

## DOMAIN GUIDE

### PRE-ADMISSION ACADEMIC CHECKLIST School/Applied Child Psychology

For admission to the Doctoral degree in School/Applied Child Psychology and the M.A. degree in Educational Psychology: School/Applied Child Psych Stream, applicants must have a minimum of 42 course credits completed within the content domains listed below. The breakdown of these credits can also be found in the Pre-Admission Academic Checklist to be submitted with your application to either degree found online on our departmental website (see page 2 for link). The objective of this document is to assist applicants to accurately identify and classify their courses in the appropriate domains prior to admission to the program.

Any course listed on the Pre-Admission Academic Checklist should be substantially in the content domain (e.g. an Introduction to Psychology course that reviews the history of psychology is not a History of Psychology course). If you are unsure of whether or not your course qualifies under a particular domain, this Domain Guide will provide you with the topics/areas of focus necessary that must be substantially covered in the course in question.

These credits are normally completed at the undergraduate level, however some of these domains have the added caveat that certain credits must be completed at the senior undergraduate or graduate level. These domains include: the biological, social-cultural, cognitive-affective, developmental, and history and systems of psychology domains. If taken at the undergraduate level, senior level courses must be beyond introductory in nature and content; they are normally taken in the third and fourth years of undergraduate study (e.g., usually classified as 300 and 400-level courses). Any credits obtained at the graduate level are over and above our M.A. level requirements for the PhD and will meet this requirement. Domains that require 6 credits require a minimum of 3 of the 6 credits to be completed at the senior undergraduate level.

In exceptional cases, applicants who do not meet all the course credit requirements may be permitted to do course remediation in the first year of the PhD program or during their MA degree. Students cannot begin either program missing more than 6 credits from this checklist. Please note that neither degree has a qualifying year.

All Pre-Admission Academic Checklists are subject to review by the Program Committee that evaluates student applications. Courses are approved by this Program Committee as fulfilling the domain requirements below. In certain cases further documentation may be requested to properly evaluate course content. Such documentation would typically include course descriptions from the calendar and/or course syllabi from the semester in which the course was completed.

The Pre-Admission Academic Checklists can be found online on our departmental website under the Prospective Student's section of each degree: <http://www.mcgill.ca/edu-ecp/programs/schoolpsych/ma> or <http://www.mcgill.ca/edu-ecp/programs/schoolpsych/phd>.

## **BASIC DEFINITION OF A PSYCHOLOGY COURSE**

A psychology course is defined as a course that:

- Is designated as such in the program's calendar (e.g., Psychology 401), OR
- Has an official title that clearly indicates it is psychological in nature (e.g., Psychology of Behavior, Psychological Aspects of Rehabilitation), OR
- Is taught or tutored by a person who has a graduate degree in psychology **AND** is clearly psychological in content. Official documents (i.e., university course calendar, syllabus) may be required as evidence of the psychological content of the course and the credentials of the instructor. Courses taught by professionals in other disciplines (ex: physicians, neuroscientists) may also be acceptable at the discretion of the Program Committee.

## **REQUIRED DOMAINS**

Applicants must have successfully completed the stipulated credits in the following domains. Courses with a '†' must have 3 of the 6 credits completed at the senior undergraduate level for the PhD and MA degrees.

1. **Biological Domain**† (6 credits total; 3 of 6 at the senior-level)
2. **Social-Cultural Domain**† (6 credits total; 3 of 6 at the senior-level)
3. **Cognitive-Affective Domain**† (6 credits total; 3 of 6 at the senior-level)
4. **Developmental Psychology Domain**† (6 credits total; 3 of 6 at the senior-level)
5. **History and Systems of Psychology Domain**† (3 senior-level credits)
6. **Psychological Measurement and Assessment Domain** (3 credits)
7. **Research Methods Domain** (3 credits)
8. **Statistics Domain** (3 credits)
9. **Personality Psychology Domain** (3 credits)
10. **Abnormal Psychology Domain** (3 credits)

## 1. Biological Domain

Courses in the biological domain address biological influences on behaviour, affect, cognition and development. Course content must include at least one of the following substantive areas:

- Basic neuroscience (e.g., neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, neurochemistry), clinical neuroscience (e.g., brain-behaviour relationships, neurological syndromes and their contribution to cognitive and emotional status and behaviour), neurological disorders and their symptoms;
- Physiological correlates/determinants of behaviour and affect (e.g., symptoms of common psychophysiological reactions and syndromes such as hyperventilation, anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, stress reactions, headaches, irritable bowel syndrome);
- Biological bases of the behaviour and affect associated with acute and chronic illness (e.g., post-stroke depression, diabetes, AIDS, asthma, chemotherapy, fibromyalgia, hypoglycemia, schizophrenia), including knowledge of psychoneuroimmunology;
- Basic psychopharmacology (e.g., medication effects, side effects, and interactions), which includes knowledge of drug metabolism, drug categories (e.g., anxiolytics, antidepressants, antipsychotics, anticonvulsants), and addictive/dependency potential;
- Genetic transmission (e.g., the relationship of dominant and recessive genes) and its role in understanding disorders and their behavioural, emotional, and psychosocial manifestations (e.g., Duchenne's muscular dystrophy, Huntington's disease, Down syndrome);
- Relationship of stress to biological and psychological functioning, with particular reference to lifestyle and lifestyle modification (e.g., cardiac rehabilitation, smoking cessation, obesity), psychological reactions to stress, behavioural health, physical or biological reactions to a behaviour such as substance abuse, eating disorders).

## 2. Social-Cultural Domain

Courses in the social-cultural domain address the social influences on behaviour, affect, cognition and development. Course content must include at least one of the following substantive areas:

- Social cognition and perception (e.g., attribution theory and biases, information integration, confirmation bias, person perception, development of stereotypes, racism);
- Social interaction (e.g., interpersonal relationships, aggression, altruism, attraction);
- Group dynamics and organizational structures (e.g., school systems, gang behaviour, job satisfaction, family systems, group thinking, cultural behaviour, conformity, compliance, obedience, persuasion), social influences on individual functioning (e.g., job satisfaction, family systems, group thinking, cultural behaviour, conformity, compliance, obedience, persuasion);
- Environmental/ecological psychology (e.g., person-environment fit, crowding, pollution, noise);
- Theories of personality that describe behaviour and the etiology of atypical behaviour, including knowledge of limitations in existing theories for understanding the effect of diversity (e.g., age, ethnicity, gender);

- Theories of cultural identity development, acculturation and psychological impact of oppression; within group and between group differences; the role of cultural differences in psychosocial development based on multicultural and multiethnic diversity (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious groups).

### **3. Cognitive-affective Domain**

Courses in the cognitive-affective domain address cognitive and affective influences on each other, on behaviour and on development. Course content must include at least one of the following substantive areas:

- Cognitive science (e.g., sensation and perception, attention, memory, language and spatial skills, intelligence, information processing, problem-solving, strategies for organizing information);
- Theories and principles of learning (e.g., social learning, classical and operant conditioning, primacy/recency effects);
- Theories of motivation (e.g., need/value approaches, cognitive choice approaches, self-regulation);
- Theories of emotions;
- Reciprocal interrelationships among cognitions/beliefs, behaviour, affect, temperament and mood (e.g., healthy functioning, performance anxiety, performance enhancement, job satisfaction, depression);
- Influence of psychosocial factors (e.g., sex differences, family styles and characteristics, academic/occupational success) on beliefs/cognitions and behaviours.

### **4. Developmental Psychology Domain**

Courses in the developmental psychology domain address the range and diversity of normal and abnormal human functioning and development. Course content must include at least one of the following substantive areas:

- Normal growth and development (cognitive, social, personality, moral, emotional, and physical) from conception through old age or over a specified stage of development (ex: Childhood, Adolescence);
- Influence of culture on normative or age-expected behaviours (e.g., normal age range, individual differences); how the definition of normative behaviour is influenced by culture;
- Risk factors that predict an atypical developmental course (e.g., nutritional deficiencies, health care including prenatal care, availability of social support, adequacy of income and housing, poverty, parental alcohol/drug abuse);
- Interventions to reduce risk factors (e.g., poor health care, nutritional deficiencies, violence), to increase resilience (e.g., protective factors such as care-giving, increased social support), competence (e.g., skill building) of individuals living in at-risk environments;
- Life-event changes that can alter the normal course of development (e.g., injury, trauma, illness, onset of chronic disease or disorder in self or parent, death, divorce);

- Theories of development (e.g., constructivist theory, social learning theory, ecological theory);
- How psychological development is influenced by the organism-environment interaction over time (e.g., understanding the relationship between the behaviour of the individual and the social, academic or work environment);
- Family systems functioning and family stages in life, and how these impact on individual psychological development (e.g., family life cycle, parent-adolescent communication, birth of a child).

### **5. History and Systems of Psychology Domain**

Courses in the history and systems of psychology domain address the historical progression of ideas central to psychology, the philosophical and empirical roots of those ideas, and the confluence of those ideas into the various systems we have today. Course content must include at least one of the following substantive areas:

- The major schools and systems of psychology (e. g., Functionalism, Structuralism, Gestalt, etc.);
- The lives and works of the men and women whose work influenced or established the major schools and systems of psychology (e.g., Freud, Piaget, Pavlov, Erikson, Jung, etc.).
- An analysis and investigation of how early contributions to psychology from the fields of philosophy, religion, physics, physiology, and psychophysics are related to the various psychological schools of thought of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20th centuries. An analysis of the cultural and social forces and various scientific paradigms that have shaped psychological theory and more modern psychological perspectives.

### **6. Psychological Measurement and Assessment Domain**

Courses in the psychological measurement and assessment domain address theory and techniques for the measurement of characteristics of individuals, groups or systems. Course content must include at least one of the following substantive areas:

- Psychometric theory and concepts (e.g., measurement, reliability, validity, item characteristics, test fairness, standardization, norms) and test validation procedures (e.g., criterion, predictive, construct and content strategies; appropriate measurement standards and legal regulations);
- Assessment models (e.g., psychometric, behavioural, neuropsychological, ecological);
- Tests for the measurement of characteristics of individuals (e.g., social, emotional and behavioural functioning; cognitive; achievement; aptitude; personality; neuropsychological; vocational interest) and the adaptation of these tests for use with special populations;
- Techniques other than tests (e.g., interviews, surveys, naturalistic and structured behavioural observations, history/biographical data, medical evaluations, imaging techniques and laboratory tests) for the measurement of characteristics of individuals;
- Theory and techniques for the measurement of client changes (e.g., client tracking, client compliance and progress);

- Program planning and evaluation strategies and techniques (e.g., needs assessment, process and implementation evaluation, cost-benefit analysis, public health benefit).
- Instruments and methods for the measurement of characteristics of jobs, organizations, educational and other social institutions (e.g., job analysis, job evaluation, needs assessment, organizational diagnosis, ecological assessment);

### **7. Research Methods Domain**

Courses in the research method domain address the philosophy and techniques used in investigation of phenomena as dictated by employing the foundations established by the scientific method (Description, Prediction, Method Selection, Control, Data Collection, Analysis, and Explanation). Course content must include at least one of the following substantive areas:

- Research methods (e.g., sampling, instrumentation, data collection procedures), appropriateness of instrument selection, issues of research design;
- Research designs (e.g., hypothesis generation; experimental, quasi-experimental and naturalistic inquiry; group designs; single-case research);
- Criteria for critical appraisal and utilization of research (e.g., technical adequacy; limitations to generalizations; threats to internal, external and construct validity and design flaws), integration of qualitative and quantitative results, and use of research.

### **8. Statistics Domain**

Courses in the statistics domain address the various statistics and techniques that are used in the context of psychology research. Course content must include at least one of the following substantive areas:

- Appropriate analytical methods (e.g., descriptive, inferential, univariate, bivariate and multivariate; parametric and nonparametric), which analysis is appropriate, interpretation (e.g., causal vs. correlational, degree and nature of generalizability);
- Methods including frequency distributions, measures of central tendency and dispersion, the normal curve, correlation, linear regression, elementary probability theory, an introduction to hypothesis testing, and the t test.
- Further methods including general linear model, (multiple regression, analysis of variance [ANOVA], and analysis of covariance [ANCOVA]), examining the limited and alternatives to null-hypothesis significance testing (NHST), including confidence intervals, measures of effect size, and meta-analysis.

### **9. Personality Psychology Domain**

Courses in the personality psychology domain address the dynamic and organized set of characteristics possessed by a person that uniquely influences his or her cognitions, motivations, and behaviours in various situations. Course content must include at least one of the following substantive areas:

- General theoretical perspectives of personality psychology (conditioning, psychodynamic, and Gestalt/field theories and symbolic interactionism) and ‘middle level’ theories (cognitive consistency, self-perception, attitudes & persuasion, motivation and cognition, personality);
- Different empirical approaches to the study and understanding of human personality, including historically important and current conceptualizations of personality.
- An analysis of the major theories and topics of personality psychology, including the definition and measurement of personality; biological and cultural aspects of personality; psychoanalytic, cognitive, and behavioral perspectives; gender differences; and personality disorders.

### **10. Abnormal Psychology Domain**

Courses in the abnormal psychology domain address the symptoms, possible causes, and treatments of mental illness. Course content must include at least one of the following substantive areas:

- Utilization of various classification systems (e.g., DSM, ICD) for diagnosing client functioning; DSM diagnosis, syndromes, differential diagnosis and diagnostic criteria, epidemiology of associated features of behavioural disorders, base rates of disorders in clinical or demographic populations, comorbidity among behavioural disorders and with medical disorders, comorbidity rates, age ranges affected and associated features;
- An analysis of psychological disorders from the four major theoretical perspectives (biological, psychodynamic, cognitive, and behavioral).