

**Institution name:** East Central University

**Official Degree Designation and Program Title:** Master of Science in Applied Psychology

**Location(s) where program will be offered:** Ada, OK Campus of ECU

**Method of Delivery:** Both Traditional and Online

## Contact Information

**Name of Chief Academic Officer:** Dr. Jeffrey Gibson

**Email of Chief Academic Officer:** [jjgibson@ecok.edu](mailto:jjgibson@ecok.edu)

**Are you the Chief Academic Officer?**

## JUSTIFICATION OR PROGRAM

### Rational for the FULLY TRADITIONAL OR ONLINE Program

The Masters in Applied Psychology will be a combined program that offers a mix of both traditional and online courses.

### Description of Program

*In addition to your description below, please provide a program check sheet outlining the program requirements.*

The proposed Master of Science in Applied Psychology will be a 30-hour blended format program (traditional and online) that will serve a diverse range of students who have an interest in an advanced psychology degree that differs from a desire to become a counselor. This program will focus on developing enhanced skills in various psychological topics along with research design, data analysis, and critical thinking skills. The curriculum will prepare students to work in various industries, achieve advancement in their current profession, or prepare them for further graduate education at the doctoral level. The design of the curriculum allows students to customize their focus so that they can obtain the psychology knowledge base and research skills that best suits their interests and future aspirations. The MSAP will be a 30-hour program split into 12 hours in Psychological Foundations, 9 Hours of Research Foundations, followed by 9 hours of Electives.

Objectives of the program include: 1) Demonstrating familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, and research orientated nature of psychology; 2) Develop skills regarding basic psychological research, including data analysis, critical evaluation, and research design; 3) Demonstration and application of psychological principles to personal, social, developmental, cultural, and organizational issues; 4) Develop skills to communicate effectively on both the written and oral communication levels; 5) Be able to implement their psychological knowledge, skills, and values in various occupational settings and pursuits.

<b>Master of Science in Applied Psychology</b>	
<b>I. <u>PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS (12 hours)</u></b>	
EDPSY 5163 Cog Beh Theories & Methods of Coun & Psychotherapy	3
PSYCH 5063 Advanced Physiological Psychology	3
PSYCH 5113 Theories of Personality	3
PSYCH 5473 Adv Psych Childhood & Adolescence	3
<b>II. <u>RESEARCH FOUNDATIONS (9 hours)</u></b>	
PSYCH 5143 Stats and Design in Applied Psychology	3
PSYCH 5153 Research in Applied Psychology	3
PSYCH 5### Applied Psychology Capstone Project	3
<b>III. <u>ELECTIVES (9 hours)</u></b>	
EDPSY 5353 Standardized Group Tests	9
EDPSY 5433 Affective Theories of Counseling & Psychotherapy *	
PSYCH 5023 Advanced Social Psychology	
PSYCH 5043 Advanced Sport Psychology	
PSYCH 5073 Human Sexuality	
PSYCH 5183 Advanced Abnormal Psychology	
PSYCH 5193 Health Psychology	
PSYCH 5213 Life Coaching & Career Counseling	
PSYCH 5313 Advanced Educational Psychology	
PSYCH 5373 Psychological Assessment	
PSYCH 5693 Master's Thesis	
<i>Department Approval can be obtained for other electives not listed above.</i>	
<b>TOTAL Hours</b>	<b>30</b>

### **Student Demand for New Program**

*Supporting evidence should be submitted with proposal.*

Advisors in our undergraduate program have reported that approximately 5 to 10% of students in these programs have requested information about continuing their education to the master's level in a non-counseling focused degree. There are currently 228 students in our Undergraduate Programs and this would equate to approximately 11 to 23 students being interested in any given year in a research focused degree. Further evidence, comes from our exit survey which has demonstrated a rate of about 10% of our graduating students stating they plan to continue their education elsewhere in a program that would be considered an applied focus degree (e.g., Industrial organizational, forensic psychology, research-oriented degree, etc.). A recent survey administered to students in our undergraduate programs has demonstrated that 90% of these students would be interested in a 30hour Master's Degree program. The wide-ranging interest in a program of this type from students in our own undergraduate programs suggests that we have a built-in need for a 30-hour program at the graduate level. Lastly, ECU does not currently offer a Master's level program that is a research focused degree built around the development of skills relating to research design and statistical analysis. Given that this degree will be accessible to students from multiple educational background, it will fill a need within the university for a graduate level program with a research focus. Based on these numbers, it is expected that we will have a consistent number of students in the program each academic year.

### **Employment Demand for New Program**

*Supporting evidence should be submitted with proposal.*

In general, a master's degree of this type in psychology is in demand by three types of students. First, would be students who are specifically interested in obtaining a masters degree in psychology in an applied/research focused area. Secondly, given that the applied area of psychology requires few specific undergraduate course pre-requisites, such a degree would be in demand by a wide-range of undergraduate majors that are not necessarily psychology focused. Lastly, given that more advanced degrees in psychology (i.e., doctoral level degrees) typically require a background in experimental psychology (e.g., research design & statistics), students interested in furthering their education at the doctoral level will find that this type of program better prepares them for and makes them more competitive for admittance to a program at the doctoral level. Indeed, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, a master's degree in psychology that focuses on these research-oriented areas is increasingly valued by doctoral programs in psychology.

In terms of specific employment opportunities, it is projected overall that the employment of psychologists outside the area of counseling will grow approximately by 7 percent from 2023 to 2033, an average that is faster than the average for all occupations. On average, about 13,000 openings for psychologists are projected each year over the next decade. Many of these openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force (e.g., through retirement; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). While that growth includes all areas of psychology, growth in psychology related jobs outside the area of the counseling are expected to increase by 5%, going from 56,600 to 59,400 over the next decade. Given the versatility of this degree, it is also important to consider jobs outside the specific area of psychology, and includes areas of

professional, scientific, and technical services. In these areas, there is an expected growth of 9.3% over the next decade (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Similarly, jobs that specifically function to service scientific research and development are expected to grow by 9.4% over the next decade. While this includes the more general areas of scientific research, areas related specifically to the areas of social sciences and the humanities in regards to research & development are expected to grow by 6.5% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Given the versatility of this degree, job opportunities covered by this degree will include areas related to psychology specifically and then more generally in the following areas: instructional design, research, teaching, marketing and sales, program development and management, social media coordination, case management, healthcare administration, mental and behavioral health services, public or private institution support, human resources manager, educational guidance, and career counselor/advisor.

### **What unmet need does this program provide?**

Currently, based on exit survey data, a consistent percentage (10 to 15%) of our undergraduate students are interested in obtaining a Master's Degree in Psychology that does not involve a counseling focus. These are typically students who are interested in the research/applied focus of psychology and are often students considering pursuing a Doctoral Level Program. Similarly, advisors in our program report that students consistently demonstrate an interest in a program that is shorter in duration (i.e., 30 hours), but that will still meet their need of an advanced degree that allows them to obtain future aspirations (e.g., career advancement in their current job; acceptance into a doctoral level program; working in an applied area of psychology). Lastly, ECU does not currently offer a Master's level program that is a research focused degree built around the development of skills relating to research design and statistical analysis. Given that this degree will be accessible to students from multiple educational areas of interest and backgrounds, it will fill a need at the university level for a graduate level program with a research design and implementation focus.

### **Describe the procedures that will be used to evaluate the program.**

Students will be assessed beyond individual level course assessments at multiple points during the program. This includes entry level abilities, mid-point abilities, and an exit level assessment of skills developed.

First semester assessment – PSYCH 5473 Adv Psych Childhood & Adolescence; PSYCH 5143 Stats and Design in Applied Psychology;

Second Semester Assessment - PSYCH 5153 Research in Applied Psychology;

Exit Semester - PSYCH 5### Applied Psychology Capstone Project in Psychology (students will complete an exit survey that includes a self-assessment of learned skills and content in the program; and provide feedback about improving the program).

**Resources Required:** *Will offering the new program require additional resources, monetary or otherwise, not currently budgeted/ assigned to the academic department? Such resources may include, but are not necessarily limited to, instructional faculty, classroom equipment, lab equipment, online learning tools and campus meeting space. If the new program is resource neutral, please provide an explanation in support of this claim.*

The program relies heavily on courses that are already being taught by other programs in the department and therefore the addition of resources to support this program would be minimal. There will be additional course loads for two courses in the program: PSYCH 5693 – Master’s Thesis AND PSYCH 5### Applied Psychology Capstone Project. Given that both of these courses will be based on the practical application model, load for these courses will be calculated at the 0.33 per student in the calculation of load hours.

This means that - per student in the program - we would have the following additional resources required:

\$2400 for 3 hours of load = \$266.67 per student supervised in the capstone and thesis courses (calculated at 0.33 course load per student).

Other resources that will be used include our university wide LMS, classroom technology, and faculty office resources. All of these resources are already accounted for by other programs that are also using these resources, with no new resources being requested for this program.