



ACADEMIC ALERT #2007-22

DATE: August, 2007
DECISION: College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)

**Revised M.A. Psychology (MAP) Program
Addition of Comprehensive Examination as an Option to Thesis;
and Deletion of Specialty Tracks**

Rationale:

Faculty have added the option of a comprehensive examination. Thesis is no longer a requirement, but one of two options. This revision addresses the poor graduation rate, given that the majority of MAP students complete all their course work with the exception of the thesis. It is anticipated that graduation completion rates will increase. In addition, specialty tracks were eliminated in order to better meet the needs of MAP students.

Senate Academic Planning Committee Approval: June 21, 2007
Faculty Senate Approval: Point of Information; Not Required
Provost Approval: Point of Information; Not Required

Program Authorizations: The M.A. Psychology Program is authorized to be offered in the following Illinois Regions: Chicago; North Suburban; West Suburban; South Metropolitan and Fox Valley. The M.A. Psychology Program is also authorized at NLU's campus in Florida.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Fall 2007

CONTACT: Jose de Vincenzo, Chair, Psychology Department, (312) 261-3455;
JDeVincenzo@nl.edu
Claudia Pitts, Program Coordinator, M.A. Psychology Program (847) 905-8041
cpitts@nl.edu

SIGNATURE

Carol R. Melnick, Ph.D.
Vice Provost

Addition of Comprehensive Examination Option as the Standard Option; Thesis Option Requires Advisor Approval

Comprehensive Examination is one of two options offered for the Master of Arts in Psychology students as a requirement for completion of the degree.. The Examination is an essay format assessment of the students' understanding of the major theories and current issues in Social Psychology, Personality/Abnormal Psychology, Developmental Psychology, and Research Methods. The Comprehensive Examination will be offered as part of a 3 SH course, Comprehensive Examination Seminar. Students will not be allowed to begin the comprehensive examination before completion of five full terms in the M.A. Psychology program. In order to take the Comprehensive Examination, students must register for LAP598 Comprehensive Examination Seminar, the capstone course for the Master of Arts in Psychology degree.

With regard to course goals and expected student learning outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate knowledge of Psychology in the areas of Social, Personality/Abnormal, Developmental and Research Methods.
- Students will be able to write in APA style.

The Comprehensive Examination will be developed from a pool of questions, uniquely, for each student taking the exam. Topics will reflect theories and issues from the core courses in the M.A. in Psychology program: Social, Personality/Abnormal, and Developmental Psychology and Research Methods.

Format of the Comprehensive Examination

- Students will be given two questions from each of the four core areas and will be required to respond to one of those questions in each area.
- Students will receive the questions on-line and will be given twenty-four hours to return their responses online to the comprehensive exam coordinator via an identified third-party plagiarism detection service.
- The grade will be determined by the quality of writing which includes ability to write in APA format, spell and use appropriate grammar and punctuation; and the appropriateness of responses to the questions.
- Each question will be graded by two faculty members. In case of disagreement in outcome a third faculty will grade the question to break the tie.
- Scores will be awarded individually for each of the four competency areas then averaged, for both examiners. Students will pass with at least a 70% competency.
- Students who do not pass will need to register and pay for the Comprehensive Examination Seminar again and retake the Comprehensive Examination. Students may register and pay for the Comprehensive Exam Seminar and retake the Comprehensive Exam a maximum of three (3) times within the 6-year time limit for the degree. Students who do not pass will be referred to NLU's Center for Academic Development (CAD) to work with a learning specialist before retaking the Comprehensive Examination Seminar and Comprehensive Examination.
- Students must pass the Comprehensive Examination in order to fulfill the requirements for the degree.

The Comprehensive Examination Seminar will include two class sessions, one on APA writing style and one on a review of the four areas of Psychology on which the student will be tested.

Revised M.A. Psychology Program: Remains 36 SH

Core Course Requirements (Remain the Same): 15 SH

| Course Code | Course Title | QH/SH |
|-------------|--|-------|
| LAP501 | Introduction to Psychological Assessment | 5/3 |
| LAP505 | Advanced Abnormal Psychology | 5/3 |
| LAP506 | Advanced Human Development | 5/3 |
| LAP509 | Advanced Social Psychology | 5/3 |
| LAP510 | Advanced Personality Theory | 5/3 |

Professional Development Requirements: 13 SH

| Course Code | Course Title | QH/SH |
|-------------|---|-------|
| LAP520 | Biological Bases of Behavior | 5/3 |
| LAP507 | Theories of Cognitive Psychology | 5/3 |
| LAP526 | Psychology of Organizational Leadership | 5/3 |
| LAP547 | Substance Abuse | 2SH |
| LAP548 | Ethics and Legal Issues in Psychology | 2SH |

Research Requirements: 8 SH

| Course Code | Course Title | QH/SH |
|-------------|--|--------------------|
| INT512A | Research Design and Methodology | 3SH |
| LAP517 | Psychological Statistics, Design and Analysis | 3-5/2-3 |
| LAP599 | Thesis (for a total of 3sh; students in old program register for 1sh per term for 3 terms) OR | 1-3SH OR |
| LAP598 | Comprehensive Examination Seminar | 3SH |

Courses Deleted for Revised Program: Effective Fall 2007; Courses remain active

LAP530 Health Psychology; 5QH/3SH (Health Track)
LAP535 Psychopharmacology; 5QH/3SH (Health Track)
LAP518 Child and Adolescent Development; 5QH/3SH (Human Development Track)
LAP542 Later Adulthood and Aging; 5QH/3SH (Human Development Track)
INT519 Principles and Methods of Group Communication; 3SH (Organizational Psychology Track)
LAP550 Advanced Industrial Psychology; 5QH/3SH (Organizational Psychology Track)

Specialty Tracks Deleted for Revised Program: Effective Fall 2007; Courses remain active

Health

LAP520 Biological Bases of Behavior; 5QH/3SH
LAP530 Health Psychology; 5QH/3SH
LAP535 Psychopharmacology; 5QH/3SH
LAP547 Substance Abuse; 2SH
LAP548 Ethics and Legal Issues in Psychology; 2SH

Human Development

LAP507 Theories of Cognitive Psychology; 5QH/3SH
LAP518 Child and Adolescent Development; 5QH/3SH
LAP542 Later Adulthood and Aging; 5QH/3SH
LAP547 Substance Abuse; 2SH

Organizational Psychology

INT519 Principles and Methods of Group Communication; 2-3SH
LAP550 Advanced Industrial Psychology; 5QH/3SH
LAP526 (Formerly MGT542) Psychology of Organizational Leadership; 5QH/3SH
LAP547 Substance Abuse; 2SH
LAP548 Ethics and Legal Issues in Psychology; 2SH

Implementation

M.A. in Psychology faculty need to work with the Office of Admissions and Records to ensure that the addition of the comprehensive examination as the standard option to the thesis is properly documented, tracked and implemented. In particular, MAP faculty need to monitor the 3-retake limit of the comprehensive examination, and all related policies that MAP students must adhere to.

LAP598 Comprehensive Examination Seminar will be offered every term beginning Winter 2008.

M.A. Psychology faculty need to design a plan with the Office of Admissions and Records for contacting “stopped-out” students in the M.A. Psychology program consistent with NLU’s re-entry, and re-admission policies. Students who “stopped-out” and did not complete the thesis should be notified of the new comprehensive examination option for degree completion. “Stopped-out” students who return and are beyond the 6-year limit will have until December 31, 2009 to pass the Comprehensive Examination.

All changes need to be entered in Banner and CAPP.

Marketing materials and the NLU web page(s) for the revised program need to be updated to reflect the changes.

The revised catalog copy must be submitted to the Vice Provost and Assistant Registrar for Schedules and Catalog Coordinator to ensure that catalog copy is prepared and ready for the next catalog, 2008-2009.