

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. (R)	2.67	1.03
In general, I would be concerned about hiring an I-O Psychologist with a graduate degree that was earned online. (R)	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. (R)	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

<i>Argosy University MA in I-O Psychology</i>	
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

<i>Carlos Albizu University MS in I-O Psychology</i>	
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 Performance Appraisal and Feedback
	Seminar II: Current Topics in I-O

<i>Capella MS in Psychology I-O Specialization</i>	
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

<i>Colorado State University MA in I-O Psychology</i>	
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

Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology MA in Organizational Psychology	
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

<i>Northcentral University MA in Psychology Specialization in I-O</i>	
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

Capella PhD in Psychology Industrial Organizational Specialization	
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

<i>Northcentral University PhD in Psychology Specialization in I-O</i>	
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)

Walden University PhD in Organizational Psychology	
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