School of Education Conceptual Framework

The primary mission of the School of Education is to prepare leaders in education and human services fields. As stated in the School Code

Within the University, the School of Education serves Kansas, the nation, and the world by (1) preparing individuals to be leaders and practitioners in education and related human service fields, (2) expanding and deepening understanding of education as a fundamental human endeavor, and (3) helping society define and respond to its educational responsibilities and challenges.

The components that frame our mission for our initial and advanced programs are: (1) Research and Best Practice; (2) Content Knowledge; and (3) Professionalism. These three themes build our conceptual framework.

The specialist research allows for you to consume and potentially produce new research that is relevant to theory and practice in school psychology. You will apply the knowledge that you have learned in your coursework and will work collaboratively and under the mentorship of a faculty member as you develop your professional identity.

Purpose of the Course
Students in the educational specialist (Ed.S.) degree program in school psychology are required to complete a research component for their degree. The purpose for the specialist research is to provide an introductory experience in conducting some form of research, which should be relevant to the theory and practice of school psychology. By conducting the specialist research, the student is being exposed to research methodologies, designs, theories, and writing skills necessary in conducting and understanding research. This research component of the Ed.S. degree is considered key in achieving several goals: The research may be a prelude to involvement in research in a more intense manner; it may be used to demonstrate research skills necessary for admission to the Ph.D. program in school psychology at KU or some other research university; or it may serve as a foundation from which to conduct and interpret research conducted and applied in a school district where they may work as a practicing school psychologist.

Readings
Readings will be done as needed to fully document and complete the research project.

Topics and Supervision
The topic for the specialist research project should be developed collaboratively between the student and a graduate faculty member who has expertise and/or interest in the topic of interest to the student. The student is required to start the process of exploring topics with his/her program advisor. This exploration should yield both a topic area and a faculty member best equipped to supervise the project. If this faculty member is not the program advisor, the student should contact the potential specialist project advisor and assess their interest in supervising their specialist
research. The program advisor must be informed throughout this process and notified of the outcome (i.e., if the student is supervised by a faculty member other than the program advisor). When the faculty member and student agree on the research collaboration, regular supervision meetings should take place until the project is completed. Topic exploration should begin during the Spring/Summer term of the student’s first year in the Ed.S. program.

The Ed.S. research project is conducted under the supervision and mentorship of a research advisor (typically a school psychology faculty member). It is up to the research advisor to determine whether the research project, which typically involves multiple revisions, meets an acceptable standard for completion. No research committee is required. The written product often takes the form of a journal article that is written in APA style, but the form of the final product is determined by the research advisor. Examples of research projects that fulfill the specialist research requirement include a quasi-experimental study, single-subject study, a correlational study, or a meta-analysis. Students, however, do have other choices. Other possibilities may include a literature review, a theoretical article, a position paper, a book chapter, a manual that translates research into practice, a synthesis and evaluation of literature so it can be used as a foundation for practice, a program evaluation of an intervention at an individual, group, or systems level, an empirical evaluation of school data that can be used to improve future practice, or a scholarly review of a measure. Class projects cannot be used to fulfill the specialist research project requirement.

Timelines and Research Compliance
Students may begin their specialist research at any time but it is typical for students to have completed courses in educational research, measurement, and statistics prior to undertaking the research project. The student should begin consideration of topics for the specialist research project in the Spring or Summer term of the first year of study. The final plan and initiation of the project should begin in the Fall of the student’s second year. Data analysis and write up of the project should be completed in the Spring term of the student’s second year with the final write up of the approved paper completed no later than July 1 of the student’s second year.

All specialist research that involves human subjects must first be approved by the Human Subjects Committee – Lawrence (HSC-L) campus. Application forms for HSC-L Committee Approval is available on the following website ecompliance.ku.edu. Students are expected to comply with the ethical principles specified for conducting research in the NASP and APA Code of Ethics.

Enrollment
Enrollment in the specialist project should be done during the semesters in which the work is underway. The specialist research course is offered on variable credit basis (1-4 credit hours). Students must enroll for a total of four hours of specialist research credit with the consent of a research advisor under PRE 947, Specialist Research, to complete the requirement. Enrollment in the specialist project may be done over the course of several semesters.

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1 These alternative choices are not available to Ph.D. students who began their studies in 2011–2012 academic year or earlier. These students are required to conduct an empirical research study for their Ed.S. project.
2 The timeline for doctoral students will begin during the spring or summer of the second year of study; the final plan and initiation of the project should begin in the Fall of the doctoral student’s third year; data analysis and write up of the project should be completed in the Spring term of the doctoral student’s third year with the final write up of the approved paper completed no later than July 1 of the student’s third year.
Grade Schedule
Letter grades A–F+/-.. Grades that are submitted prior to the completion of the project will reflect the progress the student has made to that point on the research project.

NASP Standards
Domain 9: Research and Program Evaluation
School psychologists have knowledge of research design, statistics, measurement, varied data collection and analysis techniques, and program evaluation sufficient for understanding research and interpreting data in applied settings.

KSDE Standards
Standard 9: Research
The school psychologist evaluates research, translates research into practice, and understands research design and statistics in sufficient depth to plan and conduct investigations and program evaluations for improvement of services.

Standard 11: Technology
The school psychologist accesses, evaluates, and utilizes information sources and technology in ways that safeguard or enhance the quality of services.