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# Psychology Graduate Guidelines

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2016

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## Psychology Graduate Guidelines

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The following are the rules and guidelines for all Psychology Department graduate students. You are responsible for having knowledge of and following these rules. **Violating any departmental or Graduate School rule can result in a loss of funding and/or possible termination from the program.**

### General Rules and Guidelines:

- 1) You are responsible for adhering to the rules listed in:
  - The Graduate School's Regulations, which are available online in the [Graduate School's Catalog](#).
  - The Psychology Department Graduate Student Guidelines (which you are now reading), is issued by the Department of Psychology and contains rules applying to all psychology graduate students.
  - Your specialty area handbook/checklist (if applicable), is issued by the Department of Psychology and contains additional rules specific to the student's sub-area of psychology. You can view this handbook on the [LSU Psychology website](#).
  
- 2) You are responsible for maintaining frequent communication with the department during your enrollment in the Ph.D. program. Thus, you are responsible for informing the department of your current contact information; including email, telephone numbers and address.
  - When problems arise, the faster we are able to find you, the faster the problem can be resolved. Expediting contact with you can be very important with time-sensitive issues.
  - Provide a working email address. Full mailboxes and/or closed email accounts do not allow you to receive necessary information. The Graduate Coordinator sends out numerous emails throughout the year with notices of new information and/or reminders of deadlines, rules and other important information to students.
  - Occasionally, new rules are implemented during or between semesters that will not be found in the books you have received. You will be informed of any changes via email.
  - If you are not able to receive email for any reason, contact the Graduate Coordinator immediately so that other arrangements can be made.
  - There are mailboxes for the graduate students in the Psychology Office (Room 236). Staff and faculty members will frequently place mail in them for you. The mailboxes are organized by last name. (All students with a last name beginning with "A" will find their mail in the box marked "A" etc.) Please be courteous to the other students and check your mail on a regular basis. No one wants to constantly sort through your mail to get his or her own.
  
- 3) If you have questions about the rules or what step to take next, read the information you have been given. If you are still unsure after reading it, contact your advisor (for academic/research matters, etc.) or the Graduate Coordinator (forms, deadlines, etc.). This handbook and the Graduate School's catalog entries, along with links to the Graduate School website and Graduate School forms are also available on the [Psychology Departmental](#) website

- 4) Your professors are not always available during the summer. It is possible that you will be unable to hold a meeting (proposals, defenses, exams, etc.) during the summer, so plan accordingly.
- 5) The terms “successfully propose,” “successfully defend” or “successfully pass” an exam mean that you have your necessary paperwork (forms differ for each exam) signed as “passed” by your committee.
- 6) You may qualify for travel reimbursement to attend a conference/meeting. It is your responsibility to apply at least 3 weeks prior to the trip and to turn in all completed paperwork in a timely manner. Please see the departmental accountant (Marla) for rules and forms.
- 7) You are not allowed to propose and defend your thesis or dissertation during the same semester. If approved by your advisor, you may schedule the general exam and the dissertation proposal during the same semester. A semester begins on the first day of orientation. The day prior to graduation is the final day of the semester for these major exams.
- 8) If you have earned a master’s degree in psychology from another university, you may submit your thesis to the department for possible acceptance of the department’s master’s thesis requirement. Please bring a copy of your thesis to the director of your discipline. Once the proper faculty members have reviewed the document, you will be informed of their decision. Please obtain the signatures on the Thesis Waiver Form, which can be obtained from the Graduate Coordinator to document the acceptance of your thesis, and turn the completed form in to the Graduate Coordinator.
- 9) Any student with a grievance is eligible to appeal the issue at hand. The guidelines for the appeals process are described in LSU Policy Statement 48. Individual program areas may have a specific grievance policy. Please see your area head if you have any questions or concerns.
- 10) Any graduate student wishing to be appointed as an instructor of record on a graduate assistantship must fulfill the following requirements to apply:
  - ✓ Earned their master’s degree prior to the beginning of the appointment.
  - ✓ Provided the Graduate Coordinator with an official transcript indicating your master’s degree, even if from LSU.
  - ✓ Completed PSYC 7990, Teaching of Psychology, or receive written approval for an equivalent course at another university.
  - ✓ Enroll in the Teaching of Psychology Practicum, PSYC 7690 while teaching the class.
- 11) The Department of Psychology expects the highest ethical and professional behavior from all graduate students at all times. This includes adhering to the LSU Code of Student Conduct as well as the APA’s Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. Unethical or improper behavior (on or off campus) may warrant disciplinary action by the department and/or the university.

**Graduate School Information:**

1. The department is your liaison to the Graduate School. If you have questions or concerns, call or email the Graduate Coordinator. Please do not initiate contact with the Graduate School. If you are contacted directly by the Graduate School, feel free to respond to them directly, otherwise, talk to the Psychology Graduate Coordinator first. You should never send/bring any documents/forms directly to the Graduate School (only exceptions are the final thesis and final dissertation). The department must submit all paperwork. Although this sounds inconvenient, it is for your protection.
2. You must be registered continuously for at least 3 credit hours each regular semester. The Graduate School considers the Spring and Fall semesters as “regular semesters” but not the Summer.
3. You must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better (cumulative and semester GPA) to remain “in good standing” with the Graduate School. The first semester your GPA is below 3.0, you will be placed on academic probation. Academic probation is NOT considered “in good standing.” While on academic probation, you are not eligible for funding of any kind. If after one semester of academic probation, your cumulative and semester GPAs are not 3.0 or better, you will be terminated from the university.
4. If you are the recipient of an assistantship, you must secure written permission to work additional hours outside of that assistantship. The additional work must be related to your education to merit approval. If you wish to apply for additional compensation, contact the Graduate Coordinator. She will need to know where you will be working, what services you will provide, how many hours per week you will be working, as well as your beginning and ending date for that commitment. She will then file the appropriate paperwork to request permission be granted.

**Core Statistics and Methodology Courses:**

Satisfactory completion of core statistics and methodology courses is required to qualify for advanced doctoral study. Satisfactory completion constitutes passing the required courses with a grade of at least a B- by the end of your 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the program. Each course is generally offered once a year. If you have taken a course that you feel is similar in content to one of these courses, please see the Graduate Coordinator to obtain a Course Waiver Form. You will need to discuss this with your major professor, the instructor of the course, and the area head. Be aware that this waived course will not show up on your transcript. You may waive up to 12 credits total.

**Core Statistics and Methodology Courses**

Intermediate Statistics (PSYC 4111)

OR

Advanced Statistics (PSYC 7111)

AND

Methodology and Research (PSYC 7117)

OR

Measurement of Behavior (PSYC 7020)

Note: Measurement of Behavior (PSYC 7020) may be required in certain program areas (see program-specific handbooks for more details), but it is not required within the first two years if you successfully complete or waive PSYC 7117.

### **Required Content Courses:**

Satisfactory completion of the required content courses is another component of the PhD. Satisfactory completion constitutes passing the required courses with a grade of at least a B- (“B minus”) by the end of your 4<sup>th</sup> year in the program, or prior to degree completion, whichever comes first. Each course is generally offered yearly. See section above for details on course waivers.

#### **Required Content Courses**

Biological Basis of Behavior (Psyc 7034)  
 Cognitive Basis of Behavior (Psyc 7030)  
 Social Basis of Behavior (Psyc 7040)  
 History of Modern Psychology (Psyc 4008)

**If you do not complete or waive the courses with satisfactory grades within 4 years, you will be dismissed from the program.**

**Any student failing more than one core course on the first attempt will be dismissed from the program.**

### **First Year Project:**

For Cognitive and Brain Sciences students only. Please see “Cognitive and Brain Sciences Psychology Graduate Student Checklist” for additional information. Please see the Graduate Coordinator for the necessary form once you have completed your project.

### **Thesis/Master’s Degree:**

Students earn a Master’s degree en route to the Ph.D. degree at LSU, or come in with a Master’s degree from another university. To obtain this degree, you must fulfill the Graduate School requirements, including writing a thesis and passing a comprehensive final examination.

- 1) Deadlines/Timeline: You are to consult with your major professor in regards to forming your committee and report the names of the committee to the Graduate Coordinator, in writing, at least 3 weeks prior to the proposal meeting.

You should successfully propose your thesis by the end of your 3<sup>rd</sup> semester. You **MUST** propose your thesis by the 10<sup>th</sup> class day of your 4<sup>th</sup> semester & you must successfully pass your proposal by April 1 of your 4<sup>th</sup> semester. You must successfully defend your thesis by the end of your 5<sup>th</sup> semester (the day prior to commencement). Failure to comply with these guidelines & deadlines will result in loss of financial support for at least 1 semester. In addition, you may be terminated from the program at the program area’s faculty discretion.

Consult with the Graduate Coordinator for the necessary paperwork for your proposal. Via the Graduate Coordinator, you must apply to the Graduate School for your defense meeting (form: Request For Master’s Exam and Degree Audit) at least 3 weeks prior to your meeting. Other deadlines may apply if you plan on graduating the semester you defend. See the Graduate School calendar for those dates. Please also see “Graduation Time Limits” on page 10 for more details.

- 1) Degree Audit: This document represents your individualized degree program. You will list the classes you have taken as well as the classes you intend on taking. It will be your contract between yourself and the department of your requirements to obtain your doctoral degree. Please do your best to get the information on this form correct. If changes are required, the Graduate School requires another form to be completed. No one wants additional paperwork. The Degree Audit and Change of Degree Audit forms can be downloaded from the Graduate School website under [“Enrolled Student Forms.”](#)
- 2) Registration Rules: You must register for thesis hours (PSYC 8000) any semester you are working on the project. This would include the semester you propose and the semester you defend as well as the semester you submit your document to the Graduate School. You must have a minimum total of 6 thesis credit hours to defend your thesis.
- 3) Committee: Your committee must have at least 3 members. Your committee chair is your major professor. At least 2 members of your committee must be from your specialty area & 1 member must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty. The 3<sup>rd</sup> member should be from the Psychology department or a department pertinent to the project. Any changes to the committee for any reason are to be reported to the Graduate Coordinator, in writing, immediately. All committees are subject to approval by the department chair.
- 4) Thesis Waiver: If you have earned a master’s degree in Psychology from another university, you may submit your thesis to the department for possible acceptance of the department’s master’s thesis requirement. You may obtain a thesis waiver request form from the Graduate Coordinator. For your thesis requirement to be waived requires the approval of your major professor, Director of Clinical Training, and Director of Graduate Training. You will provide your major professor with your thesis and once approved the document and waiver form will be reviewed by the Director of Clinical Training followed by the Director of Graduate Training.

5) General Information: There are three possible outcomes during the master’s thesis defense meeting: P (Pass), F (Fail), and R (Retake). The grade must be filed within two weeks of the scheduled exam date, and failure to turn in a grade defaults to an F. If a student passes (P) and revisions are needed, and can be completed within two weeks of the scheduled exam date, then a grade of P may be assigned. However, if revisions are needed that take longer than two weeks to complete, a grade of R (Retake) must be assigned. If a grade of R is assigned, a full committee meeting must be scheduled for the Retake attempt to occur. If a grade of F is assigned, the result is that the student will be terminated from the program. The student has the right to petition for reconsideration.

You cannot submit your final thesis to the Graduate School editor until the semester you graduate (continued on page 7).

You will need to find an agreeable time and date for you and your committee members. You and your committee members are to schedule proposal and defense meetings for a minimum of 90 minutes. Once this has been done, immediately inform the Graduate Coordinator of the date and time of your meeting. She will help you with booking a room, if

needed, and the necessary equipment (computer and projector for PowerPoint presentations, etc.).

### **Intermediate/Middle Project:**

A research project, under the direction of a faculty research supervisor (who may or may not be your major professor) is required for Cognitive and Brain Sciences, and may be required for Industrial/Organizational students if not completing an internship. Course credit for this project will be obtained by signing up for independent research hours in the related area.

Please see your specialty area checklist/handbook for additional information.

Please see the Graduate Coordinator for the necessary form once you have completed your project.

Timelines: You can perform this research any time after earning your master's degree. You are not allowed to attempt the General Exam until completion of this project.

### **Minor (if applicable):**

You should discuss the requirements for their Minor Degree with your Minor professor. Once the requirements are agreed upon, the requirements should be put in writing and signed by both the Minor Professor and yourself to show what you have agreed on. You should give this written agreement to the Graduate Coordinator. Depending on minor field, you are usually required to complete a minimum of 9-12 credit hours for your minor. Generally 4 classes are taken, or 3 classes and a project, to meet this requirement.

### **General Exam:**

The General Exam is a comprehensive examination required of every doctoral student. This is a written and oral exam. If a minor is to be earned, the minor professor is to participate in all aspects of the General Exam. Clinical and School students, check your handbook or the web site for additional information/rules for this exam.

- 1) Deadlines/Timeline: This exam is generally taken by 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4th year students. Please see your area specific guidelines. Clinical students will submit proper paperwork as listed in the Clinical Psychology Graduate Student Checklist.

You must apply to the Graduate School at least 3 weeks prior to the exam (Form: Request for Doctoral General or Final Examination and Degree Audit). Clinical students must pass the General Exam by November 1 to be eligible for internship the following Summer or Fall. You cannot attempt the General Exam until you have successfully completed your Intermediate Project (if required) and the Graduate School has approved your Degree Audit. You cannot defend your dissertation until 3 calendar months after passing your General Examination. Please check your specific handbook for more explicit guidelines regarding your dissertation proposal, as some areas may be a bit different in terms of the order of each milestone.

- 2) Committee: Your committee will consist of at least 4 members: your major professor, and your minor professor (if applicable). See your area specific handbook for more specific information. At least 1 committee member must be from your specialty area and at least 2 members must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty. The Graduate School will appoint your 4th member, your Dean's Representative, for your defense meeting (the



Graduate School will make sure this person is available for the date and time of your meeting/exam). This person is also assigned to your future dissertation committee. Any changes to the committee for any reason must be approved by your committee chair and are to be reported to the Graduate Coordinator, in writing, immediately. All committees are subject to approval by the department chair.

3) General Information: Only one dissenting vote is allowed for a student to successfully pass the General Exam regardless of the number of committee members. The same outcomes that apply to the Master's thesis defense apply here, grades of Pass (P), Fail (F), and Retake (R).

A grade of P indicates that the student has successfully passed the entire exam and is not required to retake any or all of the exam.

A grade of F indicates that the student has failed the entire exam and is not permitted to retake any or all of the exam. An F results in the student being terminated from the program at the end of the regular semester in which the exam is taken. The committee is required to provide the student feedback on why the exam was failed.

An R indicates that the student has failed part or all of the exam and will be permitted to take part or all of the exam one additional time. The committee will provide the student feedback on the specific weaknesses that should be corrected. The committee determines when the retake will be given, but it must be completed no later than the end of the next regular semester. For the exam retake, the only grades that can be reported are P or F.

The student has the right to petition for reconsideration.

You and your committee members are to schedule this meeting for a minimum of 2 hours. Once this has been done, immediately inform the Graduate Coordinator of the date and time of your meeting. She will help you with booking a room and the necessary equipment (computer and projector for PowerPoint presentations, etc.).

## **Internship:**

Internships are required for all Clinical and School students.

1) Timeline: Students generally go on internship their 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> year in the program. Clinical students must have passed their General Exam no later than November 1 previous to their Summer or Fall internship.

2) Registration Rules: Internships are to last 1 calendar year for clinical students and 1 academic year for school students. You must have a total of 15 internship credit hours for a completed internship. Typical registration looks like:

- Fall & Spring semesters: 6 internship hours, 2 dissertation hours
- Summer: 3 internship hours, 2 dissertation hours

The Graduate School will waive tuition (up to 8 credit hours in the regular semester & 5 in the Summer) while you are on internship. If you are receiving student loans, it is your responsibility to find out what the financial institution's requirements are for registration. Your financial institution may require you to register full time.

3) General Information: You MUST inform the Graduate Coordinator that you have applied for internship. When accepted, you must give the Graduate Coordinator a copy of your

acceptance letter as soon as possible. If she does not have the proper information, she will not be able to pass it on to the proper people. If your clinical internship is completed by July 31, and all other qualifications are met, you may graduate in that Summer. If your internship is not completed by July 31, you are not eligible to graduate until the Fall semester. Please see your specific handbook for more complete information related to completion of internship before graduating.

### **Dissertation:**

All doctoral students must fulfill the Graduate School requirement of completing a written dissertation with an oral defense.

- 1) Deadlines/Timeline: You cannot defend your dissertation for 3 calendar months after passing your General Exam. You are to consult with your major professor in regards to forming your dissertation committee and report the names to the Graduate Coordinator, in writing, at least 3 weeks prior to the exam.

Most students generally propose in their 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> year. Most students generally defend in their 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> year. You will need to see the Graduate Coordinator for the necessary paperwork for your proposal. You must apply to the Graduate School for your defense meeting (form: Request For Doctoral General or Final Examination) at least 3 weeks prior to your meeting. Other deadlines may apply to graduate the semester you defend. See the Graduate School calendar for those dates. Please also see “Graduation Time Limits” on page 10.

- 2) Registration Rules: You must register for dissertation hours (PSYC 9000) any semester you are working on the project. This would include the semester you propose and the semester you defend, as well as the semester you submit your document if different than the semester you defend your dissertation. (If you are registered as “degree only”\* you are not eligible to meet with the editor.) You must have a minimum total of 12 dissertation credit hours to defend your dissertation.

\*From the Graduate Catalog regarding “degree only” registration: Students who have completed all degree requirements, including final examinations taken in a previous semester, may register for “degree only” and pay only the graduation fee. “Degree only” registration is only allowed for students whose dissertations are submitted to the Graduate School one week prior to the last day to add courses for credit and are approved by the Graduate School no later than the last day to add courses for credit. Eligible students must submit an application for degree and inform the Graduate School of their intent to register for “degree only.”

- 3) Committee: Your committee must have at least 4 members. Your chair is your major professor. Your previously appointed Dean’s Representative, minor professor (if applicable) and 1 (2 if no minor professor) other member should be faculty from the Psychology department or a department pertinent to the project. At least 2 committee members must be from your specialty area and at least 2 must be full members of the Graduate Faculty. As a departmental rule and as a courtesy, you are to invite the Dean’s Representative to your proposal meeting. You are to accommodate him/her as well as the remaining members of your committee when scheduling the proposal. The Dean’s Rep

must attend the defense meeting. Any changes to the committee must be approved by your committee chair and reported to the Graduate Coordinator, in writing, immediately. All committees are subject to approval by the department chair.

- 4) **General Information:** You may not submit your final dissertation to the Graduate School editor until the semester you graduate.

You will need to find an agreeable time and date for you and your committee members. Then, immediately inform the Graduate Coordinator of the date and time of your meeting. She will help you with booking a room and the necessary equipment (computer and projector for PowerPoint presentations, etc.).

You and your committee members are to schedule the proposal and defense meetings for a minimum of 2 hours.

Only one dissenting vote is allowed for a student to successfully pass the dissertation proposal or defense regardless of the number of committee members. In the event the defense exam is failed, you will be dismissed from the program. The committee must provide feedback regarding the decision.

A grade of R indicates that the student has not successfully completed or defended the thesis or dissertation and that additional work, which may include a second oral defense, is required and permitted. The committee will provide specific feedback on the remaining requirements. The final grade, P or F, filed with the Graduate School by the end of the next regular semester. For an exam retake, the only grades that can be reported are P or F.

It is the responsibility of the student to schedule the final defense with sufficient lead time to meet the Graduate School deadlines for graduation in a given semester.

The oral defense and the dissertation are considered an integrated requirement. It is not possible to pass one and fail the other. The committee should not sign the dissertation signature page until all requirements, including successful oral defense, are completed, nor should it sign the oral defense report until the dissertation has been successfully defended.

The student has the right to petition for reconsideration.

### **Application for Degree:**

At the beginning of the semester in which you defend your thesis or dissertation, you should obtain the “materials for candidates for XXX (fill in the appropriate degree – MA or Ph.D.) degree” from the Graduate School. These materials contain instructions and forms necessary to meet requirements for graduation. It will include your “Application for Degree,” an application for your final exam, a Graduate School calendar as well as additional information/forms. Check the academic calendar for the various deadlines for all necessary paperwork. **You should obtain this information from the Graduate School prior to the semester or at the very beginning of the semester in which you intend to graduate.**

### **Graduation Time Limits:**

Optimally students who have a B.A or B.S. degree will proceed to the Ph.D. degree in four-five years (five-six for clinical & school students, counting internship requirement). The

maximum time allowed from entrance to the completion of the Ph.D. is 7 years. A student must have special permission from the Dean of the Graduate School to exceed this time limit. (This permission is not routinely given, and must involve exceptional circumstances.) Leave of absence is no longer formally recognized by the Graduate School. Failure to complete the Ph.D. program within the seven-year period will result in termination from the program.

**\*\*\* Graduation Time Limit (For Master's and Ph.D.): \*\*\***

The Graduate School requires students to graduate within 1 semester of completing their defense and internship (if applicable).

Example: If you defend your dissertation and complete your internship in the Spring 2016, you must receive your degree either Spring 2016 or the following Fall 2016. NO later!

If you defend your dissertation in Fall 2016, and complete your internship in the Summer 2017, you must receive your degree in either the Summer 2017 or the Fall 2017.

**If this deadline is missed, the student will be required to re-defend in order to graduate.**

Students who are dismissed from the program, but are granted permission to complete the master's degree, are granted permission to remain in the program for one additional year only. Regardless of whether or not the master's degree is completed, at the end of that one year, the student is terminated.

**\*\*\*\* Again, if you have questions, contact the Graduate Coordinator first. \*\*\*\***

**Retention in the Program:**

Compliance with the following will aid students with remaining in good standing with the program.

- Maintain semester and cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better.
- Complete core statistics and methodology courses with a grade of "B-" (B minus) or better within the first 2 years in the program.
- Complete required content courses with a grade of "B-" (B minus) or better by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year in the program (or prior to degree completion, whichever comes first).
- Successfully propose thesis preferably in the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester and no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> class day of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester.
- Successfully defend thesis no later than the day prior to commencement of the 5<sup>th</sup> semester in the program.
- Successfully complete the general exam with no more than 2 attempts.
- Successfully complete internship (if applicable) within 7 years of entering the program.
- Successfully defend dissertation within 7 years of entering the program.

**DO NOT FORGET TO CHECK YOUR SPECIALTY AREA  
HANDBOOK/CHECKLIST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/RULES THAT ARE  
SPECIFIC TO YOUR AREA**