Penn State Altoona Psychology Capstone Application (9/2017 revision)

This application is necessary only for students who wish to enroll in PSYCH 493, 494, 495, or 496. Students who intend to enroll in PSYCH 439 or PSYCH 490 may schedule them without completing this application.

This first section provides an overview of the capstone application procedure. The second and third sections provide, respectively, the application for all projects and the supplemental application for internships. The fourth section provides a sample syllabus for PSYCH 495, which provides details about the specific expectations for that capstone.

How to get started

All Psychology majors must complete a capstone course in order to graduate. Typically, students complete the capstone in their senior year. If you are thinking about the capstone you should first consult the Psychology Program Handbook, available on-line (www.altoona.psu.edu/psych) or from Dr. Pinter. The Handbook provides detailed descriptions of the various options. Next, you should consult with a Psychology faculty member about your interests.

**Eligibility requirements are a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 and a minimum grade of C in PSYCH 301W. Students who are not eligible for PSYCH 493, 494, 496, or 496 may take PSYCH 439 or PSYCH 490 to satisfy the capstone requirement.**

If you are interested in PSYCH 493, 494, or 496 you will complete only the basic application for review.

If you are interested in PSYCH 495 you will complete both the basic and supplemental application for review. In completing these documents, you might consult the student resources on the College’s webpage (http://www.altoona.psu.edu/internships/). You might also talk to our faculty members for ideas. You will be responsible for identifying possible internship sites and inquiring about their willingness to have you. It is very important that you carefully choose your internship site. Your goal should be to find an internship site that provides a meaningful experience that is consistent with your interests and career goals. As part of the supplemental application, you are directed to ask potential internship site contacts to describe the anticipated activities, experiences, and skills you can expect. This information will be helpful in evaluating the merits of the proposed project. The typical internship is taken for 3 academic credits. This requires 120 site hours.

Timeline

You should begin preparations for the capstone project **no later than the beginning of the regular semester preceding the anticipated capstone semester**. This advice is particularly important for students interested in PSYCH 494 and 495 because those courses require additional up-front work that can require a long wait. For 494, this includes submitting and gaining approval of an IRB application. For 495, this includes submitting and gaining approval of various work clearances (e.g., criminal background check).

You must submit the Psychology Capstone Application **no later than the tenth week** of the regular semester preceding the anticipated capstone semester. So, for a *fall* capstone project, students should aim to submit an application by **March 15th**. For a *spring* capstone project, students should submit an application in that previous fall semester by **October 15th**. Early submissions are welcomed.Psychology Capstone Application

Instructions: Type responses in the indicated blanks. Save the document using a file name modeled on “Jones.Capstone Application.22May13.” Eliminate the previous two pages and the sample syllabus before emailing complete applications to your desired faculty supervisor no later than the tenth week of the semester preceding the anticipated capstone semester.

Name:

PSU email:

GPA: (Note a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA is required)

PSYCH 301W grade: (Note a minimum grade of C is required)

Desired capstone course: (Choose among PSYCH 493, 494, 495, or 496)

Desired capstone semester:

Desired capstone faculty supervisor:

Desired credit hours for project: (The standard capstone course is 3 cr. in one semester. You must provide an academic justification for taking more than 3 cr. and/or taking more than one semester to complete the project.)

Project proposal: (Provide a brief description (< 1000 words) of the intended academic focus of the project. Depending on the 49x course, you might define the specific research area or question you wish to review or provide the hypothesis or working thesis and include a few preliminary references. This is not the place to describe the practical portion of the course. It would be a good idea to consult with the intended faculty supervisor before completing and submitting this section.)

Supplemental Application for PSYCH 495

Instructions: You should complete the following additional questions in consultation with the proposed internship site.

Proposed internship site: (name and location)

Site contact information: (name, title, phone, email)

Proposed internship activities: (This section should report a specific list of proposed activities with percentage estimates of the amount of time to be spent for each. The goal of this section is to understand what you will do on a day-to-day basis.)

Proposed skills/experiences: (This section should report a specific list of skills and experiences to be developed during the internship. The goal is to understand what benefits you could expect from the experience.)

Relation to academic component: (Here you should describe how the practical activities described above will inform the proposed academic focus. That is, you must explain how the site experience will contribute meaningfully to your academic focus on this project.)

**PSYCH 495: Three-Credit Internship for Student X (Semester YEAR)**

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Course Description: PSYCH 495 is a hybrid academic/professional experience in which students develop a narrowly conceived research focus and integrate it with practical skills/experiences gained in a non-academic setting. Unlike other work experiences sharing the name, the PSYCH 495 internship focuses on the critical synthesis of academic material and practical experience.

Responsibilities: Students will have on-site responsibilities, which will be determined in consultation with the site supervisor, and academic responsibilities, which will begin with identifying a suitably narrow area of academic interest related to the practical experience. Students will use the narrow focus to identify and properly summarize empirical journal articles, later integrate those summaries into a research synthesis, and lastly, present their work at the end of the semester. A more complete description of these activities, as well as the means of evaluation, is presented below.

Course Goals: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate several skills or abilities developed during the on-site training. (Student will identify these in consultation with the site supervisor. Selection of internship site should be determined by the fit between students’ goals and site offerings.)

2. Describe the current state of knowledge on one specific topic related to the practical experience.

3. Critically relate primary research findings to practical experience.

Journal summaries: Type-written summaries of journal articles will be required. Appropriate articles are approximately 5-15 pages in length and report one or more studies that use experimental or correlational methods. Note that this definition typically excludes book chapters, dissertations, theses, book reviews, blog posts, *Psychology Today* articles, and popular press columns. Identification and selection of articles should be made with the assistance of the faculty sponsor. It is acceptable to develop the reading list during the semester of the internship. An evolving reading list may occur when a student has narrowed their area of focus through more general exploration in the initial weeks.

Each summary should be approximately one, single-spaced page in length and should be accompanied by a .pdf copy of the journal article. Each summary should include the following: (1) an APA-style consistent reference, (2) a hypothesis/goal section that describes what the researchers predicted and/or were attempting to do, (3) a methods section that summarizes the choice of variables and study procedures, (4) a results section that provides the main findings, and (5) a critique/application section that evaluates the contribution of the work relative to its limitations and attempts to connect the work to internship site experiences. Note: It may be useful for students to keep a journal of their on-site experiences to facilitate this last, valuable point.

Students should identify a specific concentration area for the journal articles that will provide for a suitably narrow research synthesis. For a 6-credit internship at least 20 peer-reviewed journal articles are required and for a 3-credit internship at least 10 peer-reviewed journal articles are required.

*Due: 1 or 2 per week by email during the first 50% of the internship Relative weight: 30%*

Synthesis paper: A research synthesis paper is required that integrates knowledge gained through the article summaries with observations from site work. To properly integrate the articles, students must decide on an organizational scheme and then use subsection headers to organize the material. In addition, students are required to incorporate at least three specific examples from their site work that illustrate aspects of the review. The paper should adhere to APA format and be approximately 10-12 pages in length (6-credit) or 6-8 pages in length (3-credit). It is possible that some of the journal summaries may not be incorporated into the synthesis, but students should attempt to integrate as many as possible. It is good practice to submit two preliminary drafts to the faculty sponsor for comment: the first that clarifies the subsections of the paper before significant writing has begun and the second that shows not more than 50% progress on the paper. The faculty sponsor will provide elaborate feedback at each stage.

*Due: last day of the internship Relative weight: 30%*

Student evaluations (preliminary, mid-term, and final evaluation): Students will be prompted at three points during the semester to provide evaluations of their experiences. Note that significant problems should be discussed immediately with the faculty sponsor.

*Relative weight: 10%*

Meetings with the faculty sponsor: The student will have weekly contact with the faculty sponsor throughout the duration of the internship to discuss student progress.

*Relative weight: 10%*

Capstone Presentation: Students will present their research synthesis at an end of semester capstone presentation session. Students will give an oral presentation (preferably complemented by PowerPoint) than lasts not longer than 15 minutes. Following the presentation, 5 minutes will be allotted for questions. The presentation timing will be strictly enforced, so students are strongly advised to practice the talk to focus on the most significant content given the available time. A moderator will periodically alert students of the remaining time.

The manor of presentation is important. Professional dress is expected. Students should attempt to effectively use PowerPoint to complement and enhance their oral remarks. This could mean displaying tables or figures from a research paper, examples of psychological assessments, or pictures of equipment or internship sites. *Students should avoid placing large chunks of text on slides and then simply reading the information*. It is advisable for students to solicit feedback from the faculty sponsor on a draft version of the presentation.

The presentation should focus on 3 key areas:

1.) Description of the internship. Briefly detail the site name and location, the nature of the clients and work done there, and your responsibilities. Do not allocate more than 1 minute for this information.

2.) Review of literature. Present selected highlights of your research synthesis, along with illustrative examples from your site experience. The goal is to critically relate the literature to practice and practice to the literature. Where do they meet and miss? Plan to allocate 10 minutes to this portion of the talk.

3.) Insight. Discuss two professional (not personal) challenges you encountered or observed over the course of your internship: one relating to a client population or to treatment issues; the other to the organizational, social, or political/policy environment. Drawing explicitly on your review of the professional literature, how would you recommend that your host organization address these issues? Why? Plan to allocate 4 minutes for this portion of the talk.

*Relative weight: 20%*