Executive Summary¹ Graduate Program in School Psychology Department of Psychology University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez

A. Program Description

The Department of Psychology proposes to establish a Graduate Program in School Psychology that will have a span of three (3) years to obtain a Masters in Science in School Psychology degree and five (5) years to obtain a Doctor in Philosophy in School Psychology degree. The Graduate Program is designed to offer two sub-specializations: clinical (mental health) and neuropsychology. The Program is unique within the College of Arts and Sciences as well as across the University of Puerto Rico System and the Island of Puerto Rico. The University of Puerto Rico System **does not have** a graduate program in school psychology. Furthermore, the Graduate Program will meet: 1) the requirements of accreditation of the American Psychological Association (APA), 2) the requirements for program approval by the National Association of School Psychologists, 3) the requirements for licensure as a psychologist in Puerto Rico, 4) the requirements established by the Board of Psychology in Puerto Rico, and overseen by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Health Department, and 4) the directives and regulations of the Office of Graduate Studies at UPRM.

The curriculum of the proposed Graduate Program is composed of six fundamental components:

- CORE COURSES Advanced psychology coursework that addresses the breadth of scientific psychology, its history of thought and development, its research methods, and its applications in order to build an appropriate knowledge base and skills in both psychology and education.
- SPECIALIZED STRANDS (clinical, neuropsychology) Courses to ensure that graduates acquire indepth knowledge and skills in prevention and response techniques that promote socio-emotional functioning and mental health (NASP, 2010).
- 3) RESEARCH Sequence of courses to develop and to apply knowledge and skills of research design, statistics, measurement, data collection and analysis techniques and program evaluations methods sufficient for understanding research and interpreting data in applied settings. School psychologists demonstrate skills to evaluate and apply research as a foundation for services delivery (NASP, 2010).
- 4) PRACTICUM EXPERIENCES Application of knowledge and professional skills in relevant settings under the supervision, evaluation, and support of faculty member and certified psychologists in the field. The school psychology program's practice and internship experiences develop and enhance students' skills and professional characteristics needed for effective psychology service delivery (NASP, 2010).
- 5) **DEFENSE OF ORIGINAL RESERACH PROJECT** Doctoral level students will successfully conduct and defend a dissertation based on an original piece of empirical research.

¹ El resumen ejecutivo se presenta en inglés para cumplir con el inciso C de la página 1 (Presentación de la Propuesta) de la *GUÍA PARA LA REDACCIÓN DE PROPUESTAS PARA EL ESTABLECIMIENTO DE PROGRAMAS ACADÉMICOS NUEVOS EN LA UNIVERSIDAD DE PUERTO RICO.* En el punto 3 del inciso se indica que *"Las propuestas para la creación de programas de post grados o grados únicos en Puerto Rico, se redactan en inglés. Esto permite a la Vicepresidencia en Asuntos Académicos reclutar evaluadores externos con el peritaje adecuado y que el CESPR pueda constituir una Junta Consultiva idónea para evaluar la solicitud de enmienda a la Licencia."*

6) **INTERNSHIP** – An organized training program of sufficient breadth and scope to prepare the doctoral level intern for assuming the role of a professional school psychologist completing a minimum of 2,000 clock hours (a full calendar year).

CORE COURSES		
Code	Title	С
PSIC 6XXX	BIOLOGICAL BASES OF BEHAVIOR IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS	3
PSIC 6XXX	CHILD & ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT	3
PSIC 6XXX	DIAGNOSTIC MODELS FOR ACADEMIC, BEHAVIORAL, AND EMOTIONAL DISORDERS IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS	3
PSIC 6XXX	HISTORY AND SYSTEMS OF PSYCHOLOGY	2
PSIC 6XXX	HUMAN DIVERSITY and SOCIAL ASPECTS of BEHAVIOR	3
PSIC 6XXX	INTERVENTION MODELS FOR BEHAVIORAL, ACADEMIC, AND EMOTIONAL DISORDERS IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS	3
PSIC 6318	LEARNING AND COGNITION	3
PSIC 6005	THEORIES OF PERSONALITY	3
Total		23

Table 1 presents the courses developed for each of the six components.

SCHOOL PSYCHO	SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY COURSES				
Code	Title	С			
PSIC 6XXX	COGNITIVE ASSESSMENT (Integrated Practicum)	4			
PSIC 6XXX	EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY	3			
PSIC 6XXX	INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY: ROLES -FUNCTIONS AND ETHICAL- LEGAL ASPECTS	3			
PSIC 6XXX	PREVENTION, CONSULTATION, AND INTERVENTION IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY	3			
PSIC 6XXX	PROGRAM EVALUATION in SCHOOL CONTEXTS	3			
PSIC 6XXX	PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT (Integrated Practicum)	4			
PSIC 6XXX	SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS (Integrated Practicum)	4			
Total		24			

RESEARCH COURSES				
Code	Title	С		
PSIC 6XXX	EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT	3		
ESMA 6XXX	STATISTICS APPLIED TO PSYCHOLOGY	4		
PSIC 6XXX	ADVANCED RESEARCH METHODS IN PSYCHOLOGY: QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE APPROACHES	4		
PSIC 8XXX	DISSERTATION	3		
Total		14		

PRACTICUM COURSES				
Code	Title	C		
PSIC 7XXX	PRACTICUM IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY I (250 hours)	1		
PSIC 7XXX	PRACTICUM IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY II (250 hours)	1		
PSIC 8XXX	ADVANCED PRACTICUM IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY I (250 hours)	3		
PSIC 8XXX	ADVANCED PRACTICUM IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY II (250 hours)	3		
PSIC 8XXX	INTERNSHIP IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY	3		
		11		
Total				

SPECIALIZED STR	ANDS	
Code	Title	С
	Clinical Strand	
PSIC 8XXX	BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION TECHNIQUES for ADHD and DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR	3
	DISORDERS	
PSIC 8XXX	MOOD and ANXIETY DISORDERS and EVIDENCED BASED TREATMENTS	3
PSIC 8XXX	PLAY THERAPY for TRAUMA and STRESS RELATED DISORDERS	3
PSIC 8XXX	PROJECTIVE ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES for CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS	3
TOTAL		12
	Neuropsychology Strand	
PSIC 8XXX	NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT	3
PSIC 8XXX	NEUROANATOMY	3
PSIC 8XXX	PRINCIPLES OF NEUROPSYCHOLOGY	3
PSIC 8XXX	NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL REHABILITATION	3
TOTAL		12

ELECTIVE COURSES OUTSIDE THE PROGRAM				
Code Title				
		6		
Total		6		

B. Conceptual Framework

The mission of the School Psychology Graduate Program at UPRM is to prepare school psychology practitioners and scholars whose activities promote the psychological and educational development, and well-being of children and youth. The program is grounded on a scientist-practitioner model as reflected in its commitment to a synthesis between research and practice across all academic and professional preparation opportunities. As such, students draw upon the scientific literature as a primary basis for professional practice and focus their research agendas as to have meaningful implications for practice. Being a scientist-practitioner means that professional practice is conducted in ways that are congruent with the scientific method. That is, presenting problems are operationalized in measurable ways, data pertaining to presenting problems are collected and analyzed, analyses of these data lead to the formulation of hypotheses, resulting hypotheses form the basis for the design of interventions, the effectiveness of these interventions is monitored over time via ongoing data collection, and hypotheses and interventions are modified in light of these outcome data.

Furthermore, the Graduate Program in School Psychology is premised on a developmental-ecological view of human behavior. This perspective focuses on the developmental needs of learners as individuals within the context of families, schools, communities, organizations, and cultures (Bronfenbrenner, 1991; Cole,

1996). Human behavior is viewed as the complex result of the engagement between biological, social, and psychological factors as they contribute to the limits and potential of individuals, including the risks and opportunities of development. As such, understanding of both functional and dysfunctional human behavior requires a thorough grasp of individual, setting, and environmental variables as they influence one another. Understanding this total ecology within a developmental framework is necessary to have an adequate perspective for practical decision-making and effective functioning as a professional psychologist. The graduates of the Graduate Program in School Psychology at UPRM will:

- 1. Function as a scientist-practitioner capable of applying knowledge and skills that promote identification and resolution of psychological and educational problems relevant to children and adolescents in a variety of settings, particularly within the broad context of schools.
- 2. Possess theoretical and applied knowledge on topics related to the practice of school psychology. This includes, but is not limited to, prevention and intervention, developmental and ecological theories, clinical diagnostics, developmental disabilities, special education services, statistical and research methods, and human diversity.
- 3. Demonstrate critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and qualitative analysis abilities.
- 4. Show well-developed interpersonal skills that facilitate effective work with families, children and adolescents with varying levels and types of difficulties, and others in the community.
- 5. Understand and apply ethical principles to all professional interactions.

C. Justification

According to Nieves (2005), in Puerto Rico, the field of school psychology is relatively young and there are 1,869 psychologists from which 79 (4.2%) are school psychologists. The practice of school psychology has focused on the provision of services such as: assessment, program development and evaluation, counseling, consultation, research, and training. Children and adolescents may suffer from a significant number of psychiatric conditions that can negatively impact their ability to achieve socially and academically (Mash & Wolfe, 2010). These include common diagnoses such as Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Learning Disabilities, Bipolar Disorder, Autism, and Anxiety and Depression, among others. As such, childhood mental health and educational issues are of increasing concern for educators. According to the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Administration (ASSMCA, in Spanish) 2,732 children received mental health services during the 2011 fiscal year (http://bit.ly/1geZfCU). The Puerto Rico Department of Education reports that approximately 114,500 or 27% of the school population between the ages of 6 and 21 receive special education services under various diagnostic categories that include mental health and learning disabilities (Anuario Estadístico del Sistema Educativo, 2012-2013) as described in Public Law (PL) 51 "Ley de Servicios Educativos Integrales" para Personas con Impedimentos" of 1996. Federal and state law mandates recognize the educational needs of individuals with mental and leaning difficulties, and require the design of educational programs and provision of services that facilitate for the development of skills and competencies.

This current state of affairs stresses the need for the development and training of competent school psychologists. In that regard, the School Psychology Graduate Program at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez aims to establish itself as the leader in the school psychology field in Puerto Rico. The Faculty in the Department of Psychology has the ideal profile for the establishment of a Graduate Program in

School Psychology. Currently, the faculty is composed of 14 professors, all of them holding a doctoral degree. Three of the professors specialize in School Psychology (Drs. Moreno, Clinton, Delgado) and one in Educational Psychology (Dr. Guillemard); four professors specialize in Clinical or Counseling Psychology (Drs. Ríos, Nuñez, A. Santos, and Lugo), two professors specialize in Cognitive Psychology and Learning (Drs. Nieves and Guillemard), two professors specialize in methodology, statistics, and program evaluation (Drs. Bonilla and D. Santos); and two professors specialize in biopsychology or neuroscience (Drs. Clinton and Fraticelli).

Although there are various graduate programs in school psychology in the Island, the University of Puerto Rico System **does not have** a graduate program in school psychology. The University, instrument of higher education, as described in Law 1 of 1966, is obliged to serve the people of Puerto Rico. As specified in **Objective 5**, the University collaborates with other organisms in the study of the problems of the Island. Thus, training school psychologists to serve the mental health and educational needs of the students must be considered a service and contribution of the UPR system to the Public Education System of Puerto Rico.

The proposed Graduate Program in School Psychology is consistent with the priorities raised in the document **Ten Challenges 2005–2015: An Agenda for Planning**. The establishment of the Graduate Program in School Psychology fulfills **GOAL 2: AN ACADEMIC CULTURE OF CURRENCY**, **EXPERIMENTATION, AND RENEWAL:** "The University of Puerto Rico will foster an academic culture in which programs, departments, schools, and colleges will adapt their curricular offerings, modes of teaching/learning, and research and investigation to the best developments in their respective disciplines or fields of knowledge, and will provide flexible protocols for evaluation, renewal, and academic assessment."

UPRM will position itself as the leader in the training of professionals in school psychology that demonstrate the competencies, knowledge, and values to better serve the challenges faced by of our public schools' student population. The establishment of the Graduate Program in School Psychology demonstrates UPRM's commitment with the development of academic and administrative initiatives that respond to social needs as indicated in the **Institutional Strategic Plan Objective 2: Be at the forefront of higher education in Puerto Rico guaranteeing that students receive the best education**. In particular, the creation of the Program addresses the following items of the Strategic Plan: *1) establish innovative programs and research areas which address the needs of society and the development of knowledge; 2) promote intercollegiate coordination and program development with UPR system units and other universities; and 3) promote, from a graduate perspective, research and creative undergraduate undertakings.*

D. Curricular Design

In keeping with the diverse roles of school psychologists, the Graduate Program will provide students with a broad range of professional skills via a core School Psychology curriculum and appropriate supporting courses. Extensive work in the areas of assessment, intervention, and consultation as well as practice experiences will provide graduates with the breadth of training necessary to function effectively in a wide range of service delivery settings and to grasp the full continuum of professional school psychology. The following section presents the proposed program's curricular sequence by year.

First Year

During the first year, the students will take core courses that will provide the fundamentals for both psychology and education including theories, models, and research.

1 st Semester	Cr.	2 nd Semester	Cr.
CHILD & ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT	3	LEARNING AND COGNITION	3
BIOLOGICAL BASIS OF BEHAVIOR IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS	3	DIAGNOSTIC MODELS FOR ACADEMIC, BEHAVIORAL, AND EMOTIONAL DISORDERS IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS	3
THEORIES OF PERSONALITY	3	INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY: ROLES -FUNCTIONS AND ETHICAL- LEGAL ASPECTS	4
HISTORY AND SYSTEMS OF PSYCHOLOGY	2	EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT	3
HUMAN DIVERSITY and SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY ISSUES	3	PROGRAM EVALUATION in SCHOOL CONTEXTS	2
Total	14		15

During the second semester of the first year of studies, the student will select the president of his or her Graduate Committee, will prepare the Plan of Studies and submit it to the Office of Graduate Studies, according to stipulates of Certification 09-09 of the Academic Senate of the RUM.

At the end of the first and second academic year, students will receive a formal assessment of their progress towards meeting the program's requirements and expectations. Guidance regarding steps to remediate difficulties (if possible), and substantive, written feedback on the extent to which corrective actions are or are not successful will be provided.

Second Year

1 st Semester	Cr.	2 nd Semester	Cr.
EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY	3	PREVENTION, CONSULTATION, AND INTERVENTION IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY	3
INTERVENTION MODELS FOR BEHAVIORAL, ACADEMIC, AND EMOTIONAL DISORDERS IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS	3	ADVANCED RESEARCH METHODS IN PSYCHOLOGY: QUANTITATIVE and QUALITATIVE APPROACHES	4
STATISTICS APPLIED TO PSYCHOLOGY	4	PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT (integrated practicum)	4
COGNITIVE ASSESSMENT (integrated practicum)	4	ELECTIVE	3
Total	14		14

At this time, students will have the option of declaring one of two areas of specialization. This specialized focus within psychology will be noted in their official transcript.

Third Year

1 st Semester	Cr.	2 nd Semester	Cr.
PRACTICUM IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY I	1	PRACTICUM IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY II	1
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ASSESSMENT OF		SPECIALIZED STRAND	
CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS	4		3
(integrated practicum)			
SPECIALIZED STRAND	3	SPECIALIZED STRAND	3
SPECIALIZED STRAND	3	ELECTIVE	3
Total	11		10

At end of the third year of studies and/or its equivalent in courses/credits, the student will fulfill the requirements of a comprehensive examination. This examination will be of the content of the core and school psychology courses. The comprehensive exam will incorporate elements demonstrating the student's (a) mastery of empirical methods, (b) skills in constructing and defining a theoretical or conceptual framework, and (c) mastery over a defined literature base in school psychology. The graduate committee will construct the exam items and the completion timeline is arranged with the advisor. At this point the student may be granted a Master's in Science in School Psychology degree if requested. This examination must be passed before presenting/displaying the Defense of Dissertation Proposal.

Fourth Year

1 ^{er} Semester	Cr.	2 ^{do} Semester	Cr.
ADVANCED PRACTICUM IN SCHOOL	2	ADVANCED PRACTICUM IN SCHOOL	2
PSYCHOLOGY I (SUPERVISED)	3	PSYCHOLOGY II (SUPERVISED)	3
DISSERTATION	1	DISSERTATION	1
Total	4		4

At end of the fourth year of studies and/or its equivalent in courses/credits, the student will fulfill the requirements of the doctoral candidacy examination by defending, during a meeting, a research proposal delineating the scope and methodology to be employed in his or her dissertation. Once the dissertation proposal is approved, the student is considered a doctoral candidate. Doctoral students must have successfully proposed their dissertation before applying for an Internship.

Fifth Year

1 st Semester	Cr.	2 nd Semester	Cr.
INTERNSHIP	2	INTERNSHIP	1
DISSERTATION	1		
Total	3		1

TOTAL M.S. PROGRAM CREDITS 78 TOTAL Ph.D. PROGRAM CREDITS 90

Degree Examination

At end of the third year of studies and/or its equivalent in courses/credits, the student will fulfill the requirements of a comprehensive examination. This examination will incorporate elements demonstrating the student's (a) mastery of empirical methods, (b) skills in constructing and defining a theoretical or conceptual framework, and (c) mastery over a defined literature base in school psychology. The graduate committee constructs the exam items and the completion timeline is arranged with the advisor. The grade of the examination will be *Approved or Failed*. According to **Certification 09-09**, the student will have two opportunities to pass the examination; otherwise, the student will be suspended from the Program. Once the student approves the comprehensive examination, he or she may be granted a master's in science in school psychology if requested. This examination must be passed before presenting/displaying the Defense of the Dissertation Proposal.

At end of the fourth year of studies and/or its equivalent in courses/credits, the student will fulfill the requirements of the doctoral candidacy examination by defending, during a meeting, a research proposal delineating the scope and methodology to be employed in his or her dissertation. Once the dissertation proposal is approved, the student is considered a doctoral candidate. Doctoral students must have successfully proposed their dissertation before applying for an Internship.

Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation Defense

Doctoral Candidates will successfully conduct and defend a dissertation based on an original piece of empirical research in School Psychology. The project is described in a proposal that the student will prepare under the supervision of his or her Graduate Committee and that will defend before the Committee, in an open meeting to the academic community. The student will defend the doctoral dissertation during an oral examination that will be carried out following the dispositions established in Certifications 09-09 and 03-55 of the Senate at UPRM.

Seminars

Students will attend a minimum of two seminar scheduled by the Program every year. These seminars will provide exposure to current topics in the field of school psychology that complement thematic content of curriculum courses. Attendance to two (2) seminars will be required.

Internship

Doctoral level students will intern in a wide variety of settings, including medical centers, child guidance centers, psychiatric hospitals, residential schools for emotionally disturbed and behaviorally disordered children and youth, and public and private schools. Program requirements that must be completed prior to interviewing for an internship include: 1) successfully passing written and oral degree examination and 2) successfully defending the dissertation proposal.

E. Administration

Based on the current and projected Institutional resources, it is expected that a maximum of ten (10) students will be admitted during each year of the Program. This projection is based on the admission tendencies in similar Programs in the United States and Puerto Rico. Applicants must comply with the following requirements:

- 1) Complete the Application for Admission to Graduate School
- Have completed a bachelors degree in psychology from an accredited college/university program with a GPA of 3.00 and a specialization GPA of 3.30 OR

- 3) Evidence of having completed the following courses with an average of 3.30
 - a. developmental psychology (3 credits),
 - b. social psychology (3 credits),
 - c. physiological psychology (3 credits),
 - d. experimental psychology or research methods (3credits) and
 - e. statistics (3 credits)
- 4) GRE
- 5) Interview with the Graduate Committee
- 6) Official transcripts of completed undergraduate/graduate work
- 7) Three (3) letters of Recommendation
- 8) Personal Statement
- 9) Curriculum Vitae

In general, as all graduate programs at the UPRM, the proposed program will follow the directives and regulations of the Office of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Program in school psychology will be housed at the Department of Psychology. The Department Chair will appoint a Coordinator from the faculty. The Coordinator must have a Ph.D. degree and hold a tenure track appointment or have tenure. The Coordinator will be responsible of the administrative duties and will oversee the overall daily activities of the program. The Coordinator will also be assisted by a Graduate Committee that will be composed of five members: 1) the Department Chair, 2) the Program Coordinator, and 3) three elected members from and by the Department of Psychology faculty. All the members of this committee must hold a tenure track appointment or have tenure. The Department Chair will assign one of the department's secretaries to assist the Coordinator and the Graduate Committee with all general office and secretarial tasks. Finally, an External Advisory Board (EAB) composed by four members will support the Department and the Graduate Committee in the early stages of the Graduate Program. The Graduate Committee members of this board once a year during the first, second and third year of the programs starting date and then will meet once every two years. This meeting will take place during the summer session of the academic year. Table 2 shows the proposed budget for the first five years of the Graduate Program.

Category		Years					
Recurrent costs	1	2	3	4	5		
Personnel							
Additional Faculty		\$62,256	\$124,512	\$124,512	\$124,512		
Administrative-secretary	\$14,880	\$14,880	\$14,880	\$14,880	\$14,880		
External Advisory Board	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000		\$12,000		
Graduate Student Stipend							
5 students @ \$8,345	\$41,725	\$41,725	\$41,725	\$41,725	\$41,725		
Material							
Psychological Tests	\$10,000				\$10,000		
Library resources	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000		
SPSS	\$22,500				\$22,500		
Equipment							
Computers and printers	\$20,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000		
Classroom equipment	\$10,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000		
Travel							
Faculty	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000		
<u>Seminar</u>							
Invited speakers	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000		
Total recurrent cost	\$162,105	\$166,861	\$229,117	\$217,117	\$261,617		

Table 2.	Program	budget	for the	first five	years
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