Rehabilitation and Participation Science

The Rehabilitation and Participation Science (RAPS) PhD program aims to develop rehabilitation scientists whose research questions are chosen based explicitly on their potential to generate fundamental knowledge that will enhance health, improve quality of life, and reduce illness and disability. Our doctoral model is based on that of mentored research, wherein students devote the majority of their time to research activities beginning in the first semester and become increasingly independent. Students may choose rehabilitation scientists as mentors who will help focus their study in rehabilitation neuroscience, pediatric rehabilitation, outcome science, community health or productive aging.

This program is designed to be completed in four to five years of full-time study. The maximum time allowed for completion is seven years, and there is no provision for part-time study. A tuition stipend and fellowship is provided for up to five years. Graduates of the RAPS PhD program will be prepared for careers as academic research scientists.

Contact:
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Faculty
Chair
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Elias Michael Director and Professor of Occupational Therapy, Neurology, and Social Work
PhD, Washington University

Associate Professors
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Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy, Medicine, Pediatrics, Surgery (Prevention and Medicine) and Education
MD, University of Missouri
MPH, Saint Louis University
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Assistant Professors
Erin Foster
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PhD, Washington University School of Medicine, Program in Physical Therapy

Benjamin Philip
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PhD, Brown University

Bobbi Pineda
Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy and Pediatrics
PhD, University of Florida

Alex Wong
Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy and Neurology
PhD, Hong Kong Polytechnic University
DPhil, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Degree Requirements
PhD in Rehabilitation and Participation Science

Applicant Background
Students pursue the RAPS PhD degree because of their desire to generate knowledge to improve rehabilitation practices and thus peoples’ lives through participation. Students with a clinical degree at the bachelor’s, master’s or doctoral level are welcome to apply. Prior research experience is strongly encouraged.

Curriculum
Students must complete core courses, electives to enhance their learning, research in their mentor’s laboratory, a qualifying exam and a dissertation. Prior graduate courses that explicitly meet the program requirements may be considered (syllabus must be submitted for review and approval of the RAPS PhD chair).
All RAPS PhD students will join faculty in a biweekly seminar where faculty and student research is presented and discussed. Presentations will also be made by Washington University faculty and visiting professors who will be invited to spend time with faculty and students.

**Core Courses**

- Theories, Models and Classifications of Rehabilitation and Participation Science (RAPS, 3 units)
- Biopsychosocial Factors Affecting Performance (RAPS, 3 units)
- Environmental Factors and Participation (RAPS, 3 units)
- Measurement Theory and Development (RAPS, 3 units)
- RAPS Seminar (RAPS, 1 unit)

Additional courses will be required in research design methods and graduate statistics.

**Research Units**

It is expected that all students will be involved in research beginning in their first semester and continuing through completion of the degree. Prior to completion of courses and the qualifying exam, each student is expected to spend at least 15 to 20 hours per week actively engaged in research. After passing the qualifying exam, students are expected to focus full-time on their dissertation and other research projects. It is anticipated that these efforts will lead to refereed publications and the student becoming an independent scientist.