

# DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

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**Web Site:** <https://twu.edu/psychology-philosophy/graduate-programs/school-psychology/doctoral-program/>

The School Psychology Doctoral Program at TWU embraces a scientist-practitioner model of training in which practice, theory, and research are integrated. A balanced emphasis is placed on developing professional competencies necessary for functioning in various applied practice settings, such as school systems, mental health and child guidance centers, medical centers and hospitals, independent clinical practice, and in academic or research positions in institutions of higher education. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines Health Service Psychology as the integration of psychological science and practice in order to facilitate human development and functioning. Health Service Psychologists are prepared to work in diverse settings. The Texas Woman's University School Psychology Doctoral Program prepares health service psychologists across the diverse practice areas of school psychology.

Our program strives to provide broad and general training in the science and practice of school psychology within the broader definition of health service psychology. The theoretical philosophy of the program is grounded in an integration of the biopsychosocial perspective in combination with the application of a data-based problem-solving approach. The biopsychosocial perspective posits that biological, psychological, and social factors play a significant role in an individual's functioning. The biological system emphasizes genetics, diseases, anatomical and structural components of the individual. The psychological system incorporates developmental factors, personality, and motivation of the individual. The social system includes cultural background, environmental, and familial influences. This comprehensive perspective encompasses and integrates the variety of systems that are influential in the lives of children and posits that each component system affects and is affected by all other systems.

The biopsychosocial perspective is complemented by a data-based, problem-solving framework for the practice of school psychology.

Problem-solving methods are consistent with the experimental tradition in psychology where the problem is defined, directly measured, interventions are designed based on the measurement data, and progress on the intervention is monitored and revisions occur as needed.

Additionally, problem-solving is viewed as a collaborative process involving the child, family, and professionals representing various education and community institutions. TWU's School Psychology Doctoral Program assumes that the functions of a school psychologist involve problem-solving whether service or research-oriented, and that problem solving will be most effective when approached from a data-based framework supported by a biopsychosocial perspective. The broad overall aim of this program is to produce school psychologists who can employ scientific knowledge and methods of problem-solving in the delivery of direct or indirect services to children, families, schools, and communities. It is our intent to produce competent, skillful, ethical school psychologists who integrate the principles of scientific inquiry into service delivery functions with respect for diversity and individual differences.

In order to achieve these broad philosophical goals and translate them into marketable, workplace-practitioner skills, the School Psychology doctoral program has been designed to be sequential, with foundational

skills developed first; cumulative, with skills building upon previously learned skills and knowledge; and increasingly complex, wherein knowledge must be integrated and applied. The program has been designed to prepare students with entry-level skills required for internship and to provide the foundation for post-doctoral experiences to further their skills. Thus, all students take a core set of courses covering the foundations of psychology, then specialized coursework in the field of school psychology with experiential activities in practice-oriented settings, culminating in the capstone experiences of dissertation and internship.