

KINESIOLOGY: EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY, MS

This is a named option in the Kinesiology, MS. (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/kinesiology/kinesiology-ms/>)

For more information, please see our program website (<https://kinesiology.education.wisc.edu/academics/grad-program/>).

Exercise Psychology is the study of psychological responses and adaptations to acute and chronic physical activity. The graduate program at UW-Madison focuses on the psychobiological aspects of physical activity in both healthy and diseased populations. Research in the Exercise Psychology Laboratory has been generally concerned with quantifying the psychophysiological responses to exercise. Numerous behavioral methods have been used to determine affective and perceptual responses to exercise including the use of biofeedback, hypnosis, imagery, meditation, and traditional relaxation interventions such as autogenic training. More recently, the laboratory's focus has been on the psychophysiological aspects of pain, fatigue, and perceived exertion during and following exercise. These studies are being conducted in both healthy participants and patients with chronic pain and fatigue and are aimed at understanding the psychophysiological mechanisms that underlie the perceptual experience. Neuroimaging experiments using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) are also being conducted to determine neural responses related to pain, fatigue, and exercise.

Applicants for graduate study with specialization in exercise psychology are ordinarily only accepted where there is an interest in pursuing the PhD. Students in this area are trained in the theory and methods required for understanding the psychological and biological bases of behavior. Emphasis is placed upon the demonstration of competence in general psychology, exercise psychology, exercise science, statistics, and research design rather than completion of specific courses. Each candidate's program of formal coursework and independent study is tailored in a personalized manner to accommodate the individual's research and career goals.

This program is committed to providing graduate students with the best available training to prepare them for a variety of careers in academic, clinical, research, government, and other settings. Emphasis is on both extensive academic training in quantitative methods, kinesiology, and general psychology along with extensive research training in the area of exercise psychology. Students are expected to become creative scientists and to exhibit early and continuing commitment to research and scholarship. Most students have several publications in refereed journals to their credit before receiving their PhDs. While most of the graduates of this program are currently teaching and conducting research at the university level, some have elected to pursue clinical, administrative, and research careers in government, university, and commercial settings.