Degree Title Change Effective Fall 2012

Ed.S. School Psychology

As of Fall 2012, the Northern Arizona University M.A. in School Psychology plus Certification program has changed to an Ed.S. in School Psychology degree. The Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) title better reflects the advanced nature of the degree. The school psychology degree requires additional coursework beyond most master’s degrees (30-48 credit hours), but is not equivalent to a doctoral degree. The Ed.S. is a nationally recognized degree title in school psychology. The degree program continues to lead to certification as a school psychologist by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE).

School psychology is a field that has been changing emphases in practices as new approaches and research emerges in the field. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has an approval board that reviews programs and approves programs across the country to help guide candidates who are applying to programs. The NAU MA School Psychology +Certification program has been approved by NASP since 1991. NASP requires candidates to have a degree in school psychology in order to be approved for National Certification (NCSP). The degree title change continues to align with NASP standards.

The M.A. in School Psychology plus Certification program required a minimum of 72 credit hours of coursework. Nationwide, school psychology programs generally offer 60-72 credit hour programs. The NAU MA + Certification program was a 48 hour masters plus 24 hours necessary for candidates to gain certification in the State of Arizona and for the program to be NASP approved. When candidates complete this program, their transcripts show the MA degree, but the transcript only listed the 24 additional hours they are required for candidates to become certified. This was somewhat problematic for graduates whose pay scale may be determined by the degree obtained versus the number of graduate hours earned. Additionally, some other states or school districts recognize the Ed.S. degree in certification and hiring practices.

The Ed.S. in School Psychology degree remains a 72 credit hour degree; however, candidates must now complete the entire program of studies including internship to earn the degree. With the current change, two new courses were included: EPS 622 Child and Adolescent Counseling and EPS 669 Crisis, Disaster, and Trauma Counseling. Two elective foundation courses were removed. Additionally, course titles were revised to EPS 675 School Psychology Practicum and EPS 738 School-Based Psychosocial Assessment & Intervention. The curriculum revisions and title change reflect the school psychology faculty’s efforts to continually improve this quality professional program. Please direct any questions about the program to Dr. Mary McLellan, program coordinator, or Dr. Kathy Bohan, EPS Chair.