

George Mason University  
College of Education and Human Development  
School Psychology Program  
SPSY 751-DL2 Advanced Assessment Practicum I – 3 Credits  
Fall 2023  
Online Synchronous Wednesday 4:00-6:40

**Instructor:** Nicole Beadles, PhD, NCSP

**Office Location:** West 2007

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 1:15-2:15 and by appointment

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**Prerequisites**

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

**Catalog Description**

Provides practical, applied, supervised experience conducting comprehensive psychoeducational evaluations with children and adolescents to develop 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 clinic, and individual and group supervision. Notes: Open only to School Psychology MA students.

**Course overview**

In this course, students are required to complete two comprehensive psychoeducational assessments in Comprehensive Assessment Services (CAS), a training center that is part of Coordinated Educational and Wellness Services. The assessments take place under the supervision of a licensed psychologist. These assessments provide initial practical experience and application of assessment, writing, and diagnostic skills. For seminar, students meet regularly for group supervision and case presentations. In addition, the supervisor and student will schedule individual meetings to review and discuss case conceptualization, test choices, administration and scoring issues, and feedback on individual written reports. The practicum requires a minimum of 50 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 activities such as preparation for testing (e.g. reviewing tests), direct client contact hours, scoring, report writing, and individual supervision.

Composition of the 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, TAPS, CTOPP, DKEFS, WJ Cog, CPT*, etc.); achievement (e.g. *WIAT, KTEA, GORT, Nelson Denny Reading, etc.*); behavior rating scales (e.g. *BASC, Conners, CBRS, BRIEF*); emotional and personality assessments (e.g. *CDI, MASC, Robert's, PAI-A*, etc.); interviews of the client and parent(s); and other methods as directed by the supervisors. Student and instructor will consult on selection of instruments for individual cases.

### **Course Delivery**

This course will be delivered synchronously online in a seminar and practicum format. Seminar meets weekly and students schedule meetings for individual supervision with their supervisors outside of class time. The practicum requires a minimum of 50 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](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](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/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)

### *Expectations*

- Course Week:

Our course week will begin on the day 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 3 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.
- 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 insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

### **Course 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/domains:

1. Data Based Decision Making
2. Consultation and Collaboration
3. Academic Interventions and Instructional Support
4. Mental and Behavioral Health Services and Intervention
7. Family, School, and Community Collaboration
8. Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations
9. Research and Evidence-Based Practice
10. Legal, Ethical and Professional Practice

### **Recommended Resources for writing:**

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Author. ISBN: 9781433805615

Schneider, W. J., Lichtenberger, E. O., Mather, N., & Kaufman, N. (2018). *Essentials of report writing* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Wiley.

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

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

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)

### **Recommended Resources relevant to interventions:**

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.

- Class participation and adherence to CAS guidelines: This class is for group supervision. This means that time is devoted to students engaging with each other through case presentations, question and answer, and sharing professional experiences and reflections.

Students are expected to contribute to class discussions regularly (each class). Come prepared with test material scored and ready for discussion. Follow CAS guidelines as outlined in CAS Manual and CAS training power point.

- Case presentation: Students are expected to make one case presentations over the course of the semester. Guidelines are provided at the end of the syllabus regarding the format for the case presentation. The purpose of this activity is to enhance students' skills in oral expression, analysis and integration of data and case conceptualization.
- Test administration, scoring, and other client skills: Properly administering and scoring test instruments is crucial for an accurate understanding of the case. While a few minor errors are to be expected in the beginning, these should not continue as the semester goes on. Your supervisor will sit in on your first interview and feedback session to assess direct client skills. Feedback will be provided to students.
- Comprehensive reports: Students will complete two comprehensive, psychoeducational reports for their center cases. For these two cases, students will receive a grade for the final submitted draft, rather than initial drafts of the assessment reports. 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 two comprehensive 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.

We recommend the following submission schedule for the FINAL draft of written reports:

- First Assessment Report – mid October
- Second Assessment Report – first week of December

Supervision for your reports will occur primarily between you and your individual supervisor, as well as during group supervision in class. For these first two cases, it is expected that there will be multiple revisions to your report. Stay in contact with your supervisor throughout this process. Respond to your supervisor's emails/requests in a timely manner, at the most by 72 hours. This may entail sending a draft, or just communicating the status of your case. Once you submit the final draft and you have the approval of your supervisor, you may initiate your second case. If possible, you may initiate your third case (in advance of SPSY 752) when the second case is complete. This could occur over the winter holiday/January interterm period if your supervisor agrees.

Your total class grade will be based on the following:

1. Class participation 5%
2. Adherence to CAS / ethical guidelines 5%.  
NOTE: Failure to comply with CAS or ethical guidelines may result in a **failing grade** for Practicum. **You must close your cases in CAS in order to receive a grade for this course.**
3. Case presentation, 10%
4. Test administration, scoring accuracy, interview, feedback, and related skills, 10%
5. Quality, timeliness and accuracy of 2 reports, 70% (35% each).

(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

A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89

B = 83-86

B- = 80-82

C = 70-79

D= 60-69

F = below 60

### Professional Dispositions

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, and Comprehensive Assessment Services. Students who have questions about these expectations should consult with the instructor, clinical supervisor, or program director.

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

### Class Schedule:

Aug 18	CAS Orientation – required for all 2 <sup>nd</sup> year school psychology students
Class 1 (Aug 23)	Course expectations, scheduling issues, supervision and CAS procedures, etc.
Class 2 (Aug 30)	Continue CAS procedures, taking 1 <sup>st</sup> case, scheduling, conducting interview
Class 3 (Sept 6)	Share assigned case information, development of test battery, progress and pitfalls

Class 4 (Sept 13)	Testing, scoring, case conceptualization discussion
Class 5 (Sept 20)	Review DSM 5 relevant diagnoses Case presentations:
Class 6 (Sept 27)	Developing evidenced based interventions Case presentations:
Class 7 (Oct 4)	Report writing; parent interpretives/feedback Case Presentations:
Class 8 (Oct 18)	Review cases, progress and issues Case Presentations:
Class 9 (Nov 1)	Review cases: progress, issues Case presentations:
Class 10 (Nov 15)	Review cases: progress, issues Case presentations:
Class 11 (Nov 29)	Case presentations: Final wrap-up

Additional classes may be scheduled depending on issues and questions arising from individual assessments, and supervision and feedback according to the needs of the class and individual students (as determined by the class and faculty as the semester progresses).

If class 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.

### **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](mailto: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](mailto: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**

<b>AREA</b>	<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>CAUTIONS</b>
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-V) following formal & complete name; italicize titles.
Background Information  15 pts	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 paragraph)
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 if warranted	This highlights the take-home points of the assessment. No numbers/scores. Make this meaningful. 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 you own judgment.
Score Summary/Appendix 5 pts	Accurate, well-organized, formatted consistently, complete. Includes descriptions of the tests used and key for scores presented (e.g. scaled scores have a mean of 100 and sd of 15)	Double check for accuracy of scores and transcription from protocols; organize the scoring tables in the same fashion as your narrative – use same headers.

## Case Presentation outline

Present your case for group supervision in the following order:

### Identifying information

- Age
- Gender
- Grade
- Type of school (public, private, religious, home school)

### Referring concern

- Name the areas of concern that were listed by the parent and that you looked at in your testing (attention, reading, depression, etc.). Briefly state how long these concerns have been going on.

### Data – say what test and what results

- IQ
- Processing if applicable (attention, exec fx, phonological, visual motor, memory, etc.)
- Achievement
- Social emotional

### Potential conclusions, hypotheses, areas of further inquiry

- Does your data support the referral concern?
- Did new concerns arise?
- Describe your thought process around the conceptualization of the case

### Notes:

Don't focus on background history or anecdotes given by parents/teachers. Insert that information as you describe the data, or as your classmates ask you questions. The goal of this type of presentation is to distill the referral issue, focus on the data, and determine how the data fits together in regard to the referral concern (or if new concerns arose in the data, or if there are differential diagnoses to be made).