
Graduate Program

LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

**North Carolina
State University**



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LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

The graduate program in Lifespan Developmental Psychology (*Curriculum Code: PSD*) prepares individuals for careers aimed at enhancing the understanding of human development across the lifespan. Developmental students are encouraged to cultivate a broad, basic knowledge of psychology, to obtain a strong background in statistics and research methodology, and to be involved actively in research efforts throughout their course of study. Individually tailored plans of graduate work are created in consultation with the student's committee to augment the core courses that provide students with a broad-based knowledge of developmental psychology.

In addition, students may develop specializations within specific sub-areas (cognitive development, social development) and age groups (e.g., childhood, adulthood and aging). The program goal is to provide a balance of conceptual-theoretical, research-analytical, and application skills well suited to each candidate's professional direction. The flexibility in program design provides a range of opportunities to develop competence in research in basic and applied settings and in college/university teaching. In selecting students for the graduate program in Lifespan Developmental Psychology, both traditional academic qualifications and relevant research-related experiences are considered, along with the match between the applicant's research interests and those of the faculty.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The Psychology Department requires that all doctoral degree students complete nine semester hours of statistics and research design, as well as a one-credit orientation course, a two-credit ethics sequence, and three courses chosen from some short lists of “distributional” topics. (Some of these distributional courses may also meet requirements within the Developmental program.)

In addition to general departmental requirements, all Developmental students take the following core courses:

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| PSY 584: | Advanced Developmental Psychology |
| PSY 785: | Methodological Issues in Developmental Psychology |
| PSY 786: | Cognitive Development |
| PSY 787: | Social Development |
| PSY 788: | Adulthood and Aging: Cognitive and Intellectual Change |
| PSY 789: | Social-Emotional Processes in Adulthood and Aging |

Most students in the Lifespan Developmental Psychology program also take advantage of a five-course series in research design and applied statistics, all of which are taught by Developmental faculty. These courses are workshop-based, providing hands-on training in analyzing data using advanced statistical techniques such as structural equation modeling, latent growth curve modeling, and hierarchical linear modeling.

Overall, the student and her/his committee determine a plan of study, which includes both these basic requirements and other academic work that consists of a coherent group of courses flexibly-selected in accord with career goals. Students may choose to include a formal "minor" in another department, if they wish.

All students work closely with their faculty advisors and are actively involved in research throughout their studies. Students are expected to do individual study, thesis and dissertation research. A major strength of our program is the low ratio of students to faculty, ensuring that students get the mentoring that is necessary to foster their development as independent researchers. In addition, each doctoral student is required to exhibit competence in either instructional or application skills, depending on professional goals. Finally, all Lifespan Developmental students are expected to attend and participate in the Developmental Area Seminar, an informal series at which students and faculty meet to discuss ongoing research, development projects, and professional issues.

Our program is also one of the constituent members of the internationally renowned Center for Developmental Science, and maintains ties to the UNC system-wide Institute on Aging. Students are encouraged to augment their training through participation in special seminars and research opportunities associated with each of these organizations.

FACILITIES

The Department maintains several specialized laboratories for conducting research. The Social Development Laboratory is set up for interactional and observational studies, and includes several small play and/or interview rooms and one large play area. The Adult Development Laboratory is a multipurpose facility that is used primarily for studies of memory and cognition in adulthood, and includes testing facilities off-campus for easy access by community research participants. Other specialized labs exist within the department for conducting research on visual and auditory perception and on decision-making. Additional spaces are also available for individualized interviewing and testing. The Department is housed in Poe Hall.

A wide variety of individuals from the community participate in research projects conducted by faculty and students in the Developmental program. We maintain good relations with local preschools and area elementary and middle schools, and have also had success working with local health-care providers, senior centers, and church groups, in ongoing research on adult development and aging. Our program maintains a large file of community-residing adults aged from 20 to 90 who are willing to participate in research. Connections have also been established with the Durham VA Hospital.

PRIMARY AREA FACULTY

Jason C. Allaire: Assistant Professor, PhD, Wayne State University – older adults’ cognitive and everyday functioning; cognitive variability; cognitive training, health and cognition. (jason_allaire@ncsu.edu)

Lynne E. Baker-Ward: Professor, PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – cognitive development in childhood; development of autobiographical memory and narrative competence; children’s testimony in legal settings. (lynne_baker_ward@ncsu.edu)

Daniel Grünh: Assistant Professor, Dr.phil., Freie Universität Berlin – socio-emotional development in adulthood and aging; emotional reactivity, memory and emotions, psychophysiological assessment, and health. (Daniel_Gruehn@ncsu.edu)

Amy G. Halberstadt: Professor, PhD, The Johns Hopkins University – socio-emotional development; family experience and expression of emotion; parental beliefs about children’s emotions; children’s impact on parents; children’s affective social competence; gender-role influences on social and emotional development through the lifespan. (amy_halberstadt@ncsu.edu)

Thomas M. Hess: Professor and Program Coordinator, PhD, Southern Illinois University – social cognition in adulthood; memory and aging in context, including stereotype threat and affective influences; decision making and aging. (thomas_hess@ncsu.edu)

Shevaun D. Neupert: Assistant Professor, PhD, University of Arizona – daily stressors and their associations with affect, physical health, and memory across the adult lifespan; psychosocial and socio-demographic differences in reactivity to stressors; statistical techniques and methods for examining change and intra-individual variability. (shevaun_neupert@ncsu.edu)

ALLIED FACULTY

Craig C. Brookins: Associate Professor and Director of Africana Studies (Psychology in the Public Interest), PhD, Michigan State University – identity development in African-American youth and adults; applied developmental community intervention research; college student development. (craig_brookins@ncsu.edu)

William P. Erchul: Professor (School Psychology), PhD, University of Texas at Austin – school psychology; family-school interface. (william_erchul@ncsu.edu)

Mary E. Haskett: Associate Professor (School Psychology), PhD, Florida State University – child maltreatment; parenting styles; cognitive-behavioral interventions with children and families. (mary_haskett@ncsu.edu)

Christopher B. Mayhorn: Associate Professor, (Ergonomics /Experimental Psychology), PhD, The University of Georgia – aging; applied cognition; human-computer interaction. (chris_mayhorn@ncsu.edu)

Anne Collins McLaughlin: Assistant Professor (Ergonomics), PhD, Georgia Institute of Technology – age-related differences in learning; training for older adults; cognitive ergonomics. (anne_mclaughlin@ncsu.edu)

Donald H. Mershon: Professor, PhD, University of California at Santa Barbara – aging and perceptual change; age-related changes in spatial judgments. (don_mershon@ncsu.edu)

Samuel B. Pond, III: Associate Professor (Industrial Organizational Psychology), PhD, Auburn University – age-related transitions in employment. (sbpond@ncsu.edu)

Ann C. Schulte: Professor (School Psychology), PhD, University of Texas at Austin – learning disabilities; developmental psychopathology; attention disorders. (ann_schulte@ncsu.edu)

ADMISSION

Students are admitted each fall semester. Applications are welcomed from students with Bachelor's or Master's degrees. Admission is competitive on a space-available basis, and applications completed before January 5th are given first consideration. Candidates from under-represented populations (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities, students with disabilities) are strongly encouraged to apply.

NC State University no longer distributes/uses paper application packages; all applications are handled through the Graduate School and the on-line application system at: <http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/grad/applygrad.htm> If you need to contact the Graduate School for any other reason, you may do so by telephone (919-515-2872) or by writing to: The Graduate School, NC State University (Box 7102), Raleigh, NC 27695-7102.

Several items are required before an application is complete. In addition to the Graduate School application, these include a personal statement applicable to the program in which you are interested, transcripts of all previous academic work, and three letters of recommendation. Scores on the General GRE must be provided (the Psychology Subject Test is recommended, but not required). The TOEFL is required for most international students. More specific details on what is needed, where to obtain the appropriate forms and/or how to submit required information can be found at: <http://www4.ncsu.edu/~mershon/FDF/> Select the FAQ page and then Applicants' **FAQ#1**.

SUPPORT

Most admitted students in Developmental Psychology can expect to receive funding in the form of teaching or research assistantships. Such assistantships usually require half-time work and provide support levels typical of those offered among doctoral-level programs. Assistantship “packages” include health insurance and tuition waivers, if certain conditions are met and the student carries a specified number of hours. A few students may also qualify for special Graduate School supplements. Other forms of financial assistance, available through the Office of Financial Aid, include scholarships, grants, loans, and campus employment.

North Carolina State University is committed to equality of educational opportunity and does not discriminate against applicants, students, or employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

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