

BACKGROUND AND REQUEST

UNIVERSITY OF AKRON/CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY Joint Doctor of Philosophy In Adult Development and Aging

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This program clearly meets Regents' standards for graduate degree programs. The Regents' Advisory Committee on Graduate Study voted unanimous approval for reorganizing the existing Ph.D. program in Applied Cognitive Aging at the University of Akron into a Joint Ph.D. program in Adult Development and Aging between the University of Akron and Cleveland State University. There were no serious concerns raised in the review.

Request: The University of Akron and Cleveland State University seek approval for a Joint Doctor of Philosophy program in Adult Development and Aging degree.

Program Purpose/Mission: The proposed joint doctorate program maintains the strengths of the present Applied Cognitive Aging (ACA) program and the emphasis on aging, as well as broadens the program to include emotional, social, cognitive, psychophysiological health, and work areas across the entire adult life span. The increased breadth of the program is possible through the combined expertise and resources of UA and CSU and is an expected outcome of the Ohio Board of Regents' request for greater inter-university collaboration. The purpose of the proposed joint doctoral program in Adult Development and Aging is to train researchers who (a) will become expert in the subject of cognitive and behavioral functioning in adulthood and aging, (b) will convey existing knowledge through teaching and generate new knowledge through empirical investigation and analysis, and (c) will become involved with their communities in addressing issues of pressing social importance. The program is not designed to be a clinical or counseling psychology program. Instead, it is designed to train individuals to develop expertise in experimental neuropsychology and behavioral interventions that can improve cognitive and behavioral functioning in adulthood. Upon completion of the program, students will be able to conduct research in the cognitive, motor, perceptual, and social functioning of adults 18 years of age and older—with particular emphasis on individuals aged 60 years and older—in a variety of basic research and treatment settings. Graduates from the program will be competitive for faculty positions in teaching and research at four-year colleges, research universities, community colleges, and for research positions in applied health, rehabilitative, and adult development and aging facilities as well as in research institutes.

Enrollments: It is anticipated that two students per year, per institution, will be accepted into the program (a total of four new students per year), for a total of 16 students in the program after four years, and thereafter (assuming a four-year

graduation rate). The proposal's joint program is expected to attract significantly greater numbers of qualified applicants than has historically been the case for the ACA program.

Curriculum: The Program will train graduate students to generate new knowledge through research and to develop proficiency in teaching others (e.g., college and university students and individuals in the outside community) in this increasingly important area. The curriculum requirements will include courses at each institution covering research-based foundations in (a) adult development, information processing, social and contextual influences on behavior, psychophysiological/cognitive neuroscience issues, and motor control, and (b) assessment and maintenance of functioning. In addition, the curriculum will include substantial coursework in research methodology and advanced statistics. The Program will offer much of the same coursework that has been offered in the ACA program, but it will greatly expand the current offerings. The curriculum includes 94 credit hours of coursework, thesis, comprehensive exams, and dissertation. The 94 hours of coursework will be a requirement for both students entering with a terminal bachelor's or master's degree.

Faculty, Facilities and Resources: The academic strength of the proposed joint program is substantial. There will be ten full-time core faculty members who will contribute to the program, and ten full-time ancillary faculty members who will contribute to the program. Of these twenty program contributors, ten hold the rank of Professor; four hold the rank of Associate Professor, and six hold the rank of Assistant Professor. The Program will be operated jointly and equally by the Department of Psychology in CSU's College of Science and the Department of Psychology in UA's Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences. The Program will utilize the resources of both campuses, with approximately half of the courses offered at each locale. The instructors, locations, and frequency of all courses will be determined by the two Program Directors and/or Program Committees. The existing facilities and support staff in both departments are sufficient to support the administrative, teaching and research activities of a small doctoral program.

Evidence of Need: The proposed program with its emphasis on integrating cognitive, emotional and social processes in young and middle-aged adults and how this affects later development would be unique in Ohio. The combined emphases of cognitive, emotional, psychophysiological and social factors of earlier adulthood and how they affect psychological aging in a state with such a large number of older adults (individuals over the age of 60) but so few doctoral programs with expertise in this area is needed now, and will be needed even more in the near future with the baby-boom generation reaching 60 years of age and beyond. While there are other Gerontology doctoral programs in Ohio (e.g., the Scripps program at Miami University), these are offered out of Sociology departments that emphasize more of a social perspective. The proposed program will still examine the social perspective, but it is

just one of several perspectives (e.g., cognitive, emotional, behavioral, neuropsychological) that will be used. The psychological perspective addressed in this program is designed to integrate the behavioral, neural, emotional and social perspectives that will result in a synergy that will make this program unique.