

Dear Prospective Student:

Thank you for your interest in the Prevention Science (PSC) Doctor of Social Science degree at Wilmington University. Applications for the PSC program are accepted from individuals who have a master’s degree from an accredited institution. The PSC program is available 100% online with virtual synchronous sessions per course. Cohorts begin twice per year in the Spring and Fall.

Completed applications are evaluated by a faculty committee with a particular emphasis on professional and educational experience, essay, and potential for academic success as indicated by graduate grade point averages. Applicants that are determined to be highly qualified are invited to an interview with the PSC program chair or PSC faculty member and complete several assessments. The assessments will focus on critical thinking and writing. After completing the interview and the assessments, an applicant will typically be informed within two weeks concerning acceptance into the program.

You are encouraged to submit your applications materials early so that you can follow-up in a timely manner if anything is missing or delayed in arrival at the Graduate Admissions Office.

This packet contains several important items:

* Program Mission Statement
* Application Instructions
* Frequently Asked Questions
* Statement of Goals (thought questions)

You are encouraged to review these materials carefully as you determine your interest in pursuing admission to the program.

If you need clarification of any information contained in this packet, please call Graduate Admissions at (302) 295-1184. Best wishes as you take the next step in your education.

Sincerely,

*Debra L. Berke*

Debra L. Berke, Ph.D., CFLE

Director, Psychology Programs

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# PSC Program Mission Statement

The Mission for the Doctor of Social Science in Prevention Science (PSC) is to prepare professionals for the emergent field of prevention science, a relatively new but rapidly growing interdisciplinary field concerned with the use of science to address problems, issues, and challenges pertaining to social and public health problems at the individual, familial, peer, community and societal levels.

Program hallmarks for preparation as a prevention scientist include:

* + The teaching of scholarly-based curricular knowledge related to prevention science theories, skills, and research;
  + An emphasis on promoting health and well-being and preventing adverse outcomes for individuals, families and communities by developing and implementing family-centered and/or strengths-based programming in response to the changing health needs of individuals, families, and communities;
  + The knowledge and skills to build relationships and work effectively with individuals, families, communities, and organizations from diverse backgrounds in culturally competent ways; and
  + The promotion of proficiency in oral and written communication, as well as critical thinking.

This doctoral degree is a 72-75 credit degree[[1]](#footnote-1)**.** Nine (9) of the 72-75 credits could include credits earned while completing a master’s degree at an accredited institution of higher education. Another hallmark of this program is experiential learning, a strong component of this degree.

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### WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY

**Doctor of Social Science in Prevention Science (PSC) APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Create an Admissions Portal Account at [www.wilmu.edu/apply](http://www.wilmu.edu/apply). Submit an application and supplemental items through the portal. You are able to track the status of all Admissions documents through the portal. Please allow 3-5 business days for the processing of applications and documents.

1. Have all **Official Transcripts** sent directly to the Graduate Admissions Office electronically to [admissions@wilmu.edu](mailto:admissions@wilmu.edu) or

### Wilmington University

**Office of Graduate Admissions Wilson Graduate Center**

**31 Read’s Way**

**New Castle, DE 19720**

1. **Three Letters of Recommendation** completed by professionals who can attest to an applicant's aptitude for doctoral-level study, openness to interdisciplinary learning, and professional self-development. Recommendations are to be requested through the Admissions Portal. Delayed recommendation forms/letters will hinder the admissions process. It is suggested you follow-up with your recommendation sources to be sure your recommendations are received in a timely manner.
2. Upload a copy of a current professional **Resume or Vitae** as either a PDF or Word document.
3. Thoughtfully complete your **Statement of Goals and Objectives** by answering the **Thought Questions**. Your answers must be typed and double spaced. Both the content of your answers and your ability to write are being evaluated, so proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling are important. Upload through the Admissions Portal as either a PDF or Word document.
4. Applicants are screened for admission to the PSC Program based on the potential to be successful academically as a graduate student and professionally as a prevention scientist. Candidate interviews are based on completed admissions documentation and the quality of the responses to the documentation. The admissions process is accomplished in two stages.

### Stage 1: Review of Application Materials

* 1. Undergraduate and graduate academic transcripts (3.0 GPA or higher is desired)
  2. Relevant professional/volunteer experience documented on the resume
  3. Three recommendation letters from individuals knowledgeable of an applicant’s abilities and potential for success
  4. Statement of goals and objectives as expressed on the thought questions

### Page 2 of 2 Applicants who successfully meet the screening criteria in Stage 1 are invited to interview in Stage 2.

**Stage 2: Interview**

All admissions materials must be complete and submitted by the application deadline for an applicant to be considered for an admissions interview. Interviews will be conducted either in person or using technology (e.g., Zoom/Skype).

1. All information is confidential. Information requested on race/ethnicity and gender is gathered to enable Wilmington University to comply with its Equal Opportunity obligations and will not be used to discriminate against individuals.
2. The PSC Program Admissions Committee reviews all application materials and interview information to determine a candidate’s fit for the PSC Program based on academic readiness, personal/professional experiences, and career goals. Decisions of the committee are final.

### QUESTIONS MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED BY PSC APPLICANTS

1. **What is the difference between a PhD and a Doctor of Social Science?**

A doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) is the most commonly awarded terminal research degree in the U.S. academic system. Research-focused programs are designed to prepare scientists and scholars, and focus heavily on scientific content and research methodology. PhD programs typically require an original research project and the completion and defense of a dissertation. The Doctor of Social Science is a professional degree (similar to a JD for a lawyer, an MD for a medical doctor, or an EdD for a high school administrator) designed to prepare professionals specifically in the field of social sciences. The two types of doctoral programs differ in their goals and competencies, and hence, their coursework. However, they represent complementary approaches to the highest level of preparation as both are considered terminal degrees in higher education.

1. **How long will it take me to complete the 39 credit hour program? What is the Course of Study and do I need to come to campus?**

The PSC Program has been designed for completion in 2 1/2 years or 7 semesters. Some of the courses are scheduled on a semester long (15-week) basis but the majority of the courses are scheduled in a block (7-week) format. The sequence for study is the same for **September** and **January** admission. The PSC program is available 100% online with no on-site requirements. Weekly virtual synchronous sessions are required during each course to facilitate interaction with the students and course faculty (date/time to be determined by the students/faculty). Students have the option to present their final project in person or virtually.

1. **Does my Master’s degree have to be in a social science, health science, or related field for consideration?**

No, but it is an advantage to have had course work in psychology, sociology, family science, social work, public health, or related fields as 9 credits of a master’s degree have the potential of counting towards the doctoral degree.

1. **Does the PSC Program accept transfer credits?**

A maximum of nine master’s or doctoral level credits may be transferred into the program in graduate courses that are deemed equivalent to the courses in the PSC program. These credits are reviewed on a case by case basis but generally require a graduate level research methods course in addition to two courses in relevant content, ideally one with “hands-on” experience, such as a practicum or internship.

1. **What areas will I be able to work after graduation?**

Students may continue to work in the same healthcare or social services areas where they are already employed. However, within the PSC program students will be exposed to a variety of other settings that can open new avenues of employment, e.g., government, education.

1. **What are the Guided Study courses?**

The Guided Study coursework is designed so that a student can explore an area of interest in which they may have had little/no exposure. The adult learner will, in collaboration with a PSC faculty member, design their own learning experiences.

1. **Is there financial aid available?**

Yes, a significant number of our students utilize the Guaranteed Student Loan, which is based on need. You can get an application from a local bank which processes the loan for the federal government. The University’s Financial Aid Office can provide you with information about their loan program. Many students have benefited from this low interest program.

**Doctor of Social Science in Prevention Science (PSC)**

**STATEMENT OF GOALS**

Please respond to the following statements. Use APA 7th edition writing standards. **The response should be a minimum of two full pages (8 ½ x 11) typed, with at least three citations/references.**

1. **Describe your professional and personal goals and how they relate to pursuing a doctoral degree and career in prevention science. Include in your essay how your professional and personal life experiences have developed your prevention competencies.**
2. **Describe a focus area of prevention and associated research you would like to pursue during the doctoral program. Include examples of evidence-based practices, models, and/or frameworks that are associated with the prevention interest.**

Since we do not require standardized test scores as a criteria for admissions, your responses to these questions will weigh significantly in the initial screening process. **Responses must meet the minimum of 2 pages to be considered.** Please give careful attention to the quality of the content, writing mechanics, and organization of thought.

Upload through the Admissions Portal as either a PDF or Word document.

**Example of a Degree Plan: M.S. Applied Family Science ->**

**D.Soc.Sci. Prevention Science**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Semester** | **B/S** | **Course ID** | **Course Name** |
| **1** | Block 1 | AFM 6620 | Research in Practice |
|  | Block 1 | AFM 6690 | Family Life Education |
|  | Block 2 | AFM 6630 | Family Dynamics |
|  |  |  |  |
| **2** | Block 1 | AFM 6650 | Family Resource Management |
|  | Block 1 | AFM 6660 | Sexuality Education |
|  | Block 2 | AFM 6640 | Families and Crisis |
|  |  |  |  |
| **3** | Block 1 | AFM 6680 | Legal, Ethical, and Policy Issues in Family Science |
|  | Block 2 | AFM 6670 | Parent Education |
|  | Semester | AFM 8100 | Practicum 1 |
|  |  |  |  |
| **4** | Block 1 | AFM 6610 | Human Development Across the Lifespan |
|  | Semester | AFM 8110 or AFM 8200 | Practicum II OR  Capstone Project in Family Life Education |
|  |  |  |  |
| **5** | Block 1 | PSC 7000 | Introduction to Prevention Science |
|  | Block 2 | PSC 7101 | Human Development and Prevention Science |
|  |  |  |  |
| **6** | Block 1 | PSC 7102 | Families and Prevention Science\* |
|  | Block 2 | PSC 7201 | Applied Research Methods and Skills 1: Qualitative |
|  |  |  |  |
| **7** | Block 1 | PSC 7103 | Community Well-Being and Prevention Science |
|  | Block 2 | PSC 7202 | Applied Research Methods and Skills 2: Quantitative |
|  |  |  |  |
| **8** | Block 1 | PSC 7104 | Designing and Adapting Preventive Interventions |
|  | Block 2 | PSC 7203 | Applied Mixed Methods Research |
|  |  |  |  |
| **9** | Semester | PSC 7301 | Guided Study |
|  | Semester | PSC 8000 | Applied Inquiry Project I |
|  |  |  |  |
| **10** | Semester | PSC 7302 | Guided Study |
|  | Semester | PSC 8001 | Applied Inquiry Project II |
|  |  |  |  |
| **11** | Semester | PSC 8002 | Applied Inquiry Project III |

**Total Time**: 33 Months **Total Credits**: 72

\*If a student brings in an approved family science course from their master’s program, they can choose another course from a select list of courses.

**Prevention Science Courses**

1. PSC 7000 Introduction to Prevention Science (3 credits)

This course provides an interdisciplinary overview to prevention theory, research, and practice. A common core of concepts, methods, and terminology is presented. Although topics vary, examples of issues covered in past courses include health risks such as malnutrition, school failure, delinquency, child abuse and neglect, and family and community-based interventions designed to counteract risk factors and promote healthy development. This course would be the prerequisite for all other courses.

2. PSC 7101 Human Development and Prevention Science (3 credits)

Interdisciplinary study of theories and research on human development across the lifespan with a focus on prevention science, risk, and resilience.

3. PSC 7102 Families and Prevention Science (3 credits)

Introduction to current theory and research about micro and macro forces related to family relationships and development through the life course with a focus on prevention science, risk, and resilience.

Prerequisite: PSC 7000 Introduction to Prevention Science

4. PSC 7103 Community Well-Being and Prevention Science (3 credits)

This course is designed to promote an understanding of the factors associated with healthy communities. It provides a comprehensive overview of the relevant skills and theories including: ecological/systems theory/models; community theories (sense of community, social capital, environmental psychology), critical social theory, social justice, and social determinants of wellbeing.

Prerequisite: PSC 7000 Introduction to Prevention Science

5. PSC 7104 Designing and Adapting Preventive Interventions (3 credits)

Analysis and development of program delivery systems, curricula and evaluation models. Innovative effective prevention and intervention programs from theoretical, applied, and outcome evaluation perspectives.

Prerequisite: PSC 7000 Introduction to Prevention Science

6. PSC 7301 Guided Study course ( could also use an existing course – e.g., DNP 7102)

7. PSC 7302 Guided Study course (could also use an existing course - e.g., DNP 7103)

8. Research core (12 credits)

1. Research course from Master’s program

2. PSC 7201 Applied Research Methods and Skills 1: Qualitative

Introduction to process of qualitative research and methods in prevention science; techniques of research, data collection, and data analysis procedures. Engages the student with a range of current qualitative data collection, display and analysis methods, and overviews basic quantitative methods for use in mixed mode studies. Highlights the strengths, limitations and conditions of quality for specific data collection and analysis methods in the context of particular research methodologies. Includes an exploration of software innovations that support digital data storage, display and analyses. Lastly, explores the principles of ethical research practice and guides students to incorporate ethics concerns into their research.

3. PSC 7202 Applied Research Methods and Skills 2: Quantitative

Introduction to process of quantitative research and methods in prevention science; techniques of research, data collection, and data analysis procedures. Includes an exploration of software innovations that support digital data storage, display and analyses. Lastly, explores the principles of ethical research practice and guides students to incorporate ethics concerns into their research.

4. PSC 7203 Applied Research Methods and Skills 3: Mixed Methods Research

An introduction to mixed methods research as a distinct methodology in prevention science research. Topics include the value and use of this approach, philosophical assumptions, various types of design, and approaches to designing and conducting mixed methods research. Highlights the strengths, limitations and conditions of quality for specific data collection and analysis methods in the context of particular research methodologies. Includes an exploration of software innovations that support digital data storage, display and analyses. Lastly, explores the principles of ethical research practice and guides students to incorporate ethics concerns into their research.

9. PSC 8000 Applied Inquiry Research (3 credits)

This course will provide the opportunity to apply existing theories and knowledge to address real-world issues. The Project Chair will guide the student in identifying a research question or questions that exist in the real world. Students will formulate a statement of the problem, a brief review of the literature, methods to be used, anticipated results, and potential implications of the project. Students will be prepared to verbally present their proposal to the Project Chair and project committee member(s) by the semester’s end.

10. PSC 8001 Applied Inquiry Research (3 credits)

Utilizing evidence based findings and practice inquiry skills, the student will synthesize and integrate newly acquired knowledge and skills in the implementation of their project. Prior to data collection or interventions, students will complete the National Institute of Health (NIH) course, "Protecting Human Research Participants", and produce a copy of their NIH-issued completion certificate. If applicable, the Project Chair will also guide the student through Wilmington University’s Human Subjects Review Committee. With received approval, students begin to implement their selected project.

Prerequisite(s): PSC 8000

11. PSC 8002 Applied Inquiry Research (3 credits)

Students continue to implement their project, prepare a scholarly paper for submission, measure outcomes, ensure sustainability of the project, and disseminate results. Students must present their work in a scholarly manner to colleagues and faculty. The completed project, presentation, and scholarly paper are required for completion of this course and subsequent graduation.

Prerequisite(s): PSC 8000 and PSC 8001

1. The total number of credits for this degree is determined by adding the total number of credits for the completed master’s degree + 39 additional credits for the doctorate. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)