

PSYC 800. Educational Specialist Research Project

Opportunity for advanced applied research in an area of special interest to a school psychology or community counseling student in an Educational Specialist program. Specific course requirements are listed in the separate research project guidelines for school psychology and community counseling students. Course is graded on an S/U basis. Successful completion of the research project fulfills the comprehensive examination requirement for the School of Psychology educational specialist degree. *Prerequisite(s):* Permission of program director.

**“Writing is not what the writer does after the thinking is done; writing is thinking.”
-D. Murray**

Recommended Resources

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

Online Resources

APA Style Information and Guidelines

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/664/01/>

JMU Office of Research Integrity—Training for IRB

<http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/irbtraining.shtml>

Content and Purpose

The purpose of the Educational Specialist Research Thesis/Research Project is to provide you with an opportunity to undertake an intensive, in-depth work of scholarship in the field of counseling. The final product is an original contribution relating to the counseling profession. Most counseling students complete this project during their third year while they are also interning.

We will work to determine by the second week of the semester the type of project you will be completing. This determination will be driven by your professional goals and the scope of your area of inquiry.

The Graduate School formally recognizes the Educational Specialist Research Project in the same manner as it does theses and dissertations. The title of your Ed.S. Research Project will appear on your transcript. Copies of your final report will be included in the JMU Carrier Library permanent collection.

The purpose of this course is to help you complete a successful Ed.S. Project. The course will include practical information such as developing your ideas, using APA Style, charting a timeline for completing your report, and following the JMU Graduate School Format Guidelines.

CACREP Standards

5. HELPING RELATIONSHIPS

- j. evidence-based counseling strategies and techniques for prevention and intervention

7. ASSESSMENT AND TESTING

- g. statistical concepts, including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, shapes and types of distributions, and correlations

8. RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

- a. the importance of research in advancing the counseling profession, including how to critique research to inform counseling practice
- b. identification of evidence-based counseling practices
- c. needs assessments
- e. evaluation of counseling interventions and programs
- f. qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research methods
- g. designs used in research and program evaluation
- h. statistical methods used in conducting research and program evaluation
- i. analysis and use of data in counseling
- j. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for conducting, interpreting, and reporting the results of research and/or program evaluation

CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

Practice

- b. techniques and interventions for prevention and treatment of a broad range of mental health issues

9. JMU Counseling Program Key CMCH Standards:

Demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the context of clinical mental health counseling. Applying evidence-based interventions for prevention and treatment of a broad range of mental health issues, graduates also demonstrate skills for social justice and advocacy.

COURSE CACREP STANDARDS and KPI CHART

CACREP STANDARDS INCLUDED IN COURSE ASSIGNMENTS	7g	8a	8b	8c	8d	8e	8f	8g	8h	8i	8j	Key 9
7. Assessment and Teaching	x											
8. Research and Program Evaluation										x	x	
KPI 8 (Mastery) EdS Project: (SEE APPENDIX FOR KPI RUBRIC)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
9. Counseling Program Key CMHC Standards												x

Objectives, Knowledge and Skills Outcomes

The objectives of this preparation course are to help you:

- understand the importance of research in advancing the counseling profession;
- be familiar with research methods, such as qualitative, quantitative, single-case designs, action research, and outcome-based research;
- understand statistical methods used in conducting research and program evaluation;
- develop your ideas for a successful Ed.S. Project;
- write your proposal for the project;
- select a chair and members of your committee;
- know and use APA Style appropriately;
- chart a timeline for completing your report;
- understand the applications of needs assessment, program evaluation, and using findings to modify programs;
- adhere to ethical standards for research;
- follow culturally relevant strategies for interpreting research results;
- be familiar with the JMU Graduate College Format Guidelines;
- appreciate the use of research to inform evidence-based practice; and
- improve your technical writing skills.

Methods of Instruction and Hopes for the Semester

I invite you to join me in working to create an inclusive community, learning from the many perspectives that come from having differing backgrounds and beliefs. As such a community, we will aim to be respectful to all, rejecting all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including but not limited to those based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. In the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program, faculty and students are expected to commit to creating an environment that facilitates inquiry and self-expression, while also demonstrating diligence in understanding others' viewpoints and acting in accordance with our profession's ethical standards.

It is my hope that all students will be well served by this course, that students' learning needs can be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class will be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

Format

We will base our meetings on your needs, with the ultimate goal of helping you stick to your timeline to complete your project in a timely manner.

Completing your Ed.S. Project requires self-motivation and commitment. Identifying specific goals and responsibilities from the start can help ensure you continue to make satisfactory progress.

Your responsibilities:
Talk through your proposal and plan with me. Include your peers when possible! Keep a written record of your plan and notes from our discussions.

Be aware of your own time constraints and capabilities, and be open to suggestions for possible revisions that could strengthen your original plan.
Create a realistic timeline and stick with it. If you run into trouble with your timeline, let me know right away. We can usually make adjustments without creating too much unnecessary stress for yourself.
Promise to keep accurate citations and records for every resource you use.
Promise to create an outline and follow that outline for the structure of your paper. Trust me on this.
If you know you need help in polishing the professionalism of your writing, please make an appointment with the writing lab for assistance. Consider asking a colleague to read your draft and provide feedback. You are responsible for editing your paper and ensure that you follow the conventions of APA and professional writing.
Look at the APA manual and the Graduate School guidelines regarding writing style and format. You're responsible for putting your paper into the appropriate format, which includes using current APA style when referencing sources.
Be respectful of your committee members. Ask them how they prefer to be consulted during this process. Some faculty like to be involved throughout, and others prefer to take a back seat, offering assistance as needed and then helping at the final committee meeting.
Also ask your committee members if they prefer electronic or hard copies of your draft. Unless a faculty member specifically asks to be kept abreast of your work during the semester, plan to provide each member a final (<i>not</i> rough or unfinished) draft of your paper at least one week prior to the final committee meeting.
Allow at least one week after the final committee meeting to make changes to your project prior to submitting it to the Graduate School.
Once you've had your final committee meeting, ask a representative of the Graduate School to review your formatting.
My responsibilities:
I will help you think through your project plan and identify specific steps to take to make satisfactory progress toward completing the project.
I will also be available to meet with you as much as you would like or need to help you continue to make progress and gain mastery in this process.
If you would like, I'm happy to prompt you by phone or email to remind you of your timeline.
I will prepare you for your final meeting and will ask for revisions and rewrites (often many times) prior to that meeting.
You'll notice that your list of responsibilities is much longer than mine. Don't worry, though, keep me informed, tell me how I can best help you, and you'll do fine.

As always, if you have specific needs that are addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and require course materials in alternative formats, please notify me immediately. I will make any reasonable effort to accommodate to your special needs. Of course, I expect you to

abide by the JMU Honor Code, which is in the Catalog. Check with me if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Please review the [Clinical Mental Health Counseling Handbook](#) for more information on the EdS process.

Types of Educational Specialist Research Projects

We allow flexibility in the format of the Eds Project. You don't have to follow a thesis format of having chapters that include an introduction, extensive literature review, analysis, and conclusions/recommendations for counselors. Instead, the form of your project can vary according to your professional interests, based on consultation with your chair. For instance, you may choose to develop an annotated bibliography and reflection; demonstrate evidence-based practices through a case study; or develop a conference session, training manual, needs assessment, resource directory, or article manuscript.

For example, if you design a protocol for a particular kind of psychoeducational group, you can write instructions and guidelines that provide the practical, hands-on information that a counselor would need to implement the group. It would not be necessary to provide a detailed and comprehensive review of the literature on psychoeducational groups. Or, you could create an annotated bibliography, summary, and powerpoint that could be submitted to a professional conference as a poster presentation.

With this greater flexibility, we are encouraging you to create a project that will do more than simply fulfill a degree requirement. We invite you to consider developing a product that will help you develop your own expertise while contributing helpful information to the counseling profession. You can then consider sharing this product with other counselors by giving a presentation at a conference or writing an article for publication. Prior to choosing any specific format, please consult with your chair and ensure that you have their support. Important note: Your chair has final approval over the format of your EdS project, so choosing a chair and scheduling a planning meeting early is a vital part of this process.

The format for your project should follow the guidelines required by the Graduate School and the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Follow the guidelines carefully and check with The Graduate School before the deadline for a tentative approval of your report format.

Please note that deadlines are set by The Graduate School, and we do not have the power to change them. You should include three original approval pages with original signatures, signed in black ink, of the chair, committee members, and department head. You should also provide a copy of your final presentation to the chair and each member of your committee.

Oral Presentation

In addition to discussing your final report at a meeting with your committee, you are expected to present your results with colleagues. You must speak on this topic at the Spring Symposium,

which takes place in April, and perhaps at a professional conference, such as one of the VCA or ACA annual meetings.

If you do not complete the research project in time, you must register for PSYC 799 Directed Research Continuance. Continuance hours do not count towards graduation requirements.

Performance Evaluation Criteria and Procedures

Your performance in this course is graded as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The chair and readers of your PSYC 800 Educational Specialist Research Project use the [Ed.S. Project Evaluation Form](#), which assesses your project according to our key Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program Objectives as well as its:

- **Comprehensiveness.** The project must be a thorough consideration of the topic that you have selected. For example, your review of the literature must be complete. No matter what type of directed research you perform, you must present a comprehensive examination of the pertinent professional publications.
- **Relevance.** You must relate the project to the profession in significant ways. For example, you may discuss the implications of your results for the research, training or practice of counseling.
- **Originality.** You must offer a contribution to the counseling literature that is based on your own ideas and work. Your report must be more than a summary of the thoughts and efforts of others – it must have the distinction of presenting your individual notions and views.
- **Quality of writing.** Your paper must be grammatically correct, clear, and well-written.
- **Organization.** The presentation of your project must be well-organized and coherent.
- **Achievement of goals.** The most fundamental criterion is the extent to which you are successful in accomplishing what you set out to do in your proposal. Whether it was to perform an empirical study, to develop an innovative program, or to write a critical review, your final report will be assessed in terms of your attainment of that goal.

Counseling Programs Academic Policies for Syllabi

Over the years, we have deeply appreciated the tremendous sense of commitment that our counseling students have demonstrated in their work with us. As members of the James Madison University faculty, we are required to provide information in our syllabi regarding attendance, academic honesty, adding/dropping courses, inclement weather, religious accommodations, and disability accommodations. Therefore, we have adopted the following general academic policies to apply to all our Counseling Programs courses. Of course, in addition to these guidelines, individual faculty members may use their syllabi to inform you of more specific policies and expectations for particular courses.

Attendance

We are looking forward to you being active, contributing members of our learning community by attending every class, being fully involved in all activities, and contributing your ideas, reflections, feedback, and observations. The fundamental goal of all our courses is to prepare you to become a counseling professional, a role in which your sense of presence is essential. When you are granted the sacred trust of entering into someone else's pain, you must honor that

invitation with your full and absolute attention. Your class times are your opportunities to hone that skill of being fully present. If you are unable to attend class due to an emergency, we expect you to contact us as soon as possible. If you need to miss class, you are responsible for obtaining any material distributed during the class.

Class Participation Rubric

Excellent	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Consistently engages, actively listens, and builds on the contributions of other members of the class. Arrives promptly and fully prepared at every class session. Can always be counted on to offer honest reflections, insightful observations, and supportive comments that contribute significantly to a stimulating learning environment. Brings a sense of presence that stimulates productive group dynamics without dominating the process.	Attends every class, arrives promptly, and is well prepared, having completed all assignments. Interacts respectfully and empathically with other members of the class. Regularly contributes thoughtful reflections, relevant comments, and constructive observations to class discussions. Brings a sense of presence that contributes to productive group dynamics.	Is absent or, when present, rarely interacts with other members of the class. Comes to class unprepared. Demonstrates a notable lack of interest in contributing to a positive learning environment. Brings a presence that sabotages productive group dynamics. Engages in non-verbal relational aggressive behaviors, such as eye rolling and dismissive gestures, that communicate disrespect or contempt for peers and the instructor.

Academic Honesty

It should come as no surprise that we expect you to be committed to academic honesty, which is absolutely essential for the success of any learning community, but especially one with the mission of training ethical counselors. If you are unfamiliar with the specifics of the JMU Honor Code, you can read it at <http://www.jmu.edu/honor/code.shtml#TheHonorCode>.

Research Assistance

If you need help completing your research assignments, you can contact our Liaison Librarian, Liz Chenevey. Email her specific questions at chenevet@jmu.edu or schedule a one-on-one appointment at <http://events.lib.jmu.edu/appointments/>

Mental Health Resources

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily life. If you or someone you know is experiencing mental health challenges at James Madison University, please connect with the Counseling Center (CC) located within the Student Success Center on the 3rd floor, Suite 3100. You can learn more about available CC services by visiting the website: <https://www.jmu.edu/counselingctr/> or calling the Center (540-568-6552). Their services are free and confidential.

JMU has also partnered with TimelyCare, a virtual health and well-being platform, to provide you with 24/7 access to virtual mental health care from anywhere in the United States at no cost. Download the TimelyCare App or visit <https://timelycare.com/jmu> to register and get started today. Other available support resources to consider on campus include, but are not limited to the: Office of the Dean of Students, Health Center, UREC Health Promotion, Learning Strategies Instruction, & Office of Disability Services.

If there is ever an immediate concern for your safety or the safety of another individual please call 911. In case of a mental health emergency (e.g., thoughts or plans to kill yourself, thoughts of seriously harming others, recent sexual assault) M-F 8am-4:30pm, when the University is open, crisis services are available through the CC. After hours and/or on weekends: students can call the Center (540-568-6552) and press “1” to connect to the after-hours crisis line. Alternatively, all students may go to the Emergency Room at the Sentara RMH Medical Center, 2010 Health Campus Drive, Harrisonburg, VA, 22801, (540-689-1414), call the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988), and/or utilize the Crisis Text Line (text “HOME” to 741741).

Religious Accommodations

Cultural diversity enriches our learning community and is an essential component of our counselor education programs. Therefore, we are committed to providing appropriate accommodations for your religious observations. Please let us know at the start of a course if you expect any absences so that we can explore mutually acceptable alternatives for completing any missed activities. If you have any additional questions, we encourage you to contact the Office of Equal Opportunity at 540.568.6991 or online at <http://www.jmu.edu/oeo/>.

Disability Accommodations

We believe that cultural diversity also includes differences based on physical abilities. Therefore, we are also committed to providing any accommodations you may need for a disability. Please contact us at the beginning of the semester so we can make any necessary arrangements. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disability Services, the designated office on campus to provide services for students with disabilities. The office is located in the Student Success Center, room 1202, and you may call (540) 568-6705 for more information.

If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodations, please contact your instructor early in the semester so that they can provide or facilitate provision of accommodations you may need.

Confidentiality and Title IX

Title IX addresses not only gender discrimination, but also sexual harassment and sexual violence, because they create a hostile educational environment. We are committed to creating a safe haven and an open atmosphere in this learning community. The personal information you share in your written assignments, class discussions, experiential activities, and counseling practice sessions enriches the learning experience for everyone. We want to let you know that, as educators, we are mandated by Title IX to report any suspected sexual harassment or sexual assaults of students. This mandate does not require identifying you and we are dedicated to addressing these concerns with sensitivity and consideration for your privacy and wellbeing. If

you do want to report any event, the Title IX Coordinator is Amy Sirocky-Meck, Madison Hall 4035, sirockam@jmu.edu, 540-568-5219. You may also file a report with Title IX online at <https://www.jmu.edu/access-and-enrollment/titleIX/index.shtml>.

Furthermore, we also will take necessary action to respond to any disclosures of dangerousness to self or others. For more information on resources and reporting options, refer to the Title IX website: <https://www.jmu.edu/access-and-enrollment/titleIX/index.shtml>

Adding/Dropping Classes

As mature and conscientious students, you know that you are responsible for registering for classes and for verifying your class schedules on e-campus. Obviously, you must register for classes or drop classes before the scheduled add/drop deadline. For more details, you can refer to the Registrar's Web site at <http://www.jmu.edu/registrar/>.

Inclement Weather

Inclement weather may lead to the cancellation of a class. If you are unsure of the weather conditions on campus, you can call the JMU Weather Line at 540.433.5300. You also can listen to the JMU radio station at 1610AM for cancellation announcements. The area radio and television stations regularly inform the public when classes are cancelled. For details about JMU's cancellation policy, go to <http://www.jmu.edu/JMUpolicy/1309.shtml>. Please don't take unnecessary risks to make it to class.

CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING ED.S. PROJECT EVALUATION

Student _____ Faculty/Supervisor _____ Date _____

1. PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING ORIENTATION AND ETHICAL PRACTICE: Professional and Ethical practice	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

2. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY: Cultural competence and self-awareness	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

3. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: Developmentally appropriate approaches	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

4. CAREER DEVELOPMENT: Appropriate career counseling	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

5. COUNSELING AND HELPING RELATIONSHIPS: Evidence-based counseling	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

6. ASSESSMENT AND TESTING: Relevant assessment procedures	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

7. RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION: Research evaluation	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

Key clinical mental health counseling competencies	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

OVERALL EdS PROJECT EVALUATION	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
Recommendation – Based on project and presentation of project	FAIL		PASS	

Summative Feedback:

Faculty Signature

Faculty Signature

Appendix

KPI Rubric	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
<p>8. Research and Program Evaluation: Critically evaluates research related to core areas of counseling practice. Uses data-informed decision-making practices for program evaluation and management.</p>	<p>Does not meet expectations for level of training and experience in locating community resources and critically evaluating research related to client problems. Does not use this information to inform decision-making.</p>	<p>Does not consistently meet expectations for level of training and experience in locating community resources and critically evaluating research related to client problems. Inconsistently uses this information to inform decision-making.</p>	<p>Meets expectations for level of training and experience in locating community resources and critically evaluating research related to client problems. Able to use this information to inform decision-making.</p>	<p>Surpasses expectations for level of training and experience in locating community resources and critically evaluating research related to client problems. Able to use this information effectively and thoughtfully to inform decision-making.</p>