

# Specialist in School Psychology



Established in 1968, the mission of Western Illinois University's School Psychology program is to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to become school psychologists. WIU graduates provide a broad range of school psychological services, including assessment, consultation, and intervention to students, parents, and teachers, from preschool to high school. Training includes challenging, stimulating coursework and intensive, supervised experiences in the schools. The School Psychology program leads to licensure as a professional educator with an endorsement for school psychology through the Illinois State Board of Education or national certification as a school psychologist (NCSP) with passing scores on the respective exams.

## Admission Requirements

Admission into the School Psychology program at Western Illinois University requires a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, with at least 15 semester hours (SH) in Psychology. Incoming students are expected to have completed coursework in each of the following areas: General Psychology, and Statistics/Experimental Research Methods. Students may, however, satisfy any undergraduate deficiencies during the course of the program.

All students must meet the general admission requirements of the WIU School of Graduate Studies and have a cumulative undergraduate grade point average of at least 2.75. The aptitude portion of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is also required.

## Degree Requirements

The Specialist in School Psychology degree requires successful completion of a minimum of 66 SH of coursework, which includes four semesters on campus, one summer session and a full-time, nine-month supervised internship (1,200 hours) with a school district. School Psychology students must also successfully complete case studies, documenting mastery of the 10 domains of training for a competent school psychologist.

The 10 domains of training followed by the program were approved by the National Association of School Psychologists and include (1) data-based decision-making and accountability; (2) consultation and collaboration; (3) interventions and instructional support; (4) intervention and mental health services to develop social and life skills; (5) schoolwide

practices to promote learning; (6) preventive and responsive services; (7) family-school collaboration; (8) diversity in development and learning; (9) research and program evaluation; and (10) legal, ethical and professional practice.

The curriculum is designed to provide students with a thorough grounding in basic psychological knowledge, effective communication skills, professional skills for applying their knowledge, awareness of values and ethics and time for application and reflection.

The Specialist in School Psychology program is also approved by the Illinois State Board of Education, so students are responsible for passing all required exams, which currently include both the Test of Academic Proficiency exam (400) and the content area exam for school psychology (183).

## Career Opportunities

Most Specialist in School Psychology graduates enter the workforce as school psychologists in public schools. School psychologists perform a wide array of roles and functions, including assessment, intervention, staff development consultation and counseling. Approximately 10 percent of Western's School Psychology program graduates have gone on to complete doctoral-level training at other institutions.

## Faculty Expertise

The WIU Department of Psychology has more than 25 full-time doctoral faculty members, representing a wide range of subdisciplines within psychology, enabling the department to provide a well-rounded background in psychology.

**Program Location:**  
Macomb

## Contact Information

### Questions about the program:

Department of Psychology  
School Psychology Program  
Graduate Coordinator  
(309) 298-1593  
psychology@wiu.edu  
wiu.edu/psychology

### General admission questions:

School of Graduate Studies  
(309) 298-1806 or (877) WIU GRAD  
Grad-Office@wiu.edu  
wiu.edu/grad

## Higher Values in Higher Education

Academic Excellence  
Educational Opportunity  
Personal Growth  
Social Responsibility



**WESTERN  
ILLINOIS  
UNIVERSITY**

Four department faculty have primary affiliations with the WIU School Psychology program, and include certified school psychologists who have a wealth of experience. These faculty members provide extensive supervision for students in their coursework and through the practicum experiences spread over the first two years. Faculty also monitor completion of internships for students.

## Graduate Assistantships

All School Psychology graduate students are eligible to apply for a graduate assistantship. Graduate assistantships are awarded through a competitive process, and all full-time assistantships include a stipend and tuition waiver. Often, first-year students can secure assistantships within the department, and second-year students can find assistantships at other campus locations.

*Western Illinois University is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity employer with a strong commitment to diversity. In that spirit, we are particularly interested in receiving applications from a broad spectrum of people, including, but not limited to, minorities, women and individuals with disabilities. WIU has a non-discrimination policy that includes sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability and veteran status.*

## Distinctive Features

- The School Psychology program offers students the opportunity to integrate coursework with field-based experiences from the first semester on campus. Throughout the four-semester practicum sequence, students develop their assessment, consultation, counseling and intervention skills, while being placed in rural schools in the area. Field-based placements, predetermined by faculty, afford specialist students with the experience of being supervised by an on-site school psychologist, while continuing to be exposed to current research and best practice approaches in their educational training.
- The School Psychology program has full approval from the National Association of School Psychologists, which allows students to sit for the Praxis exam to obtain the Nationally Certified School Psychologist credential with a passing exam score.
- Our current curriculum meets the requirements for the professional educator license (PEL), with an endorsement as a school support personnel/school psychologist, regulated by the Illinois State Board of Education. Students are required to pass the content exam for school psychology (183) and Test of Academic Proficiency (400) or equivalent exam before graduation. Students from the program have a perfect (100 percent) pass rate for the exams.



## Facilities

The WIU Department of Psychology is housed in Waggoner Hall. The building offers facilities for teaching and research, including well-equipped laboratories, audio-equipped observation rooms for live supervision of clinical activities, and an up-to-date audio and video recording system used in clinical training. The department also maintains an extensive library of psychological assessment materials. Waggoner Hall offers a computer lab and access to other computers for use by students.

The University Libraries are an integral and valuable part of graduate research at Western. They hold more than one million cataloged volumes of monographs and periodicals, and offer online access to the full texts of hundreds of academic journals and other publications. Items may be borrowed from more than 70 other Illinois academic libraries through the I-Share network, or they may be obtained through interlibrary loan from libraries across the nation. Research assistance; instruction in library use; and public access to computers, printers, wireless Internet, and photocopiers are also accessible through University Libraries.



*“WIU’s comprehensive instruction and real-world approach resulted in a smooth transition to my internship and to my career. The knowledge and understanding I gained in the WIU program have made me a confident school psychologist.”*

— Ryanne Nason, 2016  
Nationally Certified School Psychologist,  
West Central Illinois Special Education Cooperative, Macomb, IL