

## Summary of Online Industrial/Organizational Psychology Programs

### *Committee*

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### *Introduction*

There has been a recent increase in the number of SIOP members who come from or teach in online I-O Psychology programs. These programs appear to be targeted at working professionals, and offer a convenient method of continuing one's studies. However, SIOP has little information about these programs: their content, curricula, faculty, and placement of students. A sub-committee of the SIOP Education was Training Committee was formed to learn more about the existing online MA and PhD programs.

### *Identification of Schools*

The SIOP database was searched to identify programs that offer distance education. Only four schools were identified (Capella, University of London, Kansas State University, and Saybrook). Thus, a broader search was needed. Two members of the committee did an internet search to identify all online programs that were at least related to I-O. Search terms included distance education, distance learning, online education and psychology, organization, and business. The two researchers identified a total of 29 schools. The differences between these diverse programs were too great to come to any meaningful insights, so only programs called Industrial/ Organizational Psychology or Organizational Psychology were included.

This left a total of 12 programs in 10 schools: Argosy, MA; Carlos Albizu University, MA; Capella, MS, PhD; Chicago School of Professional Psychology, MA; Colorado State University, MA; Kansas State University, MA; Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology, MA; Northcentral University, MA, PhD; University of Phoenix, PhD; Walden PhD.

### *Summary of Findings for Master's Programs*

*Program of study.* We investigated the number and types of courses needed to complete a Master's Degree in I-O. The Appendix includes the full information about each of the schools. Of the 8 programs offering Master's Degrees, the average number of credits needed for the degree was 40.25 ( $SD = 11.50$ ) and ranged from 30 credits to 65 credits. Although the number of credits appeared to differ greatly, the number of courses required in the programs was relatively consistent. The average number of courses was 11.50 ( $SD = 1.69$ ) and ranged from 10 courses to 14 courses. Half of the programs require 10 courses. Eight of the programs require at least one course in statistics, methods, or measurement. All of the schools offer some type of introduction to Industrial and/or Organizational Psychology. Otherwise, the curricula vary widely with some schools offering classical I-O topics such as Selection and Performance Appraisal and others offering more novel courses such as Consultation and Diversity. Seven of the programs require

some sort of capstone course, practicum, or internship experience. Only one school requires a comprehensive exam and only one school requires a written thesis.

*Faculty.* Because the schools are online, it is difficult to ascertain who exactly teaches which courses. Most schools ( $n = 6$ ) reported having a small number of core faculty ranging from 2 to 5 ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ). One school had 22 faculty members. Of the faculty, the average number of I-O faculty (either has a PhD in I-O or is a SIOP member) was 1.5 ( $SD = 1.38$ ). One school reported no I-O faculty and one reported 4 out of the 4 faculty were I-O. For two schools we could not obtain any information about the faculty.

#### *Summary of Findings for PhD Programs*

*Program of study.* We will report the same information for the 4 PhD programs (Appendix). The average number of credits needed for the degree was 106.75 ( $SD = 16.40$ ) and ranged from 88 credits to 121 credits. The average number of courses was 21.75 ( $SD = 8.85$ ) and ranged from 10 courses to 31 courses. All of the programs require at least one course in statistics, methods, or measurement. All of the schools offer some type of introduction to Industrial and/or Organizational Psychology. All four of the programs require a capstone course and dissertation. Three of the four schools require a Comprehensive Examination.

*Faculty.* We could only find information about the faculty of one of the PhD programs: Walden University. Of the 25 faculty in the program, 2 have I-O PhDs. The other schools provided no information about their faculty. This was the most surprising finding in the investigation. These two schools were called and requests were made to learn about the faculty. One school stated that they would send the information but did not. A representative from the other school stated that he was unsure if that information could be released to the public.

#### *Placement of Students*

Many of the programs were too new to have meaningful information about their graduates. In general, it appears that the programs are targeted at practitioners (rather than academics) and focus more on “O” than “I” practitioners. The various school websites mention that students from the programs often go on to become OD practitioners and Management Consultants. There was less evidence that students went into fields such as HR, staffing, etc. To gain more information about the ease of placement for students from online programs, we surveyed SIOP members.

*SIOP Survey.* We designed a short survey to examine attitudes toward graduates from online I-O programs. The survey was distributed online using Qualtrics Survey Software. The link and a short invitation to complete the survey were sent to representatives from 10 organizations. These organizations were selected because (a) each was recruiting I-O applicants on the SIOP website for at least one position, and (b) each provided the email address of a contact person who could complete the survey. Six responses were collected for a 60% response rate.

All responses were on a 1-5 scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Items have been reverse-scored in some cases so that higher scores indicate more positive evaluations of online-degree holders. Despite the small number of respondents, the five-item survey showed adequate reliability ( $\alpha =$

.87). Means and standard deviations are reported in the table below. In general, respondents indicated that they felt slightly negative (or neutral at best) toward online-degree holders.

Table 1 *Items, Means, and Standard Deviations*

| <i>Item</i>  | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--|----------|-----------|
| I would be comfortable hiring an I-O Psychologist who recently earned a graduate degree online.  | 3.00     | 0.89      |
| All other things being equal, I would have NO preference between two candidates for a position in my organization if one candidate had earned his/her I-O graduate degree online and the other candidate had earned his/her I-O graduate degree in a traditional, in-person program. | 2.33     | 0.82      |
| I tend to negatively evaluate a résumé if I notice that the applicant earned his or her graduate degree online. <b>(R)</b>   | 2.67     | 1.03      |
| In general, I would be concerned about hiring an I-O Psychologist with a graduate degree that was earned online. <b>(R)</b>  | 2.50     | 0.84      |
| I feel that there IS a meaningful difference in the quality of training that one receives in an online graduate degree program in I-O Psychology versus a traditional, in-person program in I-O Psychology. <b>(R)</b>   | 2.33     | 0.52      |

Note: (R) = Reverse-scored item

### *Conclusion*

In general, the committee found the schools to be very forthcoming with information about admission requirements, course requirements, and graduation requirements. Anecdotally, it sounds as if the schools are working hard to ensure high quality programs, while still meeting their budgets and meeting the needs of their students. The only query that was met with resistance related to the faculty who teach in the programs, which was difficult to find online or even over the phone. For at least two of the schools, a sales representative returned the investigator's phone call but could not tell her the number or backgrounds of the I-O faculty.

The committee has two main suggestions for the Executive Board. First, online programs should be contacted and invited to include their information in the SIOP listing of graduate programs, including information about and contact information for the faculty in online programs. This would not only serve interested parties, but would also be beneficial to the schools, themselves.

Second, the subcommittee suggests that the SIOP Executive Board establish a dialogue with the universities in this report, as a means to encourage them to follow the SIOP guidelines issued for Master's and Doctoral programs. Of the utmost importance are (1) faculty with appropriate degrees and experience and (2) standards for admission, curriculum design, grading, and graduation. We are in no way suggesting that the schools have not met standards in these areas. Indeed, we have not provided information about the curricula or faculty of standard I-O programs, so it is not possible to compare how the online curricula differ from more standard programs. This internal study was not designed to draw conclusions about the

effectiveness of online I-O programs. Instead, we hope that this report will serve as a basis to open a door with these programs, allowing SIOP to serve as a resource to them, and ensuring the continued quality of I-O education.

Appendix: Information about identified online I-O Graduate Training Programs' curricula and faculty

| <b><i>Argosy University MA in I-O Psychology</i></b> |   |
|--|---|
| Credits in program                                   | 39  |
| Courses in program                                   | 13  |
| Capstone/internship/practicum                        | Yes   |
| Comprehensive exam                                   | Yes   |
| Thesis   | No  |
| Faculty  | 4   |
| I-O PhD faculty                                      | 1   |
|  |   |
| Core Courses   | IO6300 -Professional Ethics and Legal Issues              |
|  | IO6301 -Research Methods in I-O Psychology                |
|  | IO6302 -Organizational Theory and Design                  |
|  | IO6303 -Organizational Behavior and Culture               |
|  | IO6304 -Organizational Development                        |
|  | IO6400-Applied Industrial Psychology                      |
|  | IO6401 -Performance Appraisal and Feedback                |
|  | I-O 6402 - Statistics for I-O Psychology                  |
|  | IO6440 -Organizational Consultation                       |
|  | IO6500 -Employee Selection, Placement, and Classification |
|  | IO6501 -Industrial and Organizational Assessment          |
|  | IO6502 -Organizational Leadership and Change              |
|  | IO6503 -Job and Task Analysis                             |

| <b><i>Carlos Albizu University MS in I-O Psychology</i></b> |  |
|---|--|
| Credits in program  | 48   |
| Courses in program  | 14   |
| Capstone/internship/practicum                               | Yes  |
| Comprehensive exam  | No   |
| Thesis  | No   |
| Faculty   | 22   |
| I-O PhD faculty   | 1 SIOP member but did not receive PhD in I-O   |
|   |  |
| Core Courses  | Attitude Theory  |
|   | Small Group Theory and Practice  |
|   | Research Methods   |
|   | I-O Statistics with Laboratory I   |
|   | Advanced Research Methods  |
|   | Foundations of I-O Psychology  |
|   | Two electives  |
| I-O Courses   | Personnel Psychology   |
|   | Psychological Assessment Techniques in the Org.  |
|   | Work Motivation  |
|   | Organizational Psychology  |
|   | Seminar I: Criterion Theory and Development (3 credits) or<br>Performance Appraisal and Feedback |
|   | Seminar II: Current Topics in I-O  |

| <b>Capella MS in Psychology I-O Specialization</b> |   |
|--|---|
| Credits in program                                 | 65  |
| Courses in program                                 | 13  |
| Capstone/internship/practicum                      | Yes   |
| Comprehensive exam                                 | No  |
| Thesis   | Yes   |
| Faculty  | ?   |
| I-O PhD faculty                                    | ?   |
|  |   |
| Core Courses                                       | PSY5002 - Orientation to Graduate Learning in Psychology                  |
|  | PSY7110 - History and Systems of Psychology                               |
|  | PSY7210 - Lifespan Development  |
|  | PSY7411 - Learning Theories in Psychology                                 |
|  | PSY7610 - Tests and Measurements  |
|  | PSY7620 - Inferential Statistics  |
|  | PSY7650 - Research Methods  |
| I-O Courses  | PSY8711 - Principles of Industrial/Organizational Psychology              |
|  | PSY8720 - Psychology of Leadership  |
|  | PSY8730 - Consultation Psychology   |
|  | PSY8740 - Psychology Practices in Personnel and Human Resource Management |
|  | PSY5201 - Integrative Project for Master's Degree in Psychology*          |
|  | One elective  |

| <i>Chicago School of Professional Psychology MA in Applied I-O Psychology</i> |  |
|---|--|
| Credits in program  | 30                                       |
| Courses in program  | 10                                       |
| Capstone/internship/practicum   | No                                       |
| Comprehensive exam  | No                                       |
| Thesis  | No                                       |
| Faculty   | 5  |
| I-O PhD faculty   | 1  |
|   |  |
| Core Courses  | EIO 510 Organizational Behavior          |
|   | EIO 511 Organizational Culture & Design  |
|   | EIO 555 Organizational Team Dynamics     |
|   | EIO 523 Employee Selection               |
|   | EIO 525 Management and Leadership        |
|   | EIO 522 Performance Management           |
|   | EIO 512 Organizational Consulting Skills |
| 3 Course specialization in one of the following:                              | Consumer Psychology                      |
|   | Workplace Diversity                      |
|   | Leadership for Healthcare Professionals  |
|   | Organizational Effectiveness             |



| <b><i>Colorado State University MA in I-O Psychology</i></b> |   |
|--|---|
| Credits in program   | 36  |
| Courses in program   | 12  |
| Capstone/internship/practicum                                | Yes   |
| Comprehensive exam   | No  |
| Thesis   | No  |
| Faculty  | 4   |
| I-O PhD faculty  | 4   |
|  |   |
| Core Courses   | PSY 605 – Applied Measurement Theory                                  |
|  | PSY 647 – Applied Industrial Psychology                               |
|  | PSY 648 – Applied Organizational Psychology                           |
|  | PSY 660 - Applied Cross-Cultural Industrial/Organizational Psychology |
|  | PSY 661 – Applied Organizational Development                          |
|  | PSY 662 – Applied Psychological Research Methods I                    |
|  | PSY 663 - Applied Psychological Research Methods II                   |
|  | PSY 665 – Applied Psychological Issues and Methods                    |
|  | PSY 666 – Succession Planning and Leadership Development              |
|  | PSY 667 – Competency Modeling and Criterion Development               |
|  | PSY 668 – Workforce Training and Development                          |
|  | PSY 669 – Capstone: Practicum and Skills Development                  |

| <i>Kansas State University MA in I-O Psychology</i> |  |
|---|--|
| Credits in program                                  | 38   |
| Courses in program                                  | 10   |
| Capstone/internship/practicum                       | Yes  |
| Comprehensive exam                                  | No   |
| Thesis  | No   |
| Faculty   | 2  |
| I-O PhD faculty                                     | 2  |
|   |  |
| Core Courses  | Introductory Seminar on Industrial/Organizational Psychology |
|   | Applied Research Methods I and II                            |
|   | Organizational Psychology                                    |
|   | Professional Problems Seminar on Ethical and Legal Issues    |
|   | Personnel Training   |
|   | Performance Appraisal  |
|   | Personnel Selection  |
|   | Practicum Research in Industrial/Organizational Psychology   |
|   | Practicum Report in Industrial/Organizational Psychology     |
|   | Practicum: Final Report in I/O Psychology                    |

| <i>Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology MA in Organizational Psychology*</i> |  |
|---|--|
| Credits in program  | 30   |
| Courses in program  | 10   |
| Capstone/internship/practicum   | Yes  |
| Comprehensive exam  | No*  |
| Thesis  | No*  |
| Faculty   | 5  |
| I-O PhD faculty   | 0*   |
|   |  |
| Core Courses  | Field Placement Course   |
|   | Organizational Behavior: The Individual and Team                       |
|   | Organizational Systems and Change Theory                               |
|   | Organizational Systems and Change Practices                            |
|   | Becoming a Practitioner and Use of the Self*                           |
|   | Assessment, Intervention, and Evaluation in Organizational Development |
|   | Leadership and Strategic Thinking in Organizational Change             |
|   | Diversity and the Global Workplace                                     |
|   | Capstone Course  |
|   | Proseminar   |

\*Per email of June 30, 2015, this institution has been renamed William James College. Additionally, the college has a comprehensive exam, requires a Master's thesis for an MA, and has 5 I-O psychologists on its faculty.

| <b><i>Northcentral University MA in Psychology Specialization in I-O</i></b> |   |
|--|---|
| Credits in program   | 36  |
| Courses in program   | 10  |
| Capstone/internship/practicum  | Yes   |
| Comprehensive exam   | No  |
| Thesis   | No  |
| Faculty  | ?   |
| I-O PhD faculty  | ?   |
|  |   |
| Core Courses   | PSY5101 Foundations for Graduate Study in Psychology                |
|  | PSY5003 History and Systems of Psychology                           |
|  | PSY5004 Professional Ethics, Law, and Psychology                    |
|  | PSY5005 Theories of Human Development and Functioning               |
|  | PSY5015 Social Psychology   |
|  | PSY5039 Research Design   |
|  | PSY5067 Physiological Psychology                                    |
| I-O Courses  | PSY5040 Applied Statistics  |
|  | IOP6005 Psychological Tests and Measurements (Prerequisite-PSY5040) |
|  | IOP6006 Organizational/Industrial Psychology                        |
|  | MGT5006 Organizational Behavior                                     |
|  | MGT5022 Organizational Development                                  |

| <b>Capella PhD in Psychology Industrial Organizational Specialization</b> |   |
|---|---|
| Credits in program  | 120   |
| Courses in program  | 25  |
| Capstone/internship/practicum   | Yes   |
| Comprehensive exam  | Yes   |
| Thesis  | Yes   |
| Faculty   | ?   |
| I-O PhD faculty   | ?   |
|   |   |
| Courses   | PSY8002 - Orientation to Doctoral Learning in Psychology                  |
|   | PSY7210 - Lifespan Development  |
|   | PSY7421 - Cognitive/Affective Psychology                                  |
|   | PSY7520 - Social Psychology   |
|   | PSY7543 - Ethics and Multicultural Issues in Psychology                   |
|   | PSY7610 - Tests and Measurements  |
|   | PSY7630 - Qualitative Analysis  |
|   | PSY7625 - Advanced Inferential Statistics                                 |
|   | PSY7656 - Advanced Research Methods                                       |
| I-O Courses   | PSY8711 - Principles of Industrial/Organizational Psychology              |
|   | PSY8720 - Psychology of Leadership  |
|   | PSY8730 - Consultation Psychology   |
|   | PSY8740 - Psychology Practices in Personnel and Human Resource Management |
|   | PSY8765 - Testing and Assessment in Workplace Psychology                  |
|   | PSY8768 - Theory and Practice of Psychological Coaching                   |
|   | PSY9919 - Doctoral Comprehensive Examination                              |
|   | PSY9920 - Dissertation Courseroom - non-credit                            |
|   | PSY9921 - Dissertation Research 1   |
|   | PSY9922 - Dissertation Research 2   |
|   | PSY9923 - Dissertation Research 3   |
|   | PSY9924 - Dissertation Research 4   |
| Industrial Concentration  | PSY7670 - Psychological Principles of Strategic Planning                  |
|   | PSY8785 - Compensation and Benefits Planning Psychology                   |
|   | PSY8780 - Psychology of Organizational Ergonomics...                      |
|   | PSY8790 - Workplace Safety and Health Psychology                          |
| Organizational Concentration  | PSY8770 - Psychology of Motivation and Performance                        |
|   | PSY7550 - Process of Professional Development                             |
|   | PSY7530 - Psychology of Group Dynamics                                    |
|   | PSY8721 - Introduction to Business Practices for Psychologists            |
| Coaching Concentration  | PSY7510 - Psychology of Personality                                       |
|   | PSY8770 - Psychology of Motivation and Performance                        |
|   | PSY8721 - Introduction to Business Practices for Psychologists            |
|   | PSY8160 - Strategies for Career and Life Planning                         |
| Consultation Concentration  | PSY7510 - Psychology of Personality                                       |
|   | PSY8770 - Psychology of Motivation and Performance                        |
|   | PSY7530 - Psychology of Group Dynamics                                    |
|   | PSY7670 - Psychological Principles of Strategic Planning                  |

| <b><i>Northcentral University PhD in Psychology Specialization in I-O</i></b> |   |
|---|---|
| Credits in program  | 51 (beyond MA – 88 total)                             |
| Courses in program  | 10  |
| Capstone/internship/practicum   | Yes   |
| Comprehensive exam  | No  |
| Dissertation  | Yes   |
| Faculty   | ?   |
| I-O PhD faculty   | ?   |
|   |   |
| Courses   | PSY7101 Foundations for Doctoral Study in Psychology  |
|   | PSY7039 Research Methods                              |
|   | PSY7240 Graduate Statistics                           |
|   | More...unknown  |
| I-O Courses   | IOP8005 Tests and Measurements                        |
|   | IOP8006 Advanced Topics in I-O Psychology             |
|   | MGT7006 Advanced Topics in Organizational Behavior    |
|   | MGT7022 Advanced Topics in Organizational Development |
|   | IOP8015 Multivariate Statistical Analysis             |

| <i>University of Phoenix PhD in Industrial Organizational Psychology</i> |   |
|--|---|
| Credits in program   | 98  |
| Courses in program   | 31  |
| Capstone/internship/practicum  | Yes   |
| Comprehensive exam   | Yes   |
| Dissertation   | Yes   |
| Faculty  | 1200  |
| I-O PhD faculty  | ?   |
|  |   |
| Courses  | PSYCH700 Introduction to I/O  |
|  | PSYCH701 History and Systems of Psychology                          |
|  | PSYCH702 Social Psychology  |
|  | PSYCH703 Personality Theories                                       |
|  | ORG714 Organizational Theory and Design                             |
|  | PSYCH704 Current and Future Topics                                  |
|  | RES731 Research Methods and Statistics in I/O (I)                   |
|  | RES732 Research Methods and Statistics for I/O (II)                 |
|  | RES733 Criterion Development, Performance Evaluation, and Appraisal |
|  | PSYCH705 Personnel Psychology                                       |
|  | RES741 (No additional course information)                           |
|  | PSYCH706 Human Performance, Assessment, and Feedback                |
|  | ORG730 Organization Development                                     |
|  | PSYCH707 Leadership and Management Theory                           |
|  | PSYCH708 (No additional course information)                         |
|  | PSYCH710 (No additional course information)                         |
|  | PSYCH720R (No additional course information)                        |
|  | RES751 (No additional course information)                           |
|  | PSYCH740 (No additional course information)                         |
|  | PSYCH750 (No additional course information)                         |
|  | RES760 (No additional course information)                           |
|  | PSYCH760R (No additional course information)                        |
|  | DOC735 (No additional course information)                           |
|  | RES765 (No additional course information)                           |
|  | PSYCH770 (No additional course information)                         |
|  | ELEC713 (No additional course information)                          |
|  | RES770 (No additional course information)                           |
|  | PSYCH799 (No additional course information)                         |
|  | DOC736A (No additional course information)                          |
|  | DOC737 (No additional course information)                           |
|  | DOC738A (No additional course information)                          |

| <b>Walden University PhD in Organizational Psychology</b> |   |
|---|---|
| Credits in program  | 121   |
| Courses in program  | 21  |
| Capstone/internship/practicum                             | Yes   |
| Comprehensive exam  | Yes   |
| Dissertation  | Yes   |
| Faculty   | 25  |
| I-O PhD faculty   | 2   |
|   |   |
| Core Courses  | Foundations for Graduate Study in Psychology  |
|   | History and Systems of Psychology             |
|   | Lifespan Development                          |
|   | Cognitive Psychology                          |
|   | Social Psychology                             |
|   | Statistics 1                                  |
|   | Research Design                               |
|   | Tests and Measurement                         |
|   | Statistics 2                                  |
|   | Psychology and Social Change                  |
|   | Ethics and Standards of Professional Practice |
| Industrial Courses  | Vocational Psychology and Counseling          |
|   | Personnel Psychology in the Workplace         |
| Organizational Courses                                    | Psychology of Organizational Behavior         |
|   | Leadership and the Process of Change          |
| Consultation Courses                                      | Psychological Consultation                    |
|   | Successful Practice Management                |
| Elective Courses  | Three additional classes                      |