

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
School Psychology Program

SPSY 752-DL1 Advanced Assessment Practicum II
3 credits Spring 2024
Thursday 3:30-6:10; synchronous, online
Zoom Meeting ID: 697 232 7998

Faculty

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Prerequisites/Corequisites

SPSY 709, SPSY 710, SPSY 722, SPSY 750, SPSY 751; or with permission of instructor

University Catalog Course Description

Provides practical, applied, supervised experience conducting comprehensive psychoeducational evaluations with children and adolescents to refine assessment and diagnostic skills. Requires interviewing, test selection and administration, scoring, report writing, and feedback sessions with clients. Focuses on integration of data and recommendation development. Requires practicum in training center, and individual and group supervision. Notes: Open only to School Psychology MA students.

Course Overview

In this course, students are required to complete a total of four comprehensive psychoeducational assessments. Two are completed in Comprehensive Assessment Services (CAS - our training

center) under the supervision of a licensed psychologist, and two are completed in a school setting under the supervision of a certified school psychologist. Students are expected to further develop, enhance, and refine their assessment and psychological/educational diagnostic skills, and gain greater independence over the course of the semester in case conceptualization and report writing. Students meet for group supervision and meet as needed with their assigned supervisor to complete the four cases. The practicum requires a minimum of 75 hours outside of class time over the course of the semester. Practicum hours vary per week and are not on a set schedule. Practicum hours include preparation for testing (e.g. reviewing tests), direct client contact hours, scoring, report writing, and individual supervision.

The choice of methods and tests used in the comprehensive evaluations will vary as a function of the referral question. The components of an evaluation will typically include a measure of intelligence (e.g. *Wechsler, DAS, KABC, WJ Cog*), measures of information processing (e.g. *Bender, Beery VMI, CTOPP, TAPS, WRAML, WJ Cog, CPT, DKEFS, NEPSY*, etc.); achievement (e.g. *WIAT, KTEA, GORT, Nelson Denny Reading*, etc.); behavior rating scales (e.g. *BASC, CBRS, Conners 4, BRIEF, ASRS*); social-emotional assessments (e.g. *CDI, MASC, PAI-A, MACI, Roberts, sentence completion, kinetic drawings*, etc.); interviews of the client and parent(s); and other methods as directed by the supervisors. Student and instructor and/or supervisor will consult on selection of instruments for individual cases.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered synchronously online in seminar and practicum format. Seminar meets regularly for the first few weeks, and students schedule meetings for individual supervision with their supervisors. Class will meet again periodically through semester. The practicum requires a minimum of 75 hours outside of class time over the course of the semester. Practicum hours vary per week and are not on a set schedule.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers

To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems

- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.

- Students will need a headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool. [Delete this sentence if not applicable.]
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download: [Add or delete options, as desire.]
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - Windows Media Player: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

Expectations

- Course Week:
Our course week will begin on the Monday that our synchronous meetings take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes.
- Log-in Frequency:
Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 5 times per week. In addition, students must log-in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings.
- Participation:
Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions. You
- Technical Competence:
Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- Technical Issues:
Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- Workload:
Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- Instructor Support:
Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
- Netiquette:

The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

- **Accommodations:**

Online learners who require effective accommodations to ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Interview parents and children, and collect and organize demographic information
2. Plan, administer, score and interpret psycho-educational assessments
3. Integrate data from all aspects of assessment into meaningful, relevant findings
4. Translate assessment data into intervention recommendations
5. Develop familiarity with diagnoses typical to school-aged children and adolescents
6. Communicate results verbally and in writing to parents and other school professionals
7. Present and summarize case information succinctly and make educationally relevant decisions
8. Learn to work under supervision and in collaboration with peers and colleagues

Professional Standards

This course contributes to the development of knowledge and skills in the following National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) professional standards:

Standard 1: Data Based Decision Making

Standard 2: Consultation and Collaboration

Standard 7: Family School and Community Collaboration

Standard 9: Research and Evidence Based Practice

Standard 10: Legal, Ethical and Professional Practice

Recommended resources relevant to writing:

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

Strunk, W., & White, E. B. (1999). *The elements of style* (4th Ed.). New York, NY: Longman.

<http://www.grammarbook.com/>

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html

Recommended resources relevant to diagnosis, interventions and instruction:

American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed., text rev.). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425787>

- Canter, A., Paige, L., & Shaw, S. (Eds.). (2010). *Helping children at home and school*. Bethesda, MD: NASP.
- Feifer, S. G., & De Fina, P. A. (2005). *The neuropsychology of mathematics: Diagnosis and intervention*. Middletown, MD: School Neuropsych Press.
- Feifer, S. G., & Della Toffalo, D. A. (2006). *Integrating RTI with cognitive neuropsychology: A scientific approach to reading*. Middletown, MD: School Neuropsych Press. (Available online at the GMU library)
- Karagiannakis, G. & Noel, M.-P. (2022). *Effective teaching strategies for dyscalculia and learning difficulties in mathematics: Perspectives from cognitive neuroscience*. Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/b22795>. (Available online at the GMU library)
- Kilpatrick, D. A. (2015). *Essentials of assessing, preventing, and overcoming reading difficulties*. Wiley. (Available online at the GMU library)
- Mascolo, J. T., Alfonso, V. C., Flanagan, D. P. (2014). *Essentials of planning, selecting, and tailoring interventions for unique learners*. John Wiley & Sons. (Available online at the GMU library)
- National Association of School Psychologists (2020). *Principles for professional ethics*. Retrieved from <http://www.nasponline.org/standards/ethics/ethical-conduct-professional-practices.aspx>
- Reschly, A. L., Pohl, A. J., & Christenson, S. L. (2020). *Student engagement: Effective academic, behavioral, cognitive, and affective interventions at school*. Springer International Publishing AG. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-37285-9>. (Available online at the GMU library)
- Shaw, S. R. (2022). *Reaching and teaching students who don't qualify for special education: Strategies for the inclusive education of diverse learners*. Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003133896>. (Available online at the GMU library)
- Strosnider, & Sharpe, V. S. (2019). *The executive function guidebook: Strategies to help all students achieve success*. Corwin. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071801383>. (Available online at the GMU library)
- Swanson, H. L., Harris, K. R., & Graham, S. (2013). *Handbook of learning disabilities* (2nd ed.). Guilford Publications. (Available online at the GMU library)

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor.

Assignments

Given differences in policy across school districts, the degree to which you will be directly involved in testing in the schools may vary. It is expected that you follow school guidelines while engaging in as much active assessment work as is allowed/possible.

1. Complete two psycho-educational evaluations in the training center, writing comprehensive reports for each.
2. Write a full report for two school-based cases. These reports may be based on data from your supervisor, from testing you've completed, or a combination thereof. If you are not permitted to test, your supervisor may provide data to you for a case that is currently in process. This report will be written in the style of a school-based report, not a center-based report. It is likely that you will follow your school-based supervisor's template. These reports should include de-identified information, reason for referral, background information (e.g., from file review), observations (either directly observed or based on supervisor information), test results, summary, and recommendations (as allowed).
3. Actively participate in two school-based cases (e.g. attend meetings, conduct classroom observation, administer tests if possible, review data, conceptualize case with supervisor, have knowledge of committee decisions and outcomes, assist with/observe parent feedback if possible). This will enable you to complete #4 below.
4. Write a two-page, double spaced reflection for each school-based case in which you are involved. In the reflection, consider what you learned from each case. Reflect on the process of the case, not the data. For example, how was the case conceptualization process with your supervisor? How were the meetings about this child? How did the school team function regarding the eligibility process and decision making? What worked well, and what issues arose? Was the outcome(s) expected or unexpected? How do you see things from the parent's point of view? What were some differences you noticed between center and school-based testing? What are pros/cons of each? These are some ideas to get you thinking.
5. Maintain a log of your time spent engaged in school-based practicum activities. This includes direct contact with students, supervision with your supervisors, preparing for testing, scoring tests and writing reports. This log should be signed and dated by you and your supervisor at the end of the practicum.

Timing of Reports

It is likely that you will be engaged in multiple cases simultaneously. To help you manage this process over the course of the semester, please note the following:

- Take your center case as soon as the semester starts.
- Be aware of timelines and deadlines, particularly in the school.
- Write and turn in your reports to your supervisor well ahead of any deadlines, if applicable.
- Aim to complete your 1st center case by end of Feb, and your 2nd case end of April. School cases are more fluid and dependent on sped timelines.
- Adhere to a 72-hour turnaround time for report drafts (particularly for center-based cases). The recommendations are as follows for center reports:
 - Draft 1: The 1st draft of your center report includes reason for referral and background. It is due to your supervisor 72 hours after you complete your parent interview.
 - Draft 2: The 2nd draft is due 72 hours after your last testing day. It should include edits from above, along with cognitive, information processing, and academic test results. Include your appendix of scores.

- Draft 3: The 3rd draft is due 72 hours from the time your supervisor returns draft 2. It includes edits from above, along with the social emotional section.
- Draft 4: The 4th draft is due 72 hours from the time your supervisor returns draft 3. It includes edits from above, along with summary and recommendations.
- Remember that your semester ends in early May, but schools are in session through early to mid-June. You will need to complete and turn in your final school reports by the end of GMU's semester.

Supervision

You will have university supervisors and a school-based supervisor. The university supervisors will supervise you for the assessments in the training center. Your school-based supervisor will supervise your assessment work in the schools. However, a university supervisor will be assigned to each case you conduct in the schools in order to provide consultation regarding case conceptualization as well as an initial read-through and editing of your report.

Grading

Grading will be based primarily on the quality of your written psycho-educational reports for four cases. For the first case in the center and the first school-based case, students will receive a grade for the final draft of the reports. For the second center case and the second school-based case, first attempts/drafts will be graded. Grades will be assigned according to the **attached rubric**. It is my assumption and anticipation that your final drafts will be worthy of "A" grades. Failure to complete testing and final reports for the four cases by the end of the semester will result in a grade of "F" unless an alternate plan has been approved by the student, supervisor, and the program director.

Your grade will also be based on written reflections of your school cases, class participation (which includes case presentations of school and center cases), timeliness of your reports and interaction with your supervisor, and a practicum log. Regarding class participation: it is crucial for the development of your ability to communicate professionally. You are expected to contribute at least one comment each class (preferably more!). Your camera should be turned on, barring illness or other issues communicated to the instructor.

All center cases must be closed with CAS office staff prior to receiving your final course grade.

Your final grade will be based on the following (500 points total):

Item	Points
Quality and accuracy of 4 reports, 100 pts each (see rubric)	400
Reflections of 2 school-based cases, 20 pts each	40
Class participation (including <u>case presentations</u>) and adherence to center, school and ethical guidelines NOTE: Failure to comply with center, school or ethical guidelines may result in a failing grade for Practicum.	20
Timeliness of report drafts (following above guidelines) and appropriate utilization of supervision (requesting assistance, keeping supervisor informed of progress)	20

Practicum log of school based work NOTE: include date, time spent engaged in the activity, and a brief description of the activity. Include total # of hours, and include signatures (student and supervisor) and date	20
Total	500

Grades are given based on the following accumulated points:

(Please note: A course grade less than B- requires that you retake the course. A grade of “F” does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education. Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 [B average] to remain in good academic standing.)

A = 93-100 (465-500)

A- = 90-92 (450-464)

B+ = 87-89 (435-449)

B = 83-86 (415-434)

B- = 80-82 (400-433)

C = 70-79 (350-399)

F = below 60 (below 350)

Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with relevant laws, standards of professional practice, ethical principles of psychologists, and policies of the university, college, division, GMU Cognitive Assessment Program, and the GMU Center for Psychological Services. Students who have questions about these expectations should consult with the instructor, clinical supervisor, or program director.

Class Schedule

Week	Date	Topic
#1	1/18	Syllabus, case updates from SPSY 751
#2	1/25	Case consultation and group supervision
#3	2/1	Case consultation and group supervision
#4	2/8	Case consultation and group supervision Presentations (2):
#5	2/15	No class – NASP conference
#6	2/22	Case consultation and group supervision Presentations (2):
#7	2/29	Case consultation and group supervision Presentations (2):

#8	3/7	No class – spring break
#9	3/14	Case consultation and group supervision Presentations (2):
#10	3/21	No class – continue individual supervision, testing and report writing
#11	3/28	No class – continue individual supervision, testing and report writing
#12	4/4	Case consultation and group supervision Presentations (2):
#13	4/11	No class – continue individual supervision, testing and report writing
#14	4/18	No class – continue individual supervision, testing and report writing
#15	4/25	Case consultation and group supervision Presentations (2): Wrap up, final questions, etc.

If seminar needs to be canceled, the instructor will send an email to students as soon as possible. Your attendance is expected at every class; however, if circumstances arise that would cause you to miss class, please discuss the situation with the instructor as soon as possible.

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per [University Policy 1202](#). If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as [Student Support and Advocacy Center](#) (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/> .

Rubric for Scoring Reports
Each report worth 100 points

AREA	CONTENTS	CAUTIONS/NOTES
Clarity of Writing 5 pts.	Report includes no grammar, syntax or punctuation errors; No professional jargon or “buzz” words; no slang terms unless used by client and these are presented in quotes.	Check for consistent use of present, past and future verb tense and use of pronouns; run spellcheck and grammarcheck on your final version; Search and destroy your “buzz” words.
Identifying Information 5 pts.	Accurate, properly formatted, complete	Double check data, esp. birthdates and age
Reason for Referral 5 pts	Who is referring? What are the specific questions for which answers are sought?	Can be short section.
Assessment Techniques 5 pts	Complete; May be presented alphabetically or grouped by type; please italicize titles	Include test acronyms, (e.g. WISC-IV) following formal & complete name; italicize titles.
Background Information 15 pts	Center cases, and where possible school cases, include: Family constellation; Developmental/medical, social and educational history. Include summary of results from previous evaluations, diagnoses, and medications.	Be alert to include information relevant to the referral question and/or the test findings & recommendations; be sure to attribute source of information.
Observations 15 pts	Specifically describe (rather than label) behaviors you observed which could be relevant to the results reported.	MUST include your assessment of the validity of results and reasons for your judgment (this can be in a separate short section if you wish)
Test Results 25 pts	May be organized according to major areas of functioning or major themes. Accurate scoring, appropriate deductions made, logical connections made.	Work on integration of data from all sources; Include <u>brief</u> descriptions of each test and relevant subtests. First time mention of particular tests, full title is included. Thereafter, acronym may be used; Double check scores transcribed from appendix for accuracy.
Summary and Conclusions 10 pts	Succinct but complete; Provides a clinical summary and conclusions from the findings; Answers referral question; Does not repeat individual test results/scores; Includes a DSM Diagnosis (center cases only)	This highlights the take-home points of the assessment. Note: Some readers look only at the summary and recommendation sections.
Recommendations 10 pts	Relevant to both referral questions and findings.	Tie recommendations to findings. If you find a particular area of deficit, be sure to offer a strategy or intervention relevant to that deficit. Good intervention resources are invaluable here, as is your own judgment.
Appendix of Scores 5 pts	Accurate, well-organized, formatted consistently, complete. Includes descriptions of the tests used and key for scores presented (e.g. standard scores have a mean of 100 and sd of 15)	Double check for accuracy of scores and transcription from protocols; the order of the test score tables mirrors your report narrative; use same headers.