

# Educational Psychology Undergraduate Handbook

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**Department of Counseling, Higher  
Education Leadership, Educational  
Psychology, and Foundations (CHEF)  
College of Education  
Mississippi State University**

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## **CEPF Statement of Diversity**

The Department of Counseling, Higher Education Leadership, Educational Psychology, and Foundations (CHEF) prides itself on its diversity of professional disciplines, including the diversity of cultures and ethnic backgrounds of faculty, staff, and students. The Department strongly encourages our faculty and students in pursuing cross interdisciplinary collaboration in reference to teaching, research, and community service. If you want to be deeply involved in shaping the future, this is the place to be to pursue your career goals.

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# Welcome to Educational Psychology!

Educational Psychology is an undergraduate degree program in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Foundations. This is a non-teaching major that leads to a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in educational psychology but not certification as a teacher.<sup>1</sup> It is generally referred to as the EPY major. This handbook will give you information about the degree requirements and other useful information you will need to know as you complete your degree program in EPY.

You should consider educational psychology major if you are interested in working with people of various ages and in a range of settings. It is an appropriate major for those who want to work in helping professions but are not seeking to become a classroom teacher.

Educational psychology is the science of learners and learning, including their differences and their development as they grow and change. These differences include changes that are biosocial, cognitive, and psychosocial. Educational psychologists are interested in areas that affect students' learning and achievement; such that they are interested in understanding motivation, individual differences in abilities, student exceptionalities, creative thinking, and personality. Educational psychology also involves learning the techniques of the scientific method that apply to our field—using tests and measurements, statistics, and research methodology. Thus, educational psychology involves a wide range of topics about people, and your major courses are designed to help you learn about these topics while also helping you learn the methods in how knowledge is gained in the field.

This undergraduate major is designed for people who

- enjoy helping and working with others,
- want to understand why people think and act the way they do, and
- seek enriching courses in human development, learning, and other topics relevant for applying psychology to teaching, coaching, counseling, and other professions. See career opportunities page.

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<sup>1</sup> Although our major is a non-teaching program, sometimes students do wish to look into teaching as a career after completing our degree. The Mississippi Department of Education does have several *alternative routes* to becoming a teacher. Each differ in their requirements and the areas in which you can be certified. For further information, check their web page (<https://www.mdek12.org/OTL/OEL/Alternate>).

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## EPY B.S. Degree Requirements

Our 124-hour (121 hours for students with catalog years Fall 2024 and later) degree program curriculum includes completion of the following (see also the EPY Undergraduate Curriculum Guide sheet):

1. general education requirements (42 hours; 39 hours for students with catalog years Fall 2024 and later)
2. educational psychology major requirements (70 hours)
  - a. educational psychology major core (46 hours; C or better)
  - b. educational psychology other requirements (6 hours)
    - i. communication (3 hours)
    - ii. human/cultural diversity (3 hours)
  - c. emphasis area (18 hours)
3. free/general electives (12 hours)

To graduate in four academic years, an EPY student should plan to take approximately 15 hours (five courses) each regular (i.e., fall and spring) semester. A student must complete all credit hours as listed above (repeated courses NOT counted) with a minimum GPA of 2.25 overall and on MSU coursework to graduate with a B.S. degree in EPY. A transfer student must also have a minimum GPA of 2.25 overall and on MSU coursework to be accepted to the EPY program.

### Planning for EPY Core Courses

The program curriculum guide includes all required coursework and is available on our website (<https://www.chef.msstate.edu/programs/undergrad/edpsych>). Although there is not a defined order in which you must follow to take the EPY core courses, it is recommended that you take some subset of courses prior to others.

**All courses with the EPY prefix are offered every semester (i.e., fall and spring), except EPY 4683, which is offered in fall semester only but perhaps with two sections.** Some EPY courses may also be offered in summer semesters, but summer offerings are subject to factors such as faculty availability and actual enrollment.

The first set (A) are intended to prepare your entry into the field and ideally should be taken in your first two years. (Note that courses marked with an asterisk \* serve as prerequisite courses for other ones in the major.)

### Set A

PSY 1013	General Psychology
EPY 2513	Human Growth and Development
EPY 3543	Psychology of Adolescence
EPY 3503	Principles of Educational Psychology
EPY 3513	Writing in the Behavioral Sciences*

The second set (B) involve a set of courses that can be taken at any point in your major, especially after taking courses in set A.

### Set B

EPY 3063	Psychology of Individual Differences and Exceptional Ability
PSY 3623	Social Psychology
EPY 4073	Personal and Motivational Factors in Education
EPY 4214	Educational and Psychological Statistics*
EPY 4553	Creativity/Innovation
EPY 4683	Advanced Issues in Educational Psychology

Finally, the last set (C) are capstone courses that are intended for you to take in your final two semesters. You should also be deciding on and taking courses in your emphasis area during your junior and senior years.

### Set C

EPY 4033	Application of Learning Theories (Prerequisite: EPY 3513)
EPY 4313	Measurement and Evaluation
EPY 4513	Research Methods (Prerequisites: EPY 3513 & 4214)

## Planning for EPY Emphasis Area Courses

Included in the curriculum to meet the major is a requirement to fulfill an emphasis area. This includes 18 hours in another major or group of courses that serve to complement the EPY courses. The emphasis areas include: *The Developing Child, Law and Order, Counseling and Clinical Applications, Youth and Teen Studies, Human Resources and Industrial Applications, Kinesiology, Speech/Language Pathology (SLP; a majority of courses taken at MUW)* and *Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA minor)*. As an alternative, you may elect to complete a minor or certificate to meet the EPY emphasis area requirements. See EPY Emphasis Areas sheet for details.

## Advising

Your college experience is made up of what you make it! In terms of your academic planning, you are responsible for attending the group advising, meeting with your advisor when needed, asking appropriate questions, listening to their advice, and making informed decisions. Please come prepared to advising appointments by

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reviewing this handbook, noting your progress, and having a draft plan of courses to take in the upcoming semester. This plan should include some alternative ideas in case some courses are full before you can register for them. **Always keep in mind that your education is your responsibility.**

### **Program Faculty (Advisors are marked with \*)**

- Dr. Ty Abernathy\*
- Dr. Kasia Gallo\*
- Dr. Mehdi Ghahremani\*
- Dr. Sareh Karami\*
- Dr. Dinetta Karriem (Student Services Coordinator)
- Dr. Andy Parra Martinez\*
- Dr. Elaine Wei\*

### **How do I get an advisor and an advising session?**

An advisor will be assigned to you once you get enrolled in the EPY program as a new, continuing, or transfer student. You may find your advisor's name and contact information via the Banner. If the advisor information is missing, please contact Dr. Dinetta Karriem ([dkarriem@colled.msstate.edu](mailto:dkarriem@colled.msstate.edu)) to assign.

Group advising sessions will be offered every fall and spring semester during the pre-registration period as specified in MSU's academic calendar (<https://www.registrar.msstate.edu/calendars/academic-calendar>), and you should make your best effort to attend at least one of these sessions. If you remain to have unanswered questions after the group advising or need additional help, you may also contact your advisor to set up one-on-one advising sessions.

### **Do I have to attend the advising session or set an appointment?**

Yes, you must attend the group advising or meet with your advisor to submit your trial/tentative schedule. Your advisor will release you for registration only after reviewing your proposed schedule.

### **What should I prepare for advising?**

- A trial schedule with courses you want (& alternatives)
- Any questions you might have about classes or emphasis areas

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## Career Opportunities with an EPY Degree

The EPY B.S. degree prepares graduates to work in variety of areas within many helping professions. The human services professions are a growing area, and our graduates work as psychiatric assistants, child welfare workers, youth workers, human resources specialists, community mental health center case workers, outreach and community specialists, drug abuse/resistance counselors, preschool care givers, military officers, and so forth. You may find jobs requiring a degree in behavioral science majors (e.g., education or psychology majors) to be appropriate for EPY majors to apply. In addition, many of our graduates are admitted to graduate programs in educational psychology, counseling, or school psychology.

### 1. MENTAL HEALTH

Case Worker  
Geriatric Technician Behavioral Technician  
Program Assistant

### 2. GROUP HOME SETTING

Resident Manager  
Program Assistant

### 3. PRIVATE MENTAL HEALTH/ SUBSTANCE ABUSE WORKER

Psychiatric Assistant  
Substance Abuse Counselor

### 4. DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Child Welfare Worker  
Adult Services Worker

### 5. FAMILY VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

Youth Worker  
Domestic Abuse/Crime Violence Aide  
Shelter Counselor  
Child Services Worker

### 6. CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

Family Support Worker

### 7. PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Parent Educator  
Family Programs Aide  
Teen Pregnancy Counselor  
Tutor

### 8. NURSING HOME

Social Worker (unlicensed)  
Activities Coordinator  
Case Manager

### 9. ADOLESCENT REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Wilderness Counselor  
Family Services Aide

### 10. BUSINESS

Human Resources Specialist

### 11. STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DELAYED

Ellisville Aides  
Case Worker

### 12. HOSPICE WORKER

Social Worker

### 13. PRIVATE CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION

Girl Scout  
Catholic Charities

### 14. CHURCH RELATED

Youth Worker  
Religious Education  
Pre-Seminary Intern

### 15. PRISONS

Classification Specialist  
Mental Health Technician

### 16. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Recreation Assistants  
Court-Appointed Youth  
Court Position

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## Obtain Your B.S. Degree in EPY Online

The Educational Psychology B.S. degree can now be completed online. Our online program (<https://online.msstate.edu/epy/>) offers great flexibility for those who want to build a solid foundation in educational psychology. The advisor for our online EPY program is Dr. Donna Gainer. You can reach her by email at [browning@colled.msstate.edu](mailto:browning@colled.msstate.edu), or by phone during daytime hours at (662) 889-0038.

If you would like to know exactly what to do to get started, follow these steps:

1. Fill out the online Application for Admission and pay an application fee online. Choose Educational Psychology (BS) as your major and Online Education as your campus.
2. Request official transcripts from EVERY university or school you have previously attended. Your application will not be considered until **ALL** transcripts are received. Transcripts can be mailed to the Office of Admissions and Scholarships, P.O. Box 6334, Mississippi State, MS 39762 or electronically submitted (eScripted) to [admit@msstate.edu](mailto:admit@msstate.edu).
3. If you **have** attended college; please submit the following:
  - a. Official transcripts from each school attended.
  - b. ACT or SAT scores may possibly be required; NOT required if you have already earned a bachelor's degree.
  - c. High school transcript; may possibly be required.
4. If you have **never** attended college; please submit the following:
  - a. High school transcript showing graduation date.
  - b. ACT or SAT scores.Once students have been accepted, register for online orientation.
5. Every new student must register for Online@State Orientation. Students must successfully complete orientation to obtain a release to register. After students have successfully completed Online orientation, the advisor is notified.
6. Release to register for class. Advisor releases and advises the students to register for class.

**If you are already a Mississippi State Student and looking to transfer into this online program, complete the change of major form. Then contact Anusha Rijal at [a.rijal@msstate.edu](mailto:a.rijal@msstate.edu) to get started.**