

## **Frequently Asked Questions by Prospective FSU Sport Psychology Graduate Students (Updated August 2023)**

This FAQ document for the Sport Psychology Program at FSU was designed to supplement the information provided at <http://education.fsu.edu/degrees-and-programs/sport-psychology>. Prospective graduate students should review the above website and the FAQs below for detailed information about the program.

### **Our Degree Programs Described Briefly:**

We offer higher degree programs that are informed by the scientist-practitioner model of sport psychology. To elaborate, our programs are focused first on the science of sport psychology. In addition, we provide great opportunities to work under supervision with athletes and other performers to apply this science in the support of the mental components of their performance.

### **Application:**

1. When are applications due (i.e., program vs. university deadlines)?
  - Applications for the master's program are due by January 15, 2024
  - Applications for the PhD program are due by December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023
2. Do you only accept students for Fall admission?
  - Yes, students are only accepted to start in the Fall semester.
3. How many students apply/get accepted to the M.S. and Ph.D. programs each year?
  - M.S.: Approximately 160 students apply, around 25 get accepted.
  - Ph.D.: Approximately 40 students apply, 3-6 get accepted.
4. What is the difference between the M.S.-Thesis and M.S.-Coursework tracks? Why would I choose one over the other?
  - All master's students are admitted on the coursework (i.e., non-thesis) track. Those interested in completing a thesis should meet with a faculty member about doing so in their first semester. If a professor agrees to serve as a student's major advisor for the thesis, the student will complete a synopsis (literature review and methods) followed by several rounds of edits. Once the major advisor is satisfied with the student's work, their program of study will be changed to reflect M.S.-Thesis. Otherwise, students will complete the coursework track.
  - Students with a strong research interest and capability would likely pursue the thesis-track, pending faculty availability and approval. If a student would like to pursue a Ph.D. (in Sport Psychology or another field) upon completion of the master's, completing a thesis may be beneficial. If a student believes the master's will be their terminal degree and plan on working in applied settings, the coursework track would be best.
5. What is the difference between the M.S. and Ph.D. programs? Which should I apply for? Can I be admitted to the Ph.D. program without a Master's degree?

- Students admitted to the Ph.D. program must have a master's degree prior to starting the Ph.D. program, and are expected to have completed a master's thesis prior to enrollment. Those who are admitted to the Ph.D. program without a master's thesis are conditionally admitted and are required to complete a research project during their first year in the Ph.D. program.
6. What GRE scores/percentiles should I be aiming for (not just the “required” minimum)? What scores do students who are accepted actually get?
- A minimum of the 50th percentile on both Verbal and Quantitative as well as at least 3.5 on the Analytical Writing.
  - *Note: The GRE requirement is waived for master's and specialist programs for Fall 2024 admission.*
7. What previous research or applied experience is required or expected for applicants?
- M.S.: At least 1 year of some form of research experience such as an undergraduate thesis or being a member of faculty member's research team or a grant-funded research team is recommended, but not required.
  - Ph.D.: At least a master's thesis.
8. From whom should I get letters of recommendation? What does a good letter of recommendation look like? To whom should my recommenders send their letter?
- Letters of recommendation should be written by persons who are in a position to comment on the likelihood of your success within the department. You are encouraged to submit at least 2 letters written by faculty.
  - Letters of recommendation are submitted by the recommender via the application portal. Applicants list the recommender and their contact information and the recommenders receive an email with instructions on how to submit their letter of recommendation.
9. I have degree(s) in \_\_\_\_\_, is there still a chance I can get accepted?
- Yes, admitted students have a variety of bachelor's degrees (e.g., Exercise Physiology, Kinesiology, Sport Management, Psychology, Marketing).
10. What courses do you recommend I take to prepare for the program?
- Courses in sport psychology, motor skill learning and control, exercise psychology, and performance psychology.
  - Courses in exercise science (e.g., anatomy & physiology, exercise physiology) and psychology are also useful.
11. If I have questions before being accepted/admitted, who do I ask?
- Program administrator José Cruz-Torres processes the applications for sport psychology; if you have questions about the application, he can be reached at [jmcl1n@fsu.edu](mailto:jmcl1n@fsu.edu), or (850) 644-8792.
12. Who do I send my application materials to?
- Applications and all supplemental documents (e.g., transcripts, CV, letters of recommendation, personal statement, writing samples) are submitted online through

the application portal: <http://www.admissions.fsu.edu/>

### **Visiting:**

1. Do you have scheduled preview or interview days?
  - Yes, the College of Education Preview Graduate Programs Open House. To register for this visit (<http://education.fsu.edu/preview>).
2. When should I come to visit? What time of year/what events might be worth visiting for?
  - The best opportunity for visiting is the annual College of Education Preview event, described above, which is generally held in the second half of the Fall semester. This is an excellent time for prospective sport psychology master and doctoral students to interact with current students and faculty in the program and get a good idea of what it is like to be a student here. Other visits are always welcome, so please do contact José Cruz-Torres ([jmc11n@fsu.edu](mailto:jmc11n@fsu.edu); 850-644-8792 if you would like to visit; however, note that these visits will depend on the availability of students and faculty.
  - Occasionally, the Sport Psychology program hosts invited speakers and holds regional conferences, which provide great opportunities for prospective sport psychology students to interact with students, faculty, and various professionals in the field. Check in with master's program coordinator Dr. Brian Foster ([bjfoster@fsu.edu](mailto:bjfoster@fsu.edu)) for details of any upcoming events.
3. Is it better for me to visit before I apply or after I've been admitted?
  - Students often plan to visit before applying to see if the program is a good fit (e.g., location, professors, etc.). Once admitted, we suggest you plan a visit so that you can get to know the area in more detail and look for housing.
4. Who can I meet with when I visit? How do I schedule meetings with current students or faculty?
  - If you are unable to attend one of the events listed above, then the best place to start is <http://visit.fsu.edu/>. Here, you can schedule campus walking tours. Additionally, students typically e-mail the professor(s) they are most interested in working with and schedule meetings with them. Current students are also usually available to answer any questions and give you a tour of the Sport Psychology Lab.

### **Funding:**

1. Who gets assistantships?
  - Assistantships that are provided directly via our program are limited. However, some Ph.D. students have opportunities for teaching undergraduate courses in sport, exercise, and performance psychology. Assistantship opportunities for M.S. students are rare.
  - In addition, many students apply for and obtain assistantships outside of the program but the Sport Psychology program does not have control over these, so it is up to the student to seek such opportunities by contacting departments, colleges, and other

centers on campus. In the past, students who have started systematically searching for assistantships before arriving at the university have in some cases been successful in securing an assistantship.

2. How do I know what assistantships are available? How do I find assistantships being offered on campus?

- Assistantships vary depending on the college. The best way to find out what is out there is to contact the different departments and laboratories on campus and inquire on the availability of such funding. In the past, students have obtained assistantships in the Department of Psychology, FSU Career Center, and Learning Systems Institute, to provide just a few examples.
- Bryan Richards is the office manager for Educational Psychology and Learning Systems, which is home to the Sport Psychology graduate programs, and he processes appointments for students who become University employees and receive graduate assistantships and tuition waivers. He has no information about what assistantships are available in the program, college, or university and is not responsible for filling open positions or finding funding for students.

3. What does an assistantship cover? Do I get paid?

- An assistantship covers nine credits of tuition (not fees). In addition, students receive a stipend depending on the assistantship they have.

4. Besides assistantships, what funding opportunities are there (e.g., scholarships, fellowships, paid internships/practicums, financial aid, etc.)?

- The College of Education offers various funding opportunities students can apply for (<http://education.fsu.edu/student-resources/scholarships-and-aid>). You can find more information at the Office of Graduate Fellowships and Awards (<http://ogfa.fsu.edu/>)
- Many scholarships and fellowships require faculty recommendation (not student application) which is why we encourage early application to give faculty adequate time to review the application and put forth recommendations by mid-January (see Application question #1 above).

5. How do students manage to get funding in their first year?

- As described above, funding in the first year often depends on the ability of the student to find opportunities outside of the department and/or outside scholarships. However, some Ph.D. students (both international and domestic) will be able to teach one of our undergraduate Sport Psychology courses pending fulfillment of teaching prerequisites and thus will receive an assistantship.

### **The Student Experience:**

1. What does a typical day for a master's/doctoral student look like?

- Students in our program are very busy! Besides taking courses (2-3 per semester is standard), students often conduct research as part of a professor's research team and

for their individual thesis/dissertation project and are involved in supervised applied practicums where they work with team and individual clients. Also, Ph.D. students often teach undergraduate Sport Psychology courses.

2. How many years does it take to complete the M.S./Ph.D.?
  - M.S.-coursework track: 2 years
  - M.S.-thesis track: 2-3 years
  - Ph.D.: 3-5 years
3. How many students are in the M.S./Ph.D. programs?
  - This varies slightly each year, but a rough estimate is about 50 students in the M.S. program (25 accepted each year) and 15 students in the PhD program (3-6 accepted each year)
4. How similar is graduate school compared to undergraduate? What differences do you see?
  - While some aspects of graduate and undergraduate study are similar (e.g., taking courses and doing homework, making friends with classmates, attending sporting events), graduate school is different in other ways. For example, the age of students varies more than in undergraduate and graduate students do not typically live on campus.
  - Undergraduate programs are more general areas of study. In the Sport Psychology graduate program, you will take a series of quite specific courses such as applied sport psychology, cognitive processes in sport psychology, and stress and motor performance. Courses are typically offered once a week rather than 2-3 times, have fewer students, and involve considerable reading, presenting critiques of papers, and writing assignments.
  - As a graduate student, you will be expected to do more than attend class; you should plan on also participating in research groups and doing an applied practicum.
5. Are there international students in your program? What is their experience like?
  - We have a very diverse student population! Our students have come from the UK, France, China, Italy, Iran, South Korea, Denmark, Israel, Brazil, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Turkey, and Colombia, and more besides, as well as from across the 50 US states. Working with students from all over the world provides great learning experiences and opportunities.
  - Check out the Center for Global Engagement (<https://cge.fsu.edu/>) for international student information and to speak to someone about the international graduate student experience.
6. Besides taking courses, what is required for degree completion?
  - For the M.S.-thesis track and Ph.D., students are required to complete and defend a thesis/dissertation. M.S.- coursework track students are required to complete coursework.
7. What careers do students who graduate pursue? What job opportunities are out there?
  - Our alumni have careers in academia, private practice, the military, coaching and

athletic training, research companies, and with professional organizations such as the MLB. Opportunities depend on the interest and qualifications of the student.

- Note that our program provides a strong start towards achieving the Certified Mental Performance Consultant (CMPC) credential (often attained 1-3 years after MS degree completion or at the completion of a Ph.D.), however it does *not* lead to licensure, meaning students are not able to use the title “sport psychologist” upon graduation. However, many of our students combine our degree with a mental health / counseling degree that makes them highly competitive in the job market.

8. What opportunities are there for professional networking? How well are you introduced to, and integrated in the sport psychology field?

- Attending conferences is the great way to network. Our students attend and present at conferences such as AASP (Association for Applied Sport Psychology), NASPSPA (North American Society for Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity), APA Division 47 (American Psychological Association), FEPSAC (European Federation of Sport Psychology), and ISSP (International Society of Sport Psychology). Students also have the opportunity to serve as student representatives of these organizations, review conference presentation abstracts, or review manuscripts for publication. All these activities give students opportunities to meet and work with professionals in the field.
- We frequently invite experienced researchers and practitioners in the field to speak with our current students, and also occasionally host a conference here on campus; these are great opportunities to meet and network with professionals.

### **Professor/Advisor/Mentor Relationships:**

1. How/when will I be assigned a major advisor?

- M.S.: Dr. Brian Foster will serve as your major advisor. He will be your go-to contact at the university and his job as advisor is to offer you guidance so that you can be successful in your degree and beyond. For those approved for the MS thesis-track, the professor who advises you on your thesis also serves as your major advisor.
- Ph.D.: When applying to the program, you will be asked to choose an advisor. Your choice should be based on the match between your research interests and those of the professor.

2. How available are the professors for advising, meetings, and guidance?

- The professors have designated office hours for their courses and are commonly available for individual meetings by appointment

3. How often do the professors meet with graduate students?

- This primarily depends on the student and how often they request meetings. The professors are open to meet with students as many times as the student requests.

## **The Research Experience:**

1. Do you have research group meetings? What are they like?
  - Yes, our faculty will meet with students interested in research during the Fall and Spring semesters. These meetings will help you gain useful research experiences and build research skills. Many of our students have ended up as authors on research publications, presenting at conferences, and disseminating research findings to practitioners simply on the basis that they got involved in our research groups.
  - Research interests of sport psychology professors also can be found by taking a look at their individual CVs (click on the person's image on the page to view their CV): [http://education.fsu.edu/faculty-and-staff?sub\\_categories=45](http://education.fsu.edu/faculty-and-staff?sub_categories=45).
  - The Sport Psychology Colloquium runs bi-weekly and provides opportunities to present and learn about ongoing research, and serves as a plenum for sport psychology students to discuss research-related topics of their own interest.
2. Do you work on only your professor's research or can you pursue research interests of your own?
  - You are able to work on your professor's research and also have the opportunity to propose your own interests to the research group. Theses and dissertations are often guided by the student's personal interests under the supervision of a professor.
3. What are the research interests of current students?
  - Our students' research interests are diverse and cover a range of sport and exercise psychology topics including: acquisition of skilled and expert athlete performance; decision making in athletes, coaches, and referees; attention allocation; visual perception processes; effects of exercise on executive functioning; exercise adherence; ironic theory of motor tasks; using EEG to study burnout; athlete transition; choking; supervision practices in sport psychology; professional development of graduate sport psychology students; providing online sport psychology services; stigma reduction for seeking sport psychology services; intervention implementation; performance profiling; and mindfulness, just to name a few!
4. What opportunities are there for attending/presenting at conferences? What opportunities are there for getting published?
  - Our students attend and present at conferences such as AASP (Association for Applied Sport Psychology), NASPSPA (North American Society for Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity), APA Division 47 (American Psychological Association), FEPSAC (European Federation of Sport Psychology), and ISSP (International Society of Sport Psychology).
  - Students present and publish research from their thesis and dissertation projects as well as from research groups. If research is a priority, students have many opportunities to work on projects that will lead to presentations and publications.
5. Do you have a lab? How is that facility used?

- Our Sport Psychology Laboratory is located in the College of Education, Stone Building. The lab is primarily used as a space to conduct research projects, consult with clients, conduct workshops, and host classes. Students and faculty also use the lab for various meetings and as a workspace. Additionally, we provide the opportunity for students to become exposed to various technologies (e.g., biofeedback, mobile eye-tracking, motion analysis, DynavisionD2, etc.).
6. What opportunities are there for obtaining research grants?
- Our students apply for and have been awarded several different grants from various entities. APA offers opportunities for students to apply for a Dissertation Research Award (<https://www.apa.org/about/awards/scidir-dissertre.aspx>) and/or Early Graduate Student Researcher Award (<https://www.apa.org/about/awards/scistucoun-earlyre.aspx>). These grants range from \$1,000-\$5,000.
  - The NCAA offers a Graduate Student Research Grant Program, with research grants of up to \$7,500 awarded (<http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-graduate-student-research-grant-program>)
  - AASP also provides students with opportunities to apply for research and community outreach grants (\$250-\$5,000; <https://appliedsportpsych.org/resources/grants/>)
  - Much of the technology in our lab has been acquired by means of Florida State University technology grants that members in the Sport and Exercise Psychology Laboratory have applied for. Since 2012, lab members, led by program faculty have acquired over \$130,000 in technology grants.

### **Experiences of Consulting with Athletes and Sports Teams**

1. As a M.S./Ph.D. student, do I have a chance to work with athletes/teams?
- M.S.: There are good opportunities for students in the master's program for supervised applied experiences with athletes. Master's students shadow the applied work of advanced students during the first semester while also attending didactics, and serve as apprentices during the second semester. Following the shadowing and apprentice experience, as well as successful completion of core courses (e.g., Introduction to Sport Psychology, Applied Sport Psychology), master's students are eligible to begin actively consulting in their third semester in the program. Master's students must enroll in 1 credit of Field Lab Internship (EDF 5942) each semester they are involved in applied work as a shadow, apprentice, or consultant.
  - Ph.D.: There are good opportunities for students in the doctoral program for supervised applied experiences with athletes. Doctoral students typically shadow the applied work of advanced students during the first semester while also attending didactics and serve as apprentices during the second semester. Following the shadowing and apprentice experience as well as successful completion of core courses (e.g., Introduction to Sport Psychology, Applied Sport Psychology), doctoral students are eligible to begin consulting under the mentorship of an advanced doctoral student during the first year



of consulting. Depending on the doctoral student's prior academic and applied background, some exceptions to this process may apply upon supervisor approval. Doctoral students must enroll in at least 1 credit of Field Lab Internship (EDF 5942) each semester they are involved in applied work as a shadow, apprentice, or consultant.

2. Do you have applied internships? Are these free or paid?

- We do not offer internships; however, students can work with athletes as part of their applied work. These opportunities are provided to team and individual clients pro bono.

3. What certification/licensure can I get upon graduating from your program? Does your program provide the opportunity to meet all AASP Certified Mental Performance Consultant (CMPC) requirements?

- Students are not able to attain any psychology or counseling licensure or certification upon completion of the program; however, all courses required for CMPC are available at FSU to take. Doctoral students often attain many of the required 400 hours for CMPC. Master's students also have good opportunities to begin to build the required hours. More information on the CMPC certification can be found at: <https://appliedsportpsych.org/certification/>

### **FSU/Tallahassee:**

1. What is it like to live in Tallahassee? What do you like about FSU? What do students typically do on "days off"?

- Tallahassee is definitely a college town! Between FSU, Florida A&M University, and Tallahassee Community College, there are 75,000 students who live here. That means there are lots of social events, restaurants and nightlife, parks and rec fields, and a young, energetic vibe.
- By attending FSU, students have the opportunity and flexibility to work within a supportive environment and pursue their research and applied interests. We are a large university that offers plenty of social events and activities. Our students enjoy attending sporting events such as Football, Soccer, Track & Field, Volleyball, Baseball, etc., going bowling at the Union, or going to FSU's Reservation where you can relax by the lake, and go paddle boarding, canoeing, rock climbing, and through a ropes course. On days off, students also venture off campus and go to the beach, float nearby rivers, or bike or run on the many trails and paths throughout and near Tallahassee. The campus itself is beautiful, with many green spaces and Live Oak trees with Spanish Moss hanging from the branches, and is walkable and sees year-round sunshine! Enjoy!

2. Why did you choose FSU?

- Students have given the following reasons for choosing our program: renowned and respected faculty, reputation of the program in the field, having both research and applied opportunities, cutting edge technology for research and applied work, research

interests matching the professor's expertise, liking the campus and feel of FSU, cost of living being relatively low, collegiality and collaboration of students, and FSU's storied and successful sports teams.

3. Do you live on or off campus? Is it better to live closer to campus or is it okay to live a little further away? How much is typical for rent?

- Most students live off campus. There are no graduate-only housing options on campus. Parking on campus can be tricky, so many students choose to live close enough to campus so they can walk or bike to class. FSU has an extensive shuttle bus system that allows students to live further away from campus but not rely on finding parking. However, living further from campus and driving gives students more options for housing. You can expect to pay \$400-\$1000/month, depending on whether you have roommates and how many you have. Upon being admitted to the program, students will receive additional housing information and the contact information of other admitted students so housing options can be arranged before starting in the fall. Many students live with other sport psychology students to make friends, reduce costs, and benefit from mutual support and guidance as they move through the program.

### **Psychology/Counseling:**

1. Are there opportunities to receive a counseling degree in addition to the sport psychology degree? Can I dual-enroll? What kind of relationships are established with psychology/counseling?

- There are no opportunities to receive a counseling or psychology degree and no option to dual-enroll, However, Counseling and Psychological Services faculty often serve as thesis and dissertation committee members.

2. Do students typically get additional counseling or psychology degrees after finishing the master's?

- Many students seek additional degrees after graduating from our master's program. In addition to the Sport Psychology degree, our students have graduate degrees in Mental Health Counseling, Experimental Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Criminal Justice, Sport Management, Measurement & Statistics, Occupational Therapy, Exercise Physiology, and Sport Sciences.

3. Is the sport psychology program at FSU APA accredited?

- No, APA accreditation is for clinical and counseling psychology programs.

### **Useful links:**

#### **Sport Psychology Organizations**

- **Directory of Graduate Programs in Applied Sport Psychology**
  - <http://www.appliedsportpsych.org/publications/graduate-program-directory/>

- **Graduate Training and Career Possibilities in Exercise and Sport Psychology**
  - <http://www.apadivisions.org/division-47/about/resources/training.aspx>  
This link provides useful information about different educational and career paths in sport psychology.
- **Association for Applied Sport Psychology Certified Mental Performance Consultant**
  - <http://www.appliedsportpsych.org/certified-consultants/>
  - **AASP**
    - <http://www.appliedsportpsych.org/>
  - **NASPSPA**
    - <http://naspspa.com/>
  - **ISSP**
    - <http://www.issponline.org/>
  - **FEPSAC**
    - <http://www.fepsac.com/>

### **Florida State University**

- **FSU Graduate Sport Psychology Program Information**
  - <http://education.fsu.edu/degrees-and-programs/sport-psychology>
- **Admissions**
  - <http://admissions.fsu.edu/>
  - <https://dos.fsu.edu/newnole/>
- **Sport Psychology Laboratory**
  - [www.education.fsu.edu/splab](http://www.education.fsu.edu/splab)
- **Visit FSU**
  - <http://visit.fsu.edu/>
- **Center for Global Engagement (for international students)**
  - <https://cge.fsu.edu/>
- **Scholarships/Funding**
  - <http://education.fsu.edu/student-resources/scholarships-and-aid>
  - <http://financialaid.fsu.edu/>
  - <http://ogfa.fsu.edu/>
- **Tuition & Fees**
  - <http://controller.vpfa.fsu.edu/student-business/tuition-fees>
- **Athletics**
  - <http://www.seminoles.com/>
- **Oglesby Union** <https://union.fsu.edu/>
  - **Bookstore**
    - <http://www.bkstr.com/floridastatestore/shop/textbooks-and->

- course- materials
- **Student Government**
    - <http://sga.fsu.edu/>
  - **Libraries**
    - <https://www.lib.fsu.edu/>
  - **Career Services**
    - <http://education.fsu.edu/student-resources/career-services>
  - **Health & Wellness**
    - **Campus Rec**
      - <http://campusrec.fsu.edu/sports/facilities/rsp-map>
    - **Wellness Center/Thagard Health Center**
      - <http://uhs.fsu.edu/>
    - **University Counseling Center**
      - <http://counseling.fsu.edu/>
  - **College of Education Faculty & Staff**
    - <http://education.fsu.edu/faculty-and-staff>
  - **Tallahassee**
    - <http://www.visittallahassee.com>