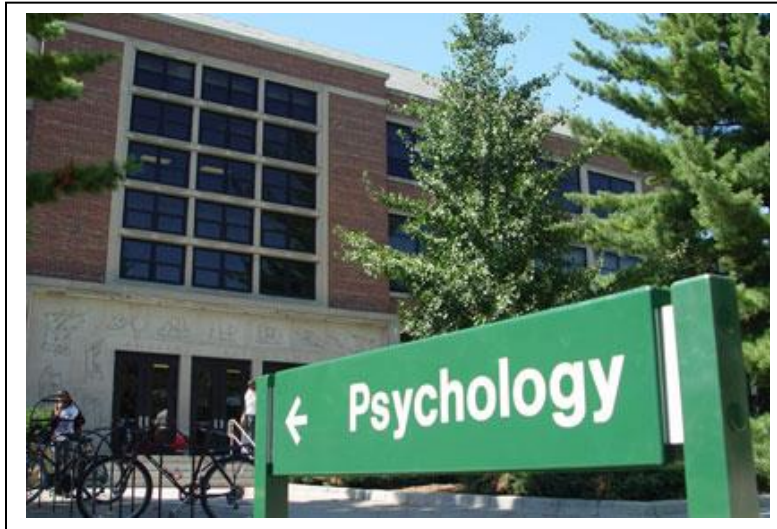


**PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT GRADUATE HANDBOOK**  
**Michigan State University**  
**2020-2021**




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**AT THE TIME OF THIS HANDBOOK'S PUBLICATION, UNIVERSITY POLICY REGARDING COVID-19 AND SAFETY IS STILL EVOLVING. GRADUATE STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH MSU POLICIES RELEVANT TO TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES AND COVID-19 SAFETY AS THEY EMERGE AND TO FOLLOW ALL APPLICABLE POLICIES. FOR INFORMATION AS IT DEVELOPS, SEE <https://msu.edu/coronavirus/>**

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**Deadline for arriving on campus:** August 16 is the beginning of the official academic year. However, because some paperwork needs to be completed prior to August 16, the graduate student orientation this year (2020-2021) will be held on **August 12**. You should be in East Lansing, completing University paperwork, and making contact with faculty in your area. You are required to participate in graduate student orientations on dates as noted in your acceptance and funding letters.

**Deadline for requesting Waivers for prior MA/MS thesis or graduate courses:** If you are coming with an MA/MS, you must petition for a **Master's thesis waiver** by **May 15** prior to the beginning of your first year at MSU if the thesis has been completed before that date. If the thesis has not been completed by May 15, you must petition for the thesis waiver **by Aug 15**. All requests for waivers of courses must be submitted by **May 15** before your first year at MSU.

**Deadline for submitting your MA Plan of Study:** You need to form your MA guidance committee and complete your MA plan of study by the end of fall semester your 1st year. In order for you to remain eligible for subsequent registration, you must complete a [Master's Level Plan of Study form](#) and provide it to the Graduate Program Assistant. The Assistant will obtain the Graduate Program Director's Signature.

**Deadlines for successfully defending the MA thesis proposal:** If you are a student in Clinical Science (CS) or Social/Personality (S/P) your Master's thesis proposal must be completed and oral defense passed by May 15 at the end of your 1st year. If you are in Behavioral Neuroscience (BNS), Cognitive Neuroscience (CCN), Ecological/Community Psychology (ECO) or Organizational Psychology (ORG) your master's thesis proposal must be completed and successfully defended by May 15 at the end of your 2nd year.

Once your proposal is passed/approved by your committee, you must complete a [Master's Level Thesis Proposal Approval](#) form and provide it, along with a copy of your proposal, to the Graduate Program Assistant. The Assistant will obtain the Graduate Program Director's Signature.

Regardless of the nature of your thesis or doctoral research, you must obtain documentation that the IRB has reviewed your project prior to commencing the research. A copy of the IRB review results or approval letter, or the AUF/IACUC form must be provided to the Graduate Program Assistant.

**Deadlines for successfully defending the MA thesis:** In CS and S/P the MA thesis must be successfully defended by May 15 in your 2nd year, and by May 15 in your 3rd Year if you are in BNS, CCN, ECO, or ORG. [The Report on Plan A MA Level Achievements form](#) must be filled out with proper signatures from the committee/program chair. You should provide the signed form to the Graduate Program Assistant, and the Assistant will obtain the Graduate Program Director's Signature.

**Deadline for submitting the Doctoral Plan of Study:** The Doctoral Plan of Study must be filed and approved before the end of your second semester as a doctoral student for you to remain eligible for registration. The Doctoral Plan of Study is completed through [Grad Plan](#). It is important to note that the Doctoral Plan of Study must not include any courses that were included on your MA Plan of Study. Once the plan is submitted it will be approved by the Department, your committee, and the College.

**Deadlines and requirements relevant to the comprehensive exam:**

- The comprehensive exam cannot be taken in the same semester in which the Master's thesis is defended.
- For those areas that require a written proposal for your comprehensive exam, the exam itself must be passed within one year of proposing.
- All students must pass the comprehensive exam by May 15 at the end of their 4th year.
- You cannot propose your dissertation until your comprehensive exams have been passed.

**General Note Concerning Full-time Status:** Full-time status prior to completion of all degree requirements up to engaging in your dissertation research requires enrollment in 6 or more credit hours each semester. Full-time status for doctoral students who have successfully completed all components of their comprehensive examination and are actively engaged in dissertation research is defined as enrollment in a minimum of 1 credit of PSY 999.

**General Note Concerning Changes to Doctoral Committee:** It is a University regulation that you cannot change committee members within 60 days before the date of the oral defense of the dissertation.

**University Deadline for completing the PhD:** The Official University time limit is that all requirements for the PhD degree must be completed *within 8 years of taking the first course on your Doctoral Plan of Study.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to the Graduate Program in Psychology at Michigan State University! This document is an important source of information that will answer many of your questions about your graduate education at MSU including degree requirements. It is intended to serve Psychology graduate students and faculty as a guide to the basic policies and procedures related to graduate education so that you will have a working knowledge of your opportunities, obligations, and responsibilities.

The graduate program in the Department of Psychology at MSU offers MA and PhD degrees in Psychology. The MA degree in Psychology is a 'Plan A' or thesis degree and involves independent research<sup>1</sup>. The PhD degree is a research-intensive doctorate that, depending on your focus, can prepare you for a career in either academic or applied settings. The "Graduate Program" for which this handbook applies encompasses both. Therefore, in this handbook, we refer to the Master's portion of the Graduate Program as the "Master's Program," and the post-Master's portion as the "Doctoral Program."

Graduate students in our department typically affiliate with one of six academic Interest Areas that span the field of Psychology. These include:

- Behavioral Neuroscience (BNS)
- Clinical Science (CS)
- Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience (CCN)
- Ecological/Community Psychology (ECO)
- Organizational Psychology (ORG)
- Social/Personality Psychology (S/P)

You will have a primary home within one of these Areas, but it is important to note that you are first and foremost a graduate student within the Department of Psychology. Although the work you do to attain your MA and PhD degrees will focus on one of these sub-disciplines, the degrees themselves are degrees in Psychology ultimately conferred by Michigan State University.

The graduate program is individualized to allow you, working with your Guidance Committee, to shape a program of study that is broad in scope yet consistent with your specific interests. The expectation for our program is that all MA and PhD requirements can be completed in a 5-year period. The one exception is the Clinical Science Area for which students are required to complete a year-long internship after their 5<sup>th</sup> year at MSU.

Throughout this handbook we discuss departmental policies, requirements, and guidelines. If, after reviewing this handbook, you have any concerns or questions, please contact us at the addresses on the front cover or visit our website: [Psychology Department](#). On the website you can also view our departmental vision statement, descriptions of our faculty and Interest Areas,

<sup>1</sup> The Psychology Department at MSU also offers a fully online terminal MA in Program Evaluation. Its requirements are described in a separate document.

course descriptions and curriculum, and facilities.

It is especially important for you to become familiar with the [online resources for psychology graduate students](#). This site contains information about degree requirements, links to forms that you will complete during the course of your graduate training, information for graduate students that is specific to the different content Areas, graduate student resources (e.g., FAQ, funding opportunities), and graduate student codes of conduct.

### **1.1 Psychology Graduate Education Mission, Goals and Values**

Our mission is to train the next generation of scientists, leaders, and professionals to advance knowledge and promote individual and societal well-being.

The underlying goals of the graduate program in Psychology are to:

1. Provide world-class scientific training: Students are trained to become outstanding scientists and thinkers through active and sustained scholarship. All students are encouraged to nurture their intellectual curiosity and engage in critical inquiry across multiple levels of analysis.
2. Transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries: Students are encouraged to develop multidisciplinary expertise through collaborative engagement and debate.
3. Translate scientific knowledge into action: Students are trained to use scientific knowledge to generate solutions to individual and societal challenges.

In accomplishing our mission and goals, we hold certain values as important to our approach to graduate education. These are scientific integrity, methodological rigor, production of high quality and impactful work, curiosity, teamwork and collaboration, inclusiveness, and respect for others' viewpoints.

The MSU Psychology Program is committed to understanding psychological processes in an increasingly diverse society. An enhanced understanding of all types of diversity is critical for the development of students and faculty as scientists and professionals in the field. The MSU Psychology Program subscribes to an inclusive definition of diversity which includes race, age, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, disability, geographic region, and other significant reference groups. In line with these values, throughout their graduate training all graduate students are expected to avail themselves of the opportunities to learn about multiple diverse populations with whom they may interact both in research and non-research settings. We support the [College of Social Science's goals related to Diversity and Inclusion](#).

### **1.2 Structure of the Department**

The Psychology Department consists of (approximately) fifty faculty members, 25-30 department and research staff members, and 90-100 graduate students during any given year. There is a Department Chairperson (currently Dr. Brent Donnellan, [donnel59@msu.edu](mailto:donnel59@msu.edu)), whose ultimate responsibilities include overseeing the Department's education, research, and service programs, budgetary and personnel matters, as well as academic facilities (i.e., the buildings and space allocations). The Department Chairperson typically works closely with the Associate Chairpersons and Chief of Staff to accomplish these tasks.

There are also two Associate Chairpersons. The current Associate Chair for Graduate Studies, Dr. Emily Durbin ([cdurbin@msu.edu](mailto:cdurbin@msu.edu)), will be an important resource for you during your graduate



training. The Associate Chair for Graduate Studies is responsible for administering aspects of the graduate program in Psychology, including coordination of admissions and recruitment, monitoring of student progress and academic standing, coordination of student professional development opportunities, assignment of TA positions, coordination of TA and RA reviews, and coordination with the College of Social Science and Graduate School regarding MSU policies. The Associate Chair is also responsible for approving all student committees (MA, comprehensive exam, and dissertation committees).

The current Associate Chair for Undergraduate Education is Dr. Mark Becker ([becker54@msu.edu](mailto:becker54@msu.edu)). He is primarily responsible for overseeing undergraduate instruction and advising, and his main interaction with graduate students is around their duties as Teaching Assistants and Instructors. The Undergraduate Associate Chair can also be a resource to graduate students for teaching or teaching-assistant related issues such as academic dishonesty, grade disputes, or student complaints.

We have an Office of Graduate Studies (240E) that is staffed by the Graduate Program Assistant (currently Brooke Rosek, [brosek@msu.edu](mailto:brosek@msu.edu)) who oversees the administrative aspects of the graduate program, including admissions, processing of assistantship contracts, handling of all required forms and documents, and other activities related to the running of the graduate program.

There are a number of other important contributors to the Psychology Department who you may interact with during your time at MSU. There is an Undergraduate Advising Office (Room 100), there are staff who oversee various administrative components of the Department (e.g., HR, finance), as well as staff engaged in grant submissions and management support, informational technology support, and office services support. Consult the departmental website for a full listing of current department staff. Take time to introduce yourself as you encounter them after your arrival on campus.

In addition to these cross-program administrative positions, each of the six Interest Areas has an Area Director (In the Clinical Science group, this role is referred to as the Director of Clinical Training or DCT). The director oversees the activities of the Interest Area, schedules meetings, and serves as a source of information for faculty and graduate students. The current Area Directors are: Alex Johnson, BNS; Jason Moser, CS; Susan Ravizza, CCN; Robin Miller, ECO; Daisy Chang, ORG; Joe Cesario, S/P.

Although students are typically affiliated with one of the six Areas noted above, students with strong cross-cutting interests may be eligible to develop individualized training plans that span two Areas. It is possible to initiate this option either during the admissions process or in your first two years of study, prior to admission to the PhD program. Early discussion with the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies and the Area Directors for the two Interest Areas is required if you wish to pursue this option.

The Psychology Department Main Office is in Room 262 is open and staff is available to assist you from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, and from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on every day that the University is open. The Psychology office is closed on weekends and on University holidays. Mail is delivered to this room; graduate student mail will be placed in your faculty Advisor's mailbox.

Routine types of interactions with Psychology Department Staff are typically handled through our online request systems (available from the “log in” tab on the Psychology Department webpage). There are request forms for routine types of transactions that you might have for: Tech Support, Maintenance & Building, Office Services, Grad Office, Chair, and Human Resources. For example, you might submit an Office Services request for photocopying of exams for a class you are a teaching assistant for, you might submit a form related to your degree milestones to the Grad Office, or you might report a ceiling leak to Maintenance. During orientation you will learn more about what types of support are available using this system. There is also a link through the same login tab on the Psychology Department webpage for room reservations should you require a conference room for a formal meeting.

### **1.3 How to Begin: Upon Arrival at MSU**

There are a few critical steps that you must take to get settled into the University and Department prior to the start of classes in the Fall semester. You have been assigned a Personal ID number or “PID” which includes the letter “A” followed by eight digits. This PID is important — it’s who you are, as far as the University systems are concerned. Your PID will be used throughout your time at MSU for various official records and for accessing University systems.

You should obtain an email account on the MSU email system as soon as you are established as an MSU student. Your MSU email address is comprised of your MSU NetID and follows the format [NetID@msu.edu](mailto:NetID@msu.edu). These email accounts are available at no cost and serve as the primary means of communicating. **Graduate students are expected to check their MSU email account frequently and to use this address for all MSU-related business.** Your NetID also allows you to do things electronically at MSU, including access to library resources and your student record. Using your NetID, you can also access some server storage space on the Psychology Department server for research, teaching and other relevant academic activities.

You can obtain your photo ID from the International Center, 427 N. Shaw Lane, Room 170. After obtaining that ID, if you go to our departmental Human Resources Administrator, currently Erin Laudenslager ([laudensl@msu.edu](mailto:laudensl@msu.edu)), she can program your ID to allow access to the Psychology Building when it is locked. The Psychology Building is closed evenings and weekends. If your RA duties require access to other buildings and labs on campus, work with your Area Director to obtain access.

Office and lab space access for graduate students varies by Interest Areas. You should work with your Area Director and/or faculty Advisor regarding assignment to office space and/or any access to relevant lab spaces. Once you determine which spaces in the Psychology Building you will need access to, you can request keys for those rooms by submitting a request, to the Maintenance/Building Request system which can be found on the psychology website after you login to the secured area of the website ([here](#)) under the “Locks/Keys” request type. All requests will require approval of your Area Director/Advisor. Approved keys can be picked up in Psychology Room 262, and individuals picking up keys will need to sign a Key Pick-Up Log. To obtain keys to any assigned space in other buildings, please see your Area Director.

Graduate students are expected to have their own personal computer for use in their academic endeavors. You may also be granted access to other equipment and supplies as needed for

research and teaching assistantships; equipment and supply accessibility will be explained by your Area Director and/or Advisor.

Soon after arrival you may also wish to register any motor vehicle you might park on campus. The University Vehicle Office is located in the Public Safety Building, 87 South Red Cedar Road. To register a vehicle, you need the vehicle registration, proof of insurance, and if you have an assistantship, a copy of your signed appointment form which is given to you by the Graduate Program Assistant. If you have a graduate assistantship you can also register your car on-line at [Parking Registration](#). Parking on campus for graduate students is limited. If you wish to bring a bike to campus, it also must be registered, and you can do this on-line at [Bike Registration](#). The University maintains bicycle racks throughout the campus. Bikes should be locked to these racks when parked. Bikes are not permitted in campus buildings. Improperly parked bikes are subject to impoundment by the Department of Public Safety.

***Attend the incoming graduate student orientation series***

You should plan to be in East Lansing *before* August 12, because the mandatory new student orientation is scheduled to occur on August 12. August 16 is the beginning of the official academic year. Between August 16 and the first day of classes you will need to attend several orientation sessions depending on your Interest Area and the mechanism from which you are being funded (e.g., teaching assistantship, research assistantship).

- The initial department-wide orientation session for first-year students will provide basic information about policies and procedures and who to go to for help and will provide a format for you to ask questions.
- Areas frequently have additional specific orientation sessions. These orientations are also required and are organized by the Area Director.
- If you have a teaching assistantship appointment, you will also be required to attend additional orientation sessions and will be provided with information on those.
- A letter providing information about the date/times of these orientations will be sent to you over the summer.

The Psychology Department orientation will start when you arrive in August and then it will extend across the academic year. Attendance is required at all orientation sessions. After the initial meetings in August, the orientation meetings will occur every few weeks, but more often in the fall, to provide you with continuing information regarding your graduate training, provide you with opportunities to interact with students in other Interest Areas, and assist you in navigating the transition to graduate school. These meetings will cover a variety of topics including essentials of the responsible conduct of research (RCR) in psychological science, time and stress management, developing and maintaining professional relationships, career planning activities, library resources (including funding resources), professional norms and conferences, professional citizenship, building a professional network, and project management skills.

There is also a required orientation session for all continuing graduate students, held at the beginning of the year for each year you are in our program. These sessions will update students on policy changes and provide information of interest.

While orientation will acquaint you with many of the resources on campus, Appendix A also lists contact information for other key resources (e.g., MSU Graduate School Offices, library).

### ***Take care of your financial support paperwork***

Your offer of admission to the program guarantees you four years of academic year financial support for your graduate education (contingent upon your being in good academic standing). Students in good standing have traditionally also received funding during their fifth year as well, although this is not guaranteed, and is subject to the availability of funding. Students are not guaranteed summer support, although summer support is sometimes available.

Financial support comes in five main types:

- 1) Teaching assistantships (TA) that are eligible to join the Graduate Employees Union (GEU) (Note that students assigned to TAs will be asked at the Teaching Assistant Orientation Session if they want to join the GEU. During that session, they will be given a card on which they indicate their decision to join or not join the GEU. This issue is discussed more in-depth during the Teaching Assistant Orientation Session).
- 2) Assistantships that are not eligible to join the Graduate Employees Union (e.g., Clinic Coordinators in The Psychological Clinic) are labeled as Teaching Excluded Assistantships (TE).
- 3) Research assistantships (RA).
- 4) Academic Achievement Graduate Assistantships (AAGA) involve work that may be in the form of either TA or RA assignments depending on departmental needs; TAs funded by an AAGA are eligible to join the GEU.
- 5) MSU fellowships (e.g., University Distinguished Fellowships, University Enrichment Fellowships).
- 6) External fellowships (e.g., from the National Science Foundation or National Institutes of Health).

Note that your source of funding can change over the course of your time here. For example, students often serve as TAs during some semesters and RAs during others. More detail on assistantships is provided in Section 5.

If you will be working as a graduate assistant (TA, RA) or have a fellowship, you may wish to set up direct deposit. For fellowships and other awards you may receive while at MSU, information is available to do this at [Student Info](#). For assistantships or hourly pay this can be done through [MSU Enterprise Business System \(EBS\)](#). (The first time you sign into EBS you must set up 2 stage authentication; then you sign in with your MSU Net ID and password, and click on relevant tabs under “my time” and “payroll” to provide your bank information.) International students must visit the Payroll Office (room 350 Hannah Administration Building) to pick up an information packet to complete and return. The taxability of stipends is subject to review by the Internal Revenue Service. Please call the Payroll office for more information, at 355-5010. More information on this and related policies will be provided at orientation.

### ***Meet with your Advisor***

It is important for you to establish a constructive working relationship with your Advisor (sometimes

referred to as your Major Professor). Advisors are faculty members who train graduate students in their areas of expertise. Advisors are expected to share their domain knowledge with their students and help direct student plans of study, research programs, and applied experiences (if relevant). Advisors also often serve as broader mentors who provide guidance on career choices/trajectories and other professional activities/pursuits (e.g., publishing). All graduate students will have a primary advisor in their Area, but it is important to note that the primary advisor may not be able to cover all aspects of professional development for each student. Students are best served by having multiple advisors within a developmental advising network that can contribute to skill development and also serve as references for future professional positions. Advisors and students should discuss the need for additional advising during expectation setting and seek out additional advisors.

During the summer before starting at MSU, you are assigned a "Temporary Advisor." In the same letter informing you of your temporary Advisor, you will receive information about what courses to enroll for during your first year. If you have any questions about them, check with your Advisor. Make sure you meet with your temporary Advisor as soon as possible after you arrive in East Lansing. Note that your temporary Advisor may become your permanent Advisor when you choose your Master's Committee, but this is not required.

The specific responsibilities of the thesis/dissertation Advisor include

- advising you on preparing for and selecting a thesis or dissertation topic with realistic prospects for success within an appropriate time frame;
- providing training and oversight regarding the conduct of research, theoretical and technical aspects of your research, and professional integrity;
- providing regular feedback on your progress, including providing constructive criticism if your progress does not meet expectations; and
- helping you develop into a successful professional and colleague.

You and your faculty advisor share a responsibility to have a working relationship based on honesty, collegiality, and mutual respect. It is your joint responsibility with your advisor to optimize the working relationship.

Because the advisor-student relationship is central to graduate student success, the Department has implemented a formal process for setting clear expectations of the relationship. At the beginning of each year during your graduate training you and your Advisor will have a meeting during which both parties discuss expectations for the year. This interaction will be guided by an Advisor-Student Checklist form that you will complete in the first few weeks of fall semester each year and that will be retained by the Department. This checklist is used to facilitate a clear understanding of expectations concerning advisor/student contact, turn-around times for review of work products (e.g., theses), research and lab activities, timing of student milestones and coursework, advisor style, student funding, and professional development.

Both you and your Advisor will sign the expectation checklist to indicate that the expectations have been discussed, and the completed checklist should be uploaded to the department GradPortal by faculty **no later than September 30<sup>th</sup> of each academic year**. You and your Advisor are encouraged to complete the Checklist more frequently when the need arises and/or when you are in your early years of the program (e.g., 1<sup>st</sup> and/or 2<sup>nd</sup> year). Expectations are often the most unclear in these early years, and re-alignment/discussion can be helpful for keeping things on track.

Although some advisor-student expectations will be individualized and unique to each advisor-student pair, there are department-wide expectations for all advisors and students in terms of advisor-student contact.

- **Academic Year Contact:** Regular meetings (e.g., 1x/week, 1x/two weeks) are expected of all advisor/student pairs over the course of the academic year (8/16-5/15). The exact frequency and type of contact must be discussed during the review of the Advisor-Student Expectations Checklist.
- **Summer Contact:** Advising graduate students is a year-long activity. However, because faculty contracts run from 8/16 to 5/15, frequency and type of summer contact should be explicitly discussed during the advisor-student expectation meeting to ensure it is in line with the faculty's and student's circumstances. Students are also expected to keep their advisors apprised of their progress throughout the academic and summer months.
- **Faculty Sabbaticals:** Similar to summer contact, expectations about frequency and type of contact during faculty sabbaticals should be explicitly discussed during the advisor-student expectation meeting. A secondary advisor who is available throughout the faculty member's sabbatical should also be identified to help support the student.
- **Family and Medical Leave:** Finally, faculty are entitled to family and medical leave, during which time there is no expectation for advisor-student contact. In the case of planned/known leaves, the advisor and student should identify a secondary advisor who can provide support during the leave. In the case of unexpected leaves, the student should meet with the Area Chair and/or Associate Chair for Graduate Studies to identify a secondary mentor and/or additional supports.

Note that if you are being funded by a Teaching Assistantship or a Research Assistantship you will complete a similar form with the faculty member you are working with (see TA forms and RA forms). Each is designed to facilitate clarity regarding what is expected in order to be successful as a TA, RA, and graduate student.

#### **1.4 Program Overview**

Graduate school is really the beginning of your career and we strongly suggest that you think of it in that way. Your outcomes and success depend on how you approach graduate training and the time and effort you dedicate to it. In addition to formal educational elements such as courses, MA thesis, comprehensive exam, and dissertation, you will have many formal and informal opportunities to advance your own scholarship. These opportunities vary across Interest Areas, but may include participation in weekly lab meetings to discuss ongoing projects, weekly seminar series in which students and faculty present their research, professional development workshops and seminars, colloquia presented by visiting scholars, professional conferences, and internships with applied organizations. Throughout your time at MSU, you will be encouraged to translate the results of any research in which you have participated into professional contributions. These contributions can include journal articles or papers presented at professional meetings and conventions. Actively

engaging with the opportunities that arise during your time at MSU is critical to moving your graduate training goals forward.

More specifically, the Department expects you to engage productively in your educational experience in the following ways: (1) meeting curricular, research, and scholarship requirements in a timely fashion; (2) demonstrating mastery of the content, methods, and norms of the field that is appropriate to your training stage and which increases during your time in the program; (3) participating in opportunities for professional development, mentorship, and skills development; and (4) contributing to a culture of mutual respect, inclusion, and respect for differences within our Department and the field.

### ***Overview of the typical tasks and timeline for the Psychology Graduate Program***

Below is a basic overview to the typical graduate student experience. Later in the handbook specific course requirements for each Interest Area are described. One important variation across the six Areas is the timeline for the Master's thesis proposal and final thesis defense. Within the Psychology Department, Areas differ in the process of skill development and hence in the timing requirements for the thesis proposal (as detailed in Section 2.2). Also, Section 2.1 discusses issues relevant to students who begin the MSU graduate program with an existing MA or MS degree who may not be following this typical timeline.

First year:

- Professional development orientation is required of all graduate students in your first year.
- You will likely take 2-3 courses during each semester of your first year. In the fall semester all first-year students take PSY 815, which is "Quantitative Research Design and Analysis," along with 1-2 courses in your program. In the Spring semester students often take PSY 818 which is "Psychometric Theory and Test Construction" along with 1-2 courses in your program. (In some Areas, PSY 818 is scheduled for Spring of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year).
- Getting actively engaged in research early in graduate school is critical for your training and for your career more broadly. In some Interest Areas (BNS, CCN, ORG, and ECO), this is formalized by having students complete a first-year research project. Consult your Area Director regarding the requirements for this project.
- You form your MA Guidance Committee during the Fall (see section 2.2.1) and complete your MA plan of Study Form [here](#) (see section 2.2.2).
- For Interest Areas without first-year projects (CS, S/P) you will write and defend your MA thesis proposal during the Fall and/or Spring semester and begin taking thesis credit hours (PSY 899).
- Participate in informal training opportunities such as weekly seminars, research team meetings, workshops, and conferences.
- Complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) requirements (discussed in Section 4.5)
- TA or RA responsibilities.
- Students in CS begin clinical practicum in the summer after their first year.

Second year:

- Students typically take 2-3 courses each semester, with some thesis (PSY 899) credit hours included.

- For students in Interest Areas with first year projects (BNS, CCN, ORG, and ECO), students write and defend their MA thesis proposal during the Fall semester of this year and work on MA data collection, analysis and writing during the spring and the following fall semester.
- For students in Interest Areas without first-year projects (CS, S/P), students collect data, analyze, and write-up the MA thesis. A formal oral defense of the thesis is completed in the Spring of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year (i.e., May 15).
- For students in CS and S/P who complete their MA in Spring of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, you should apply for MA graduation by the deadline set by the registrar's office.
- Work on continuing research projects.
- Participate in informal program opportunities such as weekly seminars, research team meetings, workshops, and conferences.
- Complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) requirements, as needed.
- TA or RA responsibilities.
- Continue year-round clinical practicum (for students in the CS Area).

#### Third year

- Continue to take classes, but the course load is variable across students and Interest Areas.
- Students in BNS, CCN, ECO, and ORG are expected to complete the written Master's thesis and have an oral defense of that thesis by the end of Spring semester (May 15) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year.
- Students who complete their MA in Spring of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year should apply for MA graduation by the deadline set by the registrar's office.
- Form a Doctoral Guidance Committee and complete PhD Plan of Study via [GradPlan](#) (see section 2.3.2).
- Begin to take some PSY 999 credits (Doctoral thesis credit hours) if MA has been completed.
- Prepare for PhD Comprehensive Exam.
- Work on continuing research projects.
- Participate in informal training opportunities such as weekly seminars, research team meetings, workshops, and conferences.
- Complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) requirements.
- TA or RA responsibilities.
- Continue year-round clinical practicum (for students in the CS Area).

#### Fourth year

- Students at this stage are often finished with their coursework and instead focus their attention on completing research, analyzing data, and writing.
- Complete the PhD Comprehensive Exam by May 15.
- Write and defend the dissertation proposal.
- Take dissertation credits (PSY 999).
- Work on continuing research projects.
- Seek out internships and other opportunities that will help you prepare for your post-grad career.
- Participate in informal training opportunities such as weekly seminars, research team meetings, workshops, and conferences.
- Complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) requirements.
- TA or RA responsibilities.



- Continue year-round clinical practicum (for students in the CS Area).

#### Fifth year

- Collect data, analyze, write, and defend the dissertation.
- Apply for PhD graduation by the deadline set by the registrar's office (CS students must wait to apply until the semester their internship ends).
- Work on continuing research projects.
- Take dissertation credits (PSY 999).
- Seek out internships and other opportunities that will help you prepare for your post-grad career.
- Participate in informal training opportunities such as weekly seminars, research team meetings, workshops, and conferences.
- Complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) requirements.
- TA or RA responsibilities.
- Continue year-round clinical practicum (for students in the CS Area).
- Apply and interview for internships (for students in CS).
- Apply and interview for employment opportunities (e.g., post-docs, assistant professor positions, industry, consulting, and governmental positions).

## 2. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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In this section, we describe each requirement students complete for the MA and PhD Programs in Psychology.

The Psychology Department uses a Plan A research intensive approach for the Master's degree. The requirements for a MA degree include:

- Form a Master's Guidance Committee before the end of Fall semester in the 1<sup>st</sup> year
- Write your Master's plan of study before the end of Fall semester in the 1<sup>st</sup> year
- Complete Responsible Conduct of Research requirements (see Section 4.5)
- Complete 30 credit hours of coursework (including 4-8 credits of PSY 899 Master's thesis research)
- Maintain a GPA of 3.0 with no more than 2 courses with grades lower than 3.0
- Complete a written Master's thesis proposal and a successful oral defense of the proposal
- Complete a written Master's thesis and successful oral defense of the thesis

After students complete their MA, they must be formally admitted into the PhD program, which is typically done by a vote of the Area faculty.

The requirements for a PhD degree include:

- Form a Doctoral Guidance Committee
- Complete a Doctoral plan of study
- Complete Responsible Conduct of Research requirements (see Section 4.5 of this handbook)
- Pass all components of the Comprehensive Exam
- Complete any remaining required coursework (including 24-36 credits of PSY 999)

- Maintain a GPA of 3.0 with no more than 2 courses with grades lower than 3.0
- Develop a written dissertation proposal and a successful oral defense of the proposal
- Complete a written Doctoral dissertation and a successful oral defense of the dissertation

A student is considered “in good standing” if they are meeting the requirements commensurate with their stage in the program in terms of GPA, required course completion, successful practicum completion (if required for Area), successful completion of comprehensive exams, and successful proposals and defenses on the required timeline. A student is considered as “making satisfactory progress toward a degree” if they are completing program requirements in accordance with the timelines noted in this handbook and meeting any required deadlines for thesis, dissertation or comprehensive exams as noted in this handbook.

### **2.1 For Students Entering the Psychology Graduate Program with a MA or MS Degree**

There are several important issues that pertain to students who come to MSU with an MA or MS degree from another institution. One issue concerns whether the existing MA/MS degree will be counted in whole or part as fulfillment of the Master’s Program at MSU, a second concerns whether the thesis requirement at MSU might be waived, and the third concerns which required courses at MSU can be waived based on previous coursework.

#### ***Will the MA/MS degree count as meeting the Master’s Program requirements at MSU?***

It is rare that an MA/MS degree from another institution is considered a sufficient substitute for an MA at MSU, given the specific requirements of our program. Importantly, students with a non-thesis-based MA/MS, and/or a degree in an unrelated area (e.g., English literature), will be required to complete the Master’s Program at MSU.

Waiver of the entire MA degree requirement may occur in rare instances when the committee feels that both the thesis and the coursework completed (see immediately below) provide a sufficient substitute for the MA requirements here at MSU. Students who enter the program with a MA or MS degree from another institution who do receive this waiver for the Master’s Program are automatically admitted into the PhD program.

#### ***Will the thesis completed elsewhere count as meeting the requirements for an MA thesis at MSU?***

If you completed a data-based MA/MS thesis in psychology or a related field, and you would like to waive the thesis requirement at MSU, you must receive prior approval. The departmental policy regarding whether an existing MA/MS thesis will be counted is that 1) the thesis must be data-based, 2) in psychology or a related field, and 3) it should demonstrate research competency. This approval requires a review of the thesis as noted below. You should complete the following steps prior to beginning at MSU:

- 1) Submit a copy of your thesis, along with a request for the thesis requirement to be waived, to the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies as well as your Area Director and Advisor by May 15<sup>th</sup> of the year prior to starting at MSU.
- 2) Students with an “in-progress” MA or MS degree that is not completed by May 15<sup>th</sup> should submit their completed thesis document and their request for a waiver immediately upon completion of

their degree (but no later than August 15<sup>th</sup>) so that the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies, Area Director, and Advisor can review the thesis.

These individuals will then determine whether the MSU Master's thesis requirement can be waived, so that you can be notified of this information prior to the beginning of Fall semester in your first year.

***Can required MSU Psychology Department courses be waived if the same material was covered in a course at another institution?***

The Psychology Graduate Program requires that all students take the PSY 815 course (Quantitative Research Design & Analysis in Psychology) in the fall of their first year. This course covers the analysis of experimental and nonexperimental research using analysis of variance and regression approaches. Requests for a waiver of this course must be submitted by May 15<sup>th</sup> before your first year at MSU. You must submit a request for a waiver, the course syllabus and any other materials requested, to the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. The Quantitative Methods and Evaluation Science (QMES) faculty and your Advisor will review those materials and will make a recommendation to the Associate Chair regarding a waiver of this requirement. Note that waivers of 815 are only given when the student has a very strong record of statistical expertise.

Courses that are required in the specific Interest Areas of the Department can be waived by the faculty in that Interest Area (generally decided by a majority vote of Area faculty or by the Director of Clinical Training team in the CS Area). As part of the request for a course waiver, you must submit a course syllabus and any other materials requested to the Area Director. Requests for course waivers must be made **by May 15<sup>th</sup> before the student's first year at MSU.**

You can also request that credits from graduate-level courses taken at other institutions be counted towards your degree. MSU limits this to 9-credit hours at the Master's level (unlimited at the PhD level), but only if they were NOT counted toward another degree program at MSU.

## **2.2 Requirements for the Master's Degree in Psychology**

In this section we detail the requirements for a Master's degree in psychology. Students who are admitted with a MA or MS and have had the Master's requirement waived (see Section 2.1) should skip to section 2.3, which presents requirements for the PhD degree. The exception to this is the required coursework (see Section 2.2.3). It is generally the case that students admitted with a Master's degree waiver must still complete the same required courses as part of their PhD program, unless such courses have also been waived (see Section 2.1).

The [Psychology Department website](#) has four forms (posted under "Master's Forms" that you will need to submit as you pursue your Master's degree. The [Master's Plan of Study Form](#) lists members of your Master's Guidance Committee, the courses you will take for your Master's degree, and the proposed topic for your thesis. The [Master's Plan Amendment Form](#) is used to make changes to your Guidance Committee membership or coursework. The [Master's Level Thesis Proposal Approval](#) should be completed and signed after you successfully defend your thesis proposal, and the [Report on Master's Level Achievements](#) form is completed and signed after you defend your final Master's thesis. Note that all forms should be signed by committees and then submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant, who will obtain the Associate Chair's signature. These steps for the MA degree are described below.

### **2.2.1 Forming the MA Guidance Committee (Complete by the end of Fall semester 1<sup>st</sup> year)**

The primary mission for the members of your Master's Guidance Committee is to contribute their expertise to the planning and execution of your Master's thesis. Members of this committee sign-off on your *Master's plan of study*, which lists the courses you plan to take for the MA degree, and which must be filed before the end of the fall semester in your 1<sup>st</sup> year. They also read and evaluate your thesis proposal and final document, participate in and evaluate your thesis proposal defense and your final MA oral defense, and they provide guidance for ways to improve the thesis research and final manuscript. Your primary research Advisor will provide you with recommendations for courses you should take and possible members of your Guidance Committee.

The Master's Guidance Committee must include three members, one of which is your primary research Advisor who serves as Chair of the Guidance Committee. The Associate Chair for Graduate Studies oversees and approves the composition of the Guidance Committee for all students in the Department, as does the College of Social Science.

#### Requirements for the MA Guidance Committee

- The Chair of your Guidance Committee must be a Psychology Department faculty member within your Interest Area and approved by the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.
- Two of the 3 committee members must be regular members of the Psychology Department (someone who has a tenure-track or tenured appointment at MSU). Therefore, only 1 of the 3 committee members may be either a faculty Emeritus (retired from the University but maintains a courtesy appointment) or a tenured or tenure track faculty member from outside the Psychology Department. Inclusion of such members is subject to approval by the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.

Less common alternatives for Guidance Committee members include:

- An additional (4th) committee member who can be an adjunct faculty member.
- A fixed-term (non-tenure-stream) faculty member from MSU or a tenured or tenure-track faculty member from another University. In this case, you need to seek approval from the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies. This request must be subsequently approved by the College of Social Science and the MSU Graduate School.

Two other points to note:

- The Master's Guidance Committee can be changed as it becomes clearer which faculty members fit best, given the direction of your thesis. To change the membership of your committee, you must file the [Master's Plan Amendment Form](#) with the Graduate Office.
- If you are developing an individualized, interdisciplinary plan of study that spans two of the Department's Interest Areas, then you must have one faculty member from each of these Areas on your committee. The Chair of this committee must come from one of the two programs.

### **2.2.2 Complete Your MA Plan of Study (Due by the end of Fall semester 1<sup>st</sup> year)**

Your Plan of Study is an important document that you should complete with the advice of your primary research Advisor (see the [Master's Plan of Study Form](#) online). The Plan of Study contains information about

- The courses and the number of research credits you will take (note that you must complete a minimum of 30 credit hours that include coursework and 4-8 credit hours of PSY 899)
- Your research area, including your MA thesis topic
- Your Guidance Committee members

Graduate students must have a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8 credits of PSY 899. The only other course requirement for all students in Psychology is PSY 815. The other coursework on the plan of study is typically determined by specific Interest Area requirements, and the number of required courses varies across Interest Areas (see section 2.2.3 below).

Note that you should limit your MA plan of study to include only 30 credits. If you take more than 30 credits while working on your Master's thesis, you can include those additional courses on your PhD plan of study. Note that courses can only appear on one of these two plans – either the MA or PhD plan. Although it is not expected that you will take undergraduate courses as part of your Master's plan, your Master's Guidance Committee may recommend that you do. In this case, a maximum of 6 of the 30 credits on the Master's plan of study can be from advanced undergraduate courses (400 level).

The plan of study must be approved by all members of your Master's Guidance Committee and is not official until it has received departmental approval by the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies. ***The Plan of Study must be approved and filed for you to remain eligible for subsequent registration.***

As noted above, your Plan of Study (including the composition of your committee) may be amended with a [Master's Plan Amendment Form](#). This form must be signed by you, the Chair of your Guidance Committee, any faculty members who are being added or removed from your Guidance Committee, and the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.

### **2.2.3 Course Requirements by Interest Area**

Because the graduate program in Psychology at MSU is inherently a PhD program, the course requirements listed below include all required courses for a PhD. Students working on their MA will take some of these courses while they work on their Master's degree, and they will include those courses (up to 22-26 credits of them) on their Master's plan of study. **Note that full-time status prior to completion of all degree requirements up to engaging in your dissertation research requires enrollment in 6 or more credit hours each semester.**

Students should discuss appropriate coursework with their primary Advisor, and courses taken must be approved by the Advisor and Guidance Committees. The MSU [Course Descriptions Catalog](#) lists all courses that might be offered at MSU, and the registrar's site lists all graduate courses offered at the university in a given semester. Of note, students in CS have constraints on the order of courses in order to be prepared for practicum work and should consult with their Advisor and Guidance Committee to ensure they have correct course sequencing

As noted, all students must complete between 4 and 8 credits of PSY 899 for their Master's plan of study. Required courses that are not on the Master's plan of study will be included on the PhD plan of study. Note too that all students must complete between 24 to 36 credits of PSY 999 (Doctoral Research) for their PhD plan of study.

The College of Social Sciences has a policy about course grades. To successfully complete a Master's program, you must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average for classes on your Master's Plan of Study. In addition, you can only earn two individual grades below 3.0 (including N or "No-Grade" grades in the Pass/No-Grade grading system). A third grade below 3.0 will result in you being dismissed from the Graduate Program. You will receive a warning letter from the Graduate Office if your academic performance (GPA) is below 3.0 or when you receive a course grade below 3.0. This same grade policy applies to the Doctoral Plan of Study.

#### Courses required by BNS

- Two courses covering quantitative analysis and statistics, research methods, or professional development. This requirement must include PSY 815, plus one additional course taught in the Psychology Department or in another department, at the 400-level or above. If the second course is another quantitative analysis and statistics course, it must be more advanced or specialized than PSY 815.
- NEU 802: Systems and Behavioral Neuroscience I.
- Two courses from among: PSY 801: Sensation and Perception; NEU 803: Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Neuroscience II; NEU 804: Molecular and Developmental Neurobiology; NEU 805: Systems and Behavioral Neuroscience II; PSY 809: Developmental Psychobiology; NEU 815: Neuroinformatics and Quantitative Reasoning; NEU 827: Physiology and Pharmacology of Excitable Cells; PSY 839 (NEU 839): Systems Neuroscience; NEU 847: Development of the Nervous System.

#### Courses required by CCN

- Two courses covering quantitative analysis and statistics, PSY 815 and another quantitative course taught in the Psychology Department, or in another department, at the 400-level or above.
- At least two courses, from the following list: PSY 801 (Sensation & Perception); PSY 802 (Basic Cognitive Processes); PSY 803 (Higher Order Cognitive Processes); PSY 805 (History of Psychology); PSY 811 (Advanced Behavioral Neuroscience); PSY 867 (Nature and Practice of Cognitive Science; cross listed with Zoology 867).

#### Courses required by CS

- Two quantitative courses: Quantitative Research Design & Analysis in Psychology (PSY 815) (must be completed in the first year) and Psychometric Theory & Test Construction (PSY 818) (can be completed at any time)
- Behavior Disorders (PSY 853), Diversity and Social Justice in Psychology (PSY 992), Cognitive Assessment (PSY 852), Psychodynamic Theory, Research, Assessment, and Intervention (PSY 952), Cognitive-Behavioral Theory, Research, Assessment, and Intervention (PSY 954) (ALL must be completed in the first year)
- Child Therapy and Assessment (PSY 992) (must be completed in the second year)
- Scientific and Professional Ethics (PSY 926) (must be completed in the second year)
- Social Cognitive Affective Neuroscience (SCAN) (PSY 930) (can be completed at any time)
- Course(s) for the "cognate" (see more information on cognates in Appendix C) and additional courses (e.g., advanced statistics courses), as determined/recommended in collaboration with the Doctoral Guidance Committee (can be completed at any time)

- Clinical practicum (see Appendix C for detailed information on clinical practicum requirements)
- Pre-doctoral internship (see Appendix C for detailed information on internship)
- Other curricular requirements of CS are listed in full in Appendix C.

#### Courses required by ECO

- Quantitative Research Design and Analysis in Psychology (PSY 815), Psychometric Theory and Test Construction (PSY 818) or equivalent.
- Ecological-Community Psychology (PSY 870), History and Theory in Ecological-Community Psychology (PSY 871), Field Research in Psychology (PSY 872), and Methods and Practice of Community Engagement I & II (PSY 873 and PSY 874).
- Students are also required to enroll in 3 Advanced Topics in Ecological and Community Psychology (PSY 970). PSY 992 courses taught by Ecological/Community faculty can count as PSY 970 courses. These requirements may be met at the Master's or Doctoral level.
- Students are also required to take 18 credits for either a specialization in another area of Psychology or a cognate. The specialization involves taking 12 credits in another Area outside of ECO, and students who do so are also required to take 6 credits outside of the Psychology Department. The cognate involves taking 12 credits in a department other than Psychology, and students who do so are also required to take 6 credits within Psychology (only 3 of which can be ECO courses).

#### Courses required by ORG

- Statistics, research methods and their application to problems in industrial and organizational psychology: PSY 815, 818, 865 (should be completed prior to MA).
- Independent Study, PSY 890 both semesters 1st year. This course involves a research project, exposure to the research programs of faculty in I/O and OB, and discusses topics related to starting your own program of research.
- Theory and research in Industrial and Organizational Psychology: PSY 860, I/O Psychology, and PSY 992 Organizational Behavior. Must be completed prior to MA.
- 6 additional courses in industrial and organizational psychology. Courses topics: motivation, learning and performance; individual differences and assessment; developing people; systems and levels; cultural context, and work attitudes and wellbeing. Note that a course that fulfills the I/O requirement cannot fulfill any other requirement.
- Breadth and/or Area of Expertise: 3 courses (within or across categories) in (a) other areas of psychology, (b) advanced statistics and modeling, or (c) multidisciplinary areas (e.g., economics, political science, communications, network science, computer science, engineering, etc.) where the constructs, processes, and/or methods and the theories have particular relevance for I/O psychology and the development of your expertise. Courses should be selected in consultation with your Advisor well in advance as part of a considered plan of study.

#### Courses required by S/P

- Quantitative courses: PSY 815 (Quantitative Research Design and Analysis in Psychology), PSY 818 (Psychometric Methods), plus 1 additional quantitative course.
- PSY 834 (Social and Personality Psych) and PSY 836 (Personality Processes and Social Behavior)
- PSY 835 (Research Methods: Interpersonal and Individual Behavior)
- 3 of the following (3 of 4 required): ◦ PSY 837 (Social Cognition) ◦ PSY 838 (Interpersonal Behavior and Relationships) ◦ PSY 841 (Evolutionary Psych) ◦ PSY 843 (Stereotyping & Prejudice)

### **Course credits and funding**

Until you have passed your comprehensive exams for the PhD, you must be registered during the academic year (fall or spring semester) for a minimum of 6 credits to be eligible for a Graduate Assistantship. The maximum number of credits covered by a Graduate Assistantship is 9 credits, so you should not enroll for more than 9 credits or you will be billed for the cost of each credit exceeding 9. After passing comps, the university minimum enrollment is 1 credit, although RA, TA, and certain fellowships may require a higher minimum (see Section 5).

When you register for courses, be aware of [University deadlines for dropping and adding courses](#), including the tuition refund period (courses cannot be dropped after the end of the tuition refund period without financial penalty). The Department is not financially responsible for costs you incur due to failure to follow these timelines. You can find the [University Calendar here](#).

### **Credit Sharing Policy**

There are rare instances when an individual may be interested in obtaining more than one Master's degree from MSU (e.g., someone who undergoes a change in career direction after receiving a Master's from MSU). The University Committee for Grad Studies sets the credit sharing policy for Master's programs: If your program includes more than 30 credits, then you may share up to 30% of the total with another Master's program. As this is an atypical circumstance, please consult with the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.

### **MSU Policies regarding Incomplete and Deferred Grades**

The I-Incomplete may be given only when: the student (a) has completed at least 6/7 of the term of instruction, but is unable to complete the class work and/or take the final examination because of illness or other compelling reason; and (b) has done satisfactory work in the course; and (c) in the instructor's judgment can complete the required work without repeating the course.

Provided these conditions are met, the instructor electing to give an I-Incomplete files an Agreement for Completion of (I) Incomplete at the time course grades are due. This agreement specifies what the student must do, and when. The department or school office gives a copy to the student and retains a copy for at least one year.

**The required work must be completed, and a grade must be reported to the Office of the Registrar, no later than the middle of the student's next semester in attendance** (summer session excluded) if that semester is within one calendar year following receipt of the I-Incomplete. Exception to this deadline: An instructor may submit an Administrative Action stating that course structure necessitates delay of make-up grading until the end of the student's next semester in attendance. The I-Incomplete, in addition to the grade reported, will remain on the student's academic record.

**Failure to complete the required work by the due date** will result in a grade of I/0.0, I/NC or I/N, depending on the grading system under which the student was enrolled. (A student who does not register for MSU courses subsequent to receipt of an I-Incomplete has one calendar year to complete the required work; after that, the I-Incomplete will become U-Unfinished and will be changed to I/U on the student's academic record, and the course may be completed only by re-enrollment).

**An extension of time for completion of the required work** may be approved by the college offering the course only by means of an Administrative Action documenting physician-certified illness or other extraordinary circumstances.



An Extension of Time is a formal agreement between the instructor and the student. After an Extension of Time has been filed, the work must be done by the deadline determined by the instructor or the I-Incomplete will be changed to I/O.0, I/NC, or I/N depending on the grading system under which the student was enrolled.

The DF-Deferred applies to the numerical, the CR-NC, and P-N grading systems. Given only to graduate students who are doing satisfactory work but cannot complete the course work because of reasons acceptable to the instructor. The required work must be completed and a grade reported within six months (190 calendar days from the last class day of the term of instruction), with the option of a single six-month extension (190 calendar days). If the required work is not completed within the time limit, the DF-Deferred will become U-Unfinished and will be changed to DF/U. This rule does not apply to graduate thesis or dissertation work.

#### **2.2.4 Quantitative Methods and Evaluation Science Concentration (QMES)**

The QMES Concentration is an option for students in all Areas of the department and can be completed at any stage during your graduate training. This concentration focuses on developing expertise in quantitative methods (e.g., advanced statistics) and evaluation science, and requires coursework and a project. Participating in this concentration is one way for you to establish your methodological expertise, which can be an important credential for both academic and non-academic employment. The concentration is a transcriptable specialization, meaning that it is officially part of your MSU transcript. It is also a useful addition to your Vita. Courses that you take for the concentration can also count towards either your MA or PhD and should be included on the appropriate plan of study.

To earn a Concentration in Quantitative Methodology and Evaluation Science, you will need to:

1. Complete two prerequisite courses (PSY 815 & PSY 818).
2. Complete the QMES [application](#) form, which requires signatures from two QMES faculty members and the QMES chairperson (currently Deborah Kashy at [kashyd@msu.edu](mailto:kashyd@msu.edu)), and submit that form to the Graduate Program Assistant.
3. Complete three advanced training courses (see list below).
4. Maintain a GPA of 3.9 for these five courses together (i.e., 4 of 5 courses with grade = 4.0 and at most one course with grade = 3.5).
5. Complete a student development project under the supervision of two members of the QMES faculty (see description below).
6. Submit the QMES [completion](#) form with signatures to the Graduate Program Assistant.

#### ***Prerequisite courses:***

Students must complete PSY 815, Quantitative Research Design and Analysis in Psychology, and PSY 818, Psychometric Theory and Test Construction. Students who have taken equivalent courses may request a waiver of the prerequisites from the QMES Chairperson. However, because MSU is certifying the student's expertise in quantitative methods, if both 815 and 818 are waived the student must complete *four* of the advanced training courses described below at MSU.

#### ***Advanced training courses:***

Students must complete three additional courses for the QMES Concentration in advanced quantitative and evaluative methods. Two of these three courses must focus on advanced quantitative statistical techniques. The third course can focus on either advanced research methods or quantitative methods. Workshops cannot be used as substitutes for the advanced courses. Courses taken from other departments must be approved by the QMES concentration chairperson.

QMES eligible courses are typically offered on a revolving schedule as sections of PSY 992 in topical areas such as: Structural Equation Modeling, Longitudinal Data Analysis, Advanced Structural Equation Modeling, Multilevel Modeling, Multivariate Design and Data Analysis, Computer Programming for Behavioral Scientists, Mixed Methods Approaches, Applied Research Methods, Network Analysis, Dyadic Data Analysis, and Program Evaluation.

**Student Development Project:**

In addition to the required QMES concentration course work, students must conduct an independent project on a topic reflecting their interests in quantitative methods and/or evaluation science. This project can be done at any time once the student has enrolled in the QMES concentration, but must not overlap with requirements of the student’s primary Ph.D. program. One member of the QMES faculty must supervise the proposed project and a second QMES member must serve as a consulting advisor to the project.

The student must submit a written proposal that outlines the goals of the project, methods, timelines, and deliverables to the two QMES faculty (a proposal meeting is not required). Both QMES faculty members must formally approve the project before the student can begin work.

The final product must be approved in writing by both QMES faculty (a defense is not required). The approved final project must be filed with the QMES Concentration Chairperson.

<b>Options for the student development project</b>	
Scholarly paper	For this option, students will write a first-authored paper on or using an advanced/sophisticated quantitative or evaluative method. The paper can be in collaboration with QMES faculty and should be publishable in a top-tier substantive or methodological journal in the psychological sciences.
Professional practice	For this option, students will conduct a field-based consultation project in program evaluation or quantitative methods under the supervision of the QMES faculty. QMES faculty will attend at least one meeting with the field consultation group.
Undergraduate teaching	For this option, students will teach a quantitative methods or evaluation science course (e.g., PSY 295) with a structured format including: syllabus, readings, supplemental materials, homework assignments, presentation materials, lecture notes, examinations, and instructor reflection of each lecture experience. QMES faculty members will also attend at least one lecture and provide developmental feedback.

**2.2.5 Master’s Thesis Proposal**

The Master’s Thesis is an original piece of scholarly research completed under the guidance of one’s Advisor. MSU defines research as “a formal investigation conducted for the purposes of producing or contributing to generalizable knowledge, and the reporting thereof.” In the Psychology Department, a thesis might take some form of an empirical investigation, but might also be a quantitative synthesis, statistical simulation, or computational model. Secondary data analysis that is designed to contribute knowledge but does not involve the student collecting information from people themselves may be considered acceptable as a thesis project by one’s committee. Work that does not contribute to

generalizable knowledge (e.g., a program evaluation without any extension meant to expand general knowledge; an employee survey for purely internal corporate descriptive use) would not be an acceptable thesis.

Your Master's Proposal is a formal description of your Master's thesis research. Your Advisor will provide guidance on what is expected in the proposal, but typically the proposal will include a description of the problem to be addressed, background literature, and study methods. You should work with your Advisor/Guidance Committee Chair to prepare the written proposal. Once your committee chair agrees that the proposal is ready for the defense, contact your committee members for possible dates and times – giving the committee at least 2 weeks to read and prepare for the defense. Be aware that when setting up meetings for the summer, most faculty members are on 9-month appointments, so they are under no obligation to meet during the summer months (May 16 -August 15). Therefore, if you are planning to have a defense during the summer months, you should check early with your committee members to make sure they are willing to meet in the summer, and to find out when they will be available.

Your Master's proposal defense is a formal meeting with your committee in which you describe your thesis research project, field questions concerning the theory and methods underlying your work, and discuss ways to amend the project to improve its contribution with your committee members. **The oral defense of the thesis proposal must take place before the research is conducted.** During this proposal meeting, you will give a brief (i.e., ~15-20 minutes) presentation on the proposed work, with the remaining time serving as a working meeting in which committee members ask questions, provide feedback on the proposed work, and suggest revisions/modifications, as needed. You should view this meeting as an opportunity to benefit from feedback and guidance from expert faculty about how best to craft your research. Anticipate that there may be considerable alterations to the work based on these discussions. At the end of the meeting, your committee will discuss the proposal without you in the room and decide whether the proposal is passed, passed with revisions, or not passed. If revisions are required, you will work with the committee to determine the timeline and whether the Advisor only, or the full committee, will review the revisions. You should bring a copy of the [Master's Level Thesis Proposal Approval](#) form to the meeting, although your committee members may choose not to sign the form until all changes are complete. Once completed and signed by your committee, return the form with a copy of your proposal to the Graduate Program Assistant.

Your MA research must be approved by the MSU IRB before you begin data collection. Because the [Master's Level Thesis Proposal Approval](#) form includes a section where you report on your current IRB status, you should begin the IRB process prior to your MA proposal defense so that, at minimum, your IRB application is "pending" at the time of the meeting. Changes to your study design or measurement that occur after you submit your original IRB application must be submitted as modifications and the new elements must be approved prior to the start of data collection.

In planning for your thesis project, consider what resources you will need to conduct the research. For example, you may need to reserve space in the Department or elsewhere in the university, including use of computer labs. Your Advisor may also have facilities and materials that can be shared with you for your research. Funding for research may be applied for through internal (e.g., research awards from the College of Social Science or Graduate School) as well as external sources (e.g., APA, APS; see Resources section of the handbook for information on these). External sites for research (e.g., businesses, organizations) may also provide in-kind considerations (e.g., space, employee time).

Students also may be expected to self-fund aspects of their research as normal educational expenses. In general, you should consider required resources as you prepare your research proposal and involve your Advisor and committee members in discussions regarding potential funding sources.

Within the Psychology Department, Interest Areas differ in the process of skill development and hence in the timing requirements for the thesis proposal. In Areas that require some form of a first-year research project or practicum for developing skills and field experience (BNS, CCN, ECO and ORG), students will typically propose their thesis after the first-year project or practicum is complete. For these Areas of the Department, the thesis should be proposed in the first semester of the second year in the program and **must be approved no later than May 15 of the second year**. In Areas without a required first-year project (CS and S/P), the thesis proposal should be written during the first year of graduate training, and **must be approved no later than May 15 of the first year**.

While students may petition for deadline extensions, success of petitions in such instances is unlikely without significant extenuating circumstances. Petitions must be made no later than May 1 of the first year for CS and S/P or May 1 of the second year for BNS, CCN, ECO, and ORG. Students who wish to petition for a deadline extension should prepare a written request for an extension that outlines the reasons for the request, and direct that petition to their Area Director, who will consult with all faculty in the Area regarding the request.

In general, you should seek to propose your Master's thesis early in your graduate career for multiple reasons. Proposing in a timely manner allows you more latitude in time to complete the research as well as more latitude in how you spend your time. Further, in fields such as organizational psychology, one is unlikely to be able to obtain applied experience or internships until after completing the thesis, and in the CS Area, an early proposal is required to devote the necessary time to the clinical practicum, formally beginning in year 2, and coursework throughout the first two years. Across the Department, failure to propose by the end the second year indicates that advancement to the Doctoral program is unlikely.

You must receive IRB approval before proceeding with a thesis. While IRB approval is not required prior to proposal, it is in your best interest to receive approval as soon as possible after obtaining committee approval on the proposal. Depending on the nature of the project, you may obtain a designation of an exempt determination or approval (i.e., after expedited or full board review), and in the case of activities such as simulations and meta-analyses, a designation of "not human subjects research." Regardless, **students must obtain documentation that the IRB has reviewed their project prior to commencing (i.e., a review letter or an approval letter or an AUF/IACUC form)**. This is true even if using an existing data set collected at MSU or elsewhere (e.g., a public data source); evidence that the project meets ethical guidelines is required. *You must provide a copy of your IRB approval letter to the graduate school along with the paperwork for final submission of your thesis (or dissertation).* *Students without an IRB approval or exemption letter may not be able to complete their degree.*

### **2.2.6 Conducting, Writing, and Defending your Master's Thesis**

Once your committee has approved revisions to your proposal and you have received an IRB approval/determination letter, data collection can proceed. Once data collection is completed, data analyses, writing, and revisions are performed under the guidance of the thesis Advisor until a draft is produced that is appropriate for review by the thesis committee. At this point, you will distribute

copies of the thesis to your committee members and you will schedule an oral defense. As was the case for the proposal defense, the thesis should be distributed at least 2 weeks prior to the defense.

### **Master's Thesis Defense**

Typically, the defense consists of a presentation of the research lasting between 10 and 20 minutes with the remaining time for committee members to ask questions, provide feedback on the work, and suggest revisions/modifications, as needed. At the end of the meeting, your committee will discuss the thesis without you in the room and decide whether the thesis is passed, passed with revisions, or not passed. The committee will also decide upon a grade, which will be applied to all of your previously deferred PSY 899 credits. If revisions are required, you will work with the committee to determine the timeline and whether the Advisor only, or the full committee, will review the revisions. You should bring a copy of the [Report on Master's Level Achievements](#) form to the meeting, although your committee may choose not to sign the form until all changes are complete. Once completed and signed by your committee, return the form to the Graduate Program Assistant.

Your committee chair and at least one other member of your three-person thesis committee must give you a passing grade (3.0 or higher) in order to pass your thesis defense. If a committee member dissents, they must explain their grade/decision on the [Report on Master's Level Achievements](#) form. Your thesis grade is determined by your entire committee, with the chairperson making the final determination in the event of a deadlock on the part of the committee. Failure to pass your thesis defense will result in dismissal from the program.

The approved and formatted thesis must be submitted electronically to the Graduate School via ProQuest. The instructions for electronic submissions are available from [Theses and Dissertation Submissions](#). The review process is interactive and final approval can take anywhere from a few hours to weeks, depending upon the extent of the necessary revisions and how diligent the author is when making the necessary revisions. The date for the **FINAL APPROVAL** of an electronic Thesis or Dissertation to the Graduate School for graduating the semester of that submission is listed for each semester on the graduate school webpage [here](#). If you intend to graduate in a given semester, your document must be accepted and delivered to the publisher, ProQuest, by 5:00 p.m. on the deadline date. This means that your document has been submitted via the ProQuest website, has been reviewed by a Graduate School ETD Administrator for formatting, has been deemed to be formatted correctly and all necessary paperwork has been turned in to the Graduate School prior to the deadline date and time. **The deadline date is not simply the last date to submit your document to the Graduate School via the ProQuest website. Make sure you are aware of the deadline dates.**

The Graduate School permits the submission of supplementary materials to ProQuest, in addition to the main body of a thesis. These supplemental materials will not be reviewed by the Graduate School for formatting requirements, but they must be acceptable by ProQuest and comply with ProQuest's criteria and storage limits. All supplemental materials to be submitted need the written approval of the thesis committee chair.

**You must be enrolled for at least 1 credit during the semester in which you orally defend your thesis or research project.** This requirement may be waived if the examination is administered during the summer session immediately following a spring semester during which you were registered and/or prior to a fall semester in which you will be registered. When you register for classes for the semester you plan on receiving your degree, you must complete [an application for graduation](#) and alert the Graduate

Program Assistant of your intent to graduate. This begins the procedure by which the various offices involved will be notified of your intention to graduate, and *must be filed before the end of the first week of the semester you expect to complete your degree requirements.*

Timelines for the thesis defense follow from the timelines for the thesis proposal. **Students in Areas that complete a first-year project (i.e., CCN, BNS, ECO and ORG) are expected to defend their thesis by the end of their third year (May 15). Students in Areas that complete a first-year project (i.e., CCN, BNS, ECO and ORG) are expected to defend their thesis by the end of their third year (May 15). The S/P area has a deadline of May 15 and the CS Area has a deadline of April 1, due to the assignment to practicum (see Appendix C).** Failure to defend by these dates means you will not be advanced to the Doctoral program. This also has implications for continued funding in subsequent years, as you will no longer be considered in good standing in the Department. Petitions for reconsideration for advancement in cases where the defense occurs after these deadlines need to be sent to the Area Director and Associate Chair for Graduate Studies within 10 days of completion of the Master's thesis defense meeting.

Note that the University has the additional time limit that all requirements for a Master's degree must be completed within 6 years of taking the first course on your Master's Plan of Study.

### **2.2.7 Exit Survey**

The MSU Graduate School conducts a short online exit survey for all students graduating with a MA/MS or PhD degree. Only students who have applied for graduation will have access to the survey, which asks questions about educational experiences in MSU graduate programs, as well as about immediate professional plans. The MSU Graduate School uses data from this survey when reviewing graduate programs and to guide decisions about services and initiatives for graduate students. The identity of all respondents is kept confidential and only aggregate (group) information is made available to faculty and administrators.

You will receive an e-mail message from the Dean of the Graduate School with a link to the survey. However, you do not need to wait for that e-mail message to complete the survey after applying for graduation. It takes about 5-10 minutes to complete the online survey. Below are the [instructions for completing the survey](#)

- Access the following website
- Master's Students [survey](#)
- Enter your MSU NetID (Login Name) and Password
- Complete all the items on the survey. When finished, click *Submit*.
- If you cannot open this survey, email [destination-survey@egr.msu.edu](mailto:destination-survey@egr.msu.edu) and include your name, student ID #, degree level (MA/MS) and semester of graduation. You will then be notified when you are able to complete the survey.

### **2.3 Requirements for the Doctoral Degree in Psychology**

In this section we detail the requirements for a Doctoral degree in psychology. The key components of the Doctoral degree include forming a Doctoral Guidance Committee, filing a Doctoral plan of study, passing a comprehensive exam, writing and defending a dissertation proposal, writing and defending the dissertation, and completing between 24 and 36 credits of PSY 999 (Dissertation research credits).

Each of these components are described in more detail below.

[GradPlan](#) is the web-interactive system for Doctoral students to create and store their PhD Degree Plans, Guidance Committee and course changes, comprehensive and final defense reports, and the final University Degree Certification. It provides electronic circulation for checking/approvals and generates automatic emails that are needed. A general rule of thumb is that for all intents and purposes, you are not considered to have fulfilled Doctoral program requirements until these requirements have been documented and approved in Grad Plan. Instructions on making changes to your plan, should they be required, can be found [here](#).

In addition to providing links to [GradPlan](#) for the [Doctoral Plan of Study](#) form and the Amendments to the [Doctoral Plan of Study](#) form, the [Psychology Department website](#) has five forms (posted under “PhD Forms” that you will need to submit as you pursue your Doctoral degree. The [PhD Comprehensive Exam Report Form](#) is completed after you have completed all written and oral components of the comprehensive exam. The [Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Approval](#) form should be completed and signed after you successfully defend your dissertation proposal. After you have completed your written dissertation, and at least three weeks before your dissertation oral defense, you will need to complete the [PhD Notification of Final Oral Exam](#) form, and the [PhD Record of Dissertation and Final Oral Exam](#) form is typically completed and signed after you defend your dissertation. Finally, there is a form that asks you to identify your post-PhD placement (The [PhD Placement Report](#)).

### **2.3.1 Admission to the PhD program**

After you have successfully defended your MA thesis and completed all of the courses on your Master’s plan of study, your Master’s Guidance Committee makes a recommendation to your Area Director on your admission to the PhD program. After consultation with the tenured and tenure-track faculty members in your Interest Area, the Area Director signs the Master’s completion forms and makes a recommendation on your admission to the PhD program.

Therefore, admission to the PhD program is not automatic upon completion of the Master’s thesis. Students may not be recommended for advancement to the PhD Program for a variety of reasons. Students who are recommended by their Master’s Guidance Committee are admitted into the Doctoral program if they have demonstrated competence in the skills needed at the Master’s level and they exhibit readiness for Doctoral-level work. The annual written feedback you have received from faculty during formal student reviews, as well as your conversations with your Advisor and committee members, should serve to keep you well-informed about your progress in the program prior to this recommendation.

As previously noted, students who enter the program with a MA or MS from another institution *who have filed for and received a waiver for the MA degree* (see section 2.1) may be automatically admitted into the Doctoral program. Students who complete their Master’s degree at MSU must be formally admitted to the Doctoral program.

Once your Area Director and the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies have approved your admission into the PhD program, you are now officially admitted into the Doctoral Program. At this point you are a PhD graduate student. Once you have completed your comprehensive exam (see below), you will advance to being a “PhD Candidate”.

### 2.3.2 Doctoral Plan of Study & Guidance Committee

When you begin your Doctoral program, you will need to create a Doctoral Guidance Committee. The Associate Chair for Graduate Studies has the discretion to approve or not approve a committee or to add a committee member to any Doctoral Committee.

#### Requirements for the Doctoral Guidance Committee

- The Chair of your Guidance Committee must be a Psychology Department faculty member within your Interest Area and approved by the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.
- Three of the four committee members must be regular members of the MSU Psychology Department (someone who has a tenure-track or tenured appointment at MSU), and students in CS must have two members of the CS faculty on their Doctoral committee. Therefore, only 1 committee member may be either a faculty Emeritus (retired from the University but maintains a courtesy appointment) or a tenured or tenure track faculty member from outside the Psychology Department. Inclusion of such members is subject to approval by the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.

Less common alternatives for Guidance Committee members include:

- An additional (5th) committee member who can be an adjunct faculty member.
- A fixed-term (non-tenure-stream) faculty member from MSU or a tenured or tenure-track faculty member from another University. In this case, you need to seek approval from the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies. This request must be subsequently approved by the College of Social Science and the MSU Graduate School.

If you are pursuing an individualized plan of study that spans two of the Department's Areas, your Doctoral Guidance Committee must contain at least one current faculty member from each of the two Areas, and the Chair must come from one of them.

The members of your Guidance Committee work with you to develop your Plan of Study, and in most Areas (BNS, CCN, CS, ECO & SP) they oversee your comprehensive exam (ORG has a rotating committee that supervises all Doctoral student comprehensive exams). Once you have been advanced to the doctoral program, you should complete the Doctoral Plan of Study, which is completed using [GradPlan](#), includes: 1) courses you will take (not including any that were included on your Master's plan of study); 2) your dissertation subject; 3) your committee members; and 4) plans for your comprehensive exam. After your Plan of Study has been submitted using [GradPlan](#), it will be routed electronically to the Psychology Graduate Program Assistant and all members of your Doctoral Guidance Committee for approvals. It is not official until it has received both Departmental and College of Social Science approval. ***The Doctoral Plan of Study must be filed and approved before the end of your second semester as a Doctoral student for you to remain eligible for registration.***

The members of the Doctoral Guidance Committee often serve on your Doctoral Dissertation Committee, but this is not necessarily the case. Once you have reached the stage of working on your dissertation, you can select new committee members to take advantage of different faculty members' expertise. At that point, you can amend your Doctoral Guidance Committee membership to reflect those changes to the committee (the amendment to the Doctoral committee membership is completed on [GradPlan](#)). Regulations concerning who may serve on Doctoral Dissertation Committees are the same as those for the Doctoral Guidance Committees: composed of at least four faculty, at least three of



whom are regular Department members. An adjunct or fixed term faculty member may co-chair a dissertation along with a regular member of the Department. The chair of your dissertation must come from the Area of Psychology to which you were admitted (or one of the two Areas if you are pursuing an individualized plan of study). Also, the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies has the discretion to approve or not approve a committee or to add a committee member to any Doctoral committee, as does the College of Social Science.

***It is a University regulation that you cannot change committee members within 60 days before the date of the oral defense of the dissertation.***

This Plan of Study must satisfy the requirements of your Area of study. If you wish to pursue an individualized plan of study that spans two of the Department's Areas, your committee may recommend a unique set of requirements for your courses and comprehensive exam that can be approved by the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies in consultation with the Area Directors of the two Areas.

### **2.3.3 Course Requirements**

As noted in Section 2.1, students who have a waiver for the Master's degree and enter directly into the Doctoral program must complete the course requirements for their Area (see Section 2.2.3) either by taking those courses at MSU or by having them waived.

All Doctoral students must complete a minimum of 24 credits and *no more than 36 credits* of Doctoral dissertation research (course number PSY 999). You receive credit for those 999s when the PhD is awarded. This is a University requirement. You should carefully consider the number of research credits to take while being funded on an assistantship so as to reach the minimum but not exceed the maximum. That is, you do not want to end up having to pay tuition for 999 credits to reach the 24-credit minimum. However, you should keep track of this so that you do not exceed the limit of 36 PSY 999 credits.

The College of Social Science has a policy about academic standards. As a Doctoral student, you may only have grades below 3.0 (including N grades in the P-N grading system) in two of the courses listed on your Doctoral plan of study. In addition, you must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 to remain in the Doctoral program. Three grades below 3.0 or an overall GPA below 3.0 will result in being dismissed from the program. You will receive a warning letter from the Graduate Office if your academic performance is unsatisfactory.

Full-time status for Doctoral students is defined as a minimum of 1 credit of PSY 999 for those students who have successfully completed all components of their comprehensive examination and are actively engaged in dissertation research. Note the University has residency requirements: prior to being able to drop to 1 credit, students must fulfill the minimum of one-year residency requirements of the university for this 1 credit minimum to apply. A year of residence is made up of two consecutive semesters, involving the completion of credits at the level of full-time status of graduate work each semester (i.e., you must be registered for 6-9 credit hours each semester).

If you choose to relocate outside of Michigan prior to finishing your dissertation research, you will no longer be eligible for in-state tuition rates and will be charged out-of-state rates. (This does not apply to students in CS who have relocated for the required internship). Remaining in residence without taking full time employment while finishing your dissertation is generally a wise strategy. Students who take

full time positions prior to completion of the dissertation often add several years on to their degree completion as well as considerable personal expenses for needed tuition credits

#### **2.3.4 Comprehensive Exams**

The comprehensive examination has the purpose of demonstrating that you have an appropriate breadth of understanding of your field of psychology as well as sufficient depth of understanding of topics and methods within your Area. The nature of the comprehensive exam varies somewhat depending upon one's Area of specialization within psychology and the pedagogically appropriate format for that specialization.

**Note that the comprehensive exam cannot be taken in the same semester in which the Master's thesis is defended. In addition, you cannot propose your dissertation until your comprehensive exams have been passed.**

Within the Psychology Department, comprehensive exams take several formats, and some Areas require students to complete several different components for their comprehensive exam. Generally speaking, the components of the exam include one or more of the following:

- 1) A written examination based on readings and content in your Area
- 2) A required paper with a focus on theory and literature in your Area
- 3) Designing course materials for teaching an undergraduate course in your specialty Area

In addition to these written formats, BNS and CCN require an oral exam based on the written components of their comprehensive exam and CS requires the submission of a first-author empirical paper for publication.

***The specific comprehensive exam requirements for each Area of the Department are detailed in Appendix B in this handbook.***

Regardless of format, the Department maintains standardization in timing of comprehensive exams and evaluation of performance. Students in Areas that require comprehensive exam proposals (BS, CCN, CS, and ECO) should propose their comprehensive examination plans as soon as possible after completing the Master's thesis. **While the timing for proposing comps will vary depending on when the thesis is completed, for all students the comprehensive exam must be completed by the end of your 4<sup>th</sup> year in the program (i.e., by May 15 of your 4<sup>th</sup> year).**

Overall comprehensive exam performance is graded as pass, pass with required revisions, or fail. Revisions may include being asked to redo portions of the examination or make revisions to a paper. Failure would require retaking the examination; note that re-examinations that extend beyond expected timelines for comprehensive exam completion must be approved as extensions of deadlines. One retake is allowed; a second failure would be grounds for dismissal from the program. You will be officially notified of your exam performance by the chair of your Doctoral Guidance Committee a timely manner (i.e., typically within 2-3 weeks). After the examination, regardless of outcome, a copy of all written questions/paper instructions and your responses to them will be placed in your departmental file. This file is maintained by the Graduate Program Assistant and you may consult this file upon request.

The Department timelines are meant to ensure reasonable degree progress; in the rare cases where extenuating circumstances warrant extensions to Department deadlines, students may petition for deadline extensions. Students who wish to petition for a deadline extension should prepare a written request for an extension that outlines the reasons for the request, and direct that petition to their Area Director, who will consult with all faculty in the Area regarding the request. However, it is important to note that there are immovable University deadlines. That is, the University requires that all *Comprehensive Exams must be passed WITHIN FIVE YEARS* from the time when you begin the first class at MSU that appears on your Doctoral Plan of Study. Requests for time extensions to the University requirement must be made by the Chair of your committee and endorsed by the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies. Requests should be made for a specific time period, normally no longer than one year, and must include a specific end date. *When a time extension is approved, you must retake the comprehensive examinations by that date.* If you believe there is justification for not requiring a retake of the exam, you must request this exception in writing as part of the request for the time extension. Extensions endorsed by the Department's administration must be approved by the College of Social Science and the Graduate School.

The College of Social Science strictly enforces a number of regulations concerning comprehensive exams.

- The names of the examiners should be entered on the [MSU Record of Comprehensive Examinations form](#), which can be found under PhD forms [here](#), and each examiner should sign under their typed name.
- You must be enrolled for at least one credit the semester in which the exams are taken. This requirement may be waived if the examination is administered during the summer session immediately following a spring semester during which you were registered and/or prior to a fall semester in which you will be registered.
- The Record of Comprehensive Exam form should be submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant after all committee members have signed.
- The student's comprehensive exam committee should upload the approved written comprehensive exam/instructions to the Department's GradPortal.

### **2.3.5 The Dissertation Proposal and Oral Defense**

Your Doctoral Dissertation Committee can include the same faculty members as your Doctoral Guidance Committee or you can make changes in the committee composition. Such changes must be filed in [GradPlan](#). Your dissertation chair and committee members provide guidance on the content of your proposal. As with your Master's proposal, the dissertation proposal is a formal description of your dissertation research. It should present a clear statement of the research problem and goals, provide a thorough review of relevant literature, and include a very detailed description of the research methods you will use.

Once your chair determines that your proposal is ready for your committee, an oral proposal defense meeting can be scheduled. Committee members should receive copies of your proposal at least 2 weeks in advance of the defense meeting. Take a copy of the [Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Approval Form](#) (which can be found [here](#)), so it can be filled out at the meeting. The oral defense is intended to be a working meeting in which the proposed research is critiqued and required revisions are outlined. You should view this meeting as an opportunity to benefit from feedback and guidance from expert faculty about how best to craft your dissertation research. Anticipate that there may be considerable

alterations to the work based on this discussion. Outcomes of the proposal meeting include approval as is, approval with revisions, extensive revisions and new proposal defense required.

When your proposal has been approved, the signed [Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Approval Form](#), along with an electronic file of the accepted dissertation proposal, should be submitted through the Psychology Departments Graduate Services Request System on the department website to the Graduate Program Assistant soon after your proposal has been accepted.

### **2.3.6 Dissertation Research and Dissertation Defense**

After your proposal has been approved, you will focus on conducting the work detailed therein. At this stage in the program, your dissertation research will be your primary focus. Maintaining contact with your Doctoral Dissertation Committee members during this process is good practice; these faculty members are tasked with a variety of roles in the process, including serving as a sounding board for resolving any issues that arise, content expertise, and guidance regarding the conduct of research.

Once your committee chair agrees that your written dissertation document is ready for defense, you may schedule the defense meeting with your Doctoral Dissertation Committee. You should provide the document to the committee members at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled date of the defense.

Dissertation defenses are public meetings and you must complete the [PhD Notification of Final Oral Examination](#) form (found [here](#)), and, along with an abstract, submit it to the Graduate Program Assistant at least three weeks prior to the oral defense meeting so that the meeting can be advertised. The public presentation is open to all faculty (i.e., those that are not a member of the dissertation committee), graduate students, and members of the public.

At the dissertation defense, you will be asked to give a brief presentation (approximately 20 minutes) of your work. Questions from members of the audience are typically invited prior to questions from the dissertation committee members. The second part of the oral defense, which includes the formal examination of the student and committee discussion, may not be public depending on the Interest Area's traditions.

At the conclusion of the defense, the committee votes on whether the dissertation is to be accepted. Often, a defense can lead to requirements to make some changes to the dissertation before final approval. Your committee chair and at least two other members of your four-person dissertation committee must give you a Pass grade in order to pass your Doctoral defense. In the case of an individualized plan in which students are spanning two Areas, at least one faculty member from each of these two groups (one of whom will be the chair) must pass you. If a committee member dissents, they must explain their decision on the "PhD Record of Dissertation and Oral Examination" form.

### **2.3.7 Get Your PhD and Graduate**

In order to graduate in a particular semester, you need to:

1. Apply for graduation. When you register for classes for the semester you plan on receiving your degree, you must complete [an application for graduation](#) and alert the Graduate Program Assistant of your intent to graduate. This begins the procedure by which the various offices involved will be notified of your intention to graduate, and must be filed *before the end of the first week of the semester you expect to complete your degree requirements*.

2. The completed dissertation and all completed and signed paperwork must be received by the [deadline noted by the MSU Graduate School](#) in order to graduate in a particular semester.
3. **As a final checklist**, the following forms and documents must be completed and returned to the Psychology Department Graduate Program Assistant in order to graduate.
  - a. IRB letter or review notice for dissertation research
  - b. Comprehensive Exam report-signed by your committee. This date is also entered into Grad Plan and approved by the college and graduate school. (see the [MSU Record of Comprehensive Examinations form](#))
  - c. Dissertation Proposal Approvals-signed by your committee (see the [Doctoral Level Approval of Dissertation Proposal form](#))
  - d. Dissertation Defense announcement form turned in to the Graduate Program Assistant 3 weeks prior to your defense along with an abstract (see the [PhD Notification of Final Oral Examination form](#))
  - e. Ensure that [GradPlan](#) is complete. After your defense date has been approved by the Graduate School, you need to enter your dissertation title and IRB approval number or review information.
  - f. Dissertation Proposal Approvals - signed by your committee members (see the [Doctoral Level Approval of Dissertation Proposal form](#))
  - g. [PhD Record of Dissertation and Final Oral Exam](#) (found [here](#)). This form requires the signature of all members of your dissertation committee following your dissertation defense. After final revisions, your Committee Chair will sign the approval. This date is entered into GradPlan and must be approved by the College and Graduate School.
  - h. A final copy of Dissertation should be submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant electronically through the graduate program portal on the department website
  - i. Documentation that you have completed RCR requirements (see section 4 below)
  - j. Verification of Internship for Clinical students
  - k. [PhD Placement Report](#) (found [here](#)). This is your statement on job or educational plans after receiving your degree. Your placement information should also be entered into GradPlan.

In addition to providing the above documents to the Psychology Department, the approved and formatted dissertation must be submitted electronically to the Graduate School via ProQuest. The instructions for electronic submissions are available from [Theses and Dissertation Submissions page](#). The review process is interactive and final approval can take anywhere from a few hours to weeks, depending upon the extent of the necessary revisions and how diligent the author is when making the necessary revisions. The date for the **FINAL APPROVAL** of an electronic Dissertation to the Graduate School for graduating the semester of that submission is listed for each semester on the [graduate school webpage](#). If you intend to graduate in a given semester, your document must be accepted and delivered to the publisher, ProQuest, by 5:00 p.m. on the deadline date. This means that your document has been submitted via the ProQuest website, has been reviewed by a Graduate School ETD Administrator for formatting, has been deemed to be formatted correctly and all necessary paperwork has been turned in to the Graduate School prior to the deadline date and time. **The deadline date is not simply the last date to submit your document to the Graduate School via the ProQuest website. Make sure you are aware of the deadline dates.**

The Graduate School permits the submission of supplementary materials to ProQuest, in addition to the main body of a dissertation. These supplemental materials will not be reviewed by the Graduate School for formatting requirements, but they must be acceptable by ProQuest and comply with ProQuest's

criteria and storage limits. All supplemental materials to be provided to ProQuest need the written approval of the dissertation committee chair.

Students submitting a dissertation to ProQuest can request a hold/embargo of publication by ProQuest by contacting the Graduate School at [msuetds.approval@grd.msu.edu](mailto:msuetds.approval@grd.msu.edu) or calling 517-353-3220. In response to the request, the Graduate School will send a form to you that needs to be completed and turned to the Graduate School prior to the document submission to ProQuest. The form needs to be signed by your Advisor and by the Associate Dean of the College of Social Science. The request for the hold/embargo may be for six months, one year, or two years. Requests for a period longer than six months must include a brief justification for the length of the requested hold/embargo.

At the time of submission to ProQuest, authors now have the opportunity to create an ORCID that provides researchers with a unique identifier for linking their research outputs and activities. An ORCID:

- Improves recognition of research contributions
- Reduces form-filling (enter data once, re-use it often)
- Works with many institutions, funders, and publishers
- Is a requirement of many journal manuscript submission systems and grant application forms

To learn more about ORCID go to the [ORCID website](#).

### **2.3.8 University Guidelines for Students Pursuing Dual-Degrees**

In addition to options for completing a psychology graduate degree that spans two Areas within the Psychology Department, MSU offers Doctoral students the exceptional opportunity to work in conjunction with faculty Advisors to develop a dual major Doctoral program across two departments at the University. Such a program will reflect the required courses and standards for both departments with a single dissertation. All dual major Doctoral degrees must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. A request for the dual major degree must be submitted via [GradPlan](#) within one semester following its development *and within the first two years of enrollment in the PhD program at MSU*.

In order to receive a dual major, the following conditions (in addition to those listed above in section 2.3.7) must be met:

- l. The intent to receive the degree in two areas must be outlined in the MA and PhD Plans of Study.
- m. The PhD Degree Plan must reflect the required standards for both departments.
- n. The integrated course work must be satisfactory to both departments.
- o. The comprehensive examination must be passed to the satisfaction of both departments.
- p. A Doctoral Guidance Committee including members from both departments must be satisfied that the dissertation represents a contribution meeting the usual standards in both areas.
- q. There must be a single dissertation that represents an integration of the disciplinary areas.
- r. Responsible Conduct of Research requirements will be as defined and approved by the Doctoral Guidance Committee (i.e., to cover requirements of both departments).
- s. You must submit a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) detailing the agreement between the two departments. The information in this MOU must match information in Grad Plan.

Because of the additional complexity of a dual degree plan and the need for coordination across different academic units at MSU, if you choose to seek a dual degree you should work closely with your Advisor, relevant program faculty, and the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies to explore whether this is an option for you and to work through the details of how you will meet these criteria.

### **2.3.9 Time Limits for Doctoral Program**

The Official University time limits are that all requirements for the PhD degree must be completed *within 8 years of taking the first course on your Doctoral Plan of Study*. This applies to any course listed on your Doctoral Plan of Study, even if taken at MSU before you entered our graduate program or courses for which you received transfer credit.

Application for extensions of the 8-year period of time toward degree must be submitted by the Psychology Department's Associate Chair for Graduate Studies for approval by the Dean of the College of Social Science and the Dean of the Graduate School. Upon approval of the extension, Doctoral comprehensive examinations must be passed again.

### **2.2.10 Exit Survey**

The MSU Graduate School conducts a short online exit survey for all students graduating with a PhD degree. Only students who have applied for graduation will have access to the survey, which asks questions about educational experiences in MSU graduate programs, as well as about immediate professional plans. The MSU Graduate School uses data from this survey when reviewing graduate programs and to guide decisions about services and initiatives for graduate students.

The identity of all respondents is kept confidential and only aggregate (group) information is made available to faculty and administrators.

You will receive an e-mail message from the Dean of the Graduate School with a link to the survey. However, you do not need to wait for that e-mail message to complete the survey after applying for graduation. It takes about 5-10 minutes to complete the online survey. Below are the instructions for completing the survey and they are also available from [The Graduate School Exit Survey Instructions](#)

- Access the following website [Doctoral Survey](#)
- Enter your MSU NetID (Login Name) and Password
- Complete all the items on the survey. When finished, click *Submit*.

If you cannot open this survey, email [destination-survey@egr.msu.edu](mailto:destination-survey@egr.msu.edu) and include your name, student ID #, degree level (PhD, MA) and semester of graduation. You will then be notified when you are able to complete the survey.

## **3. DEPARTMENTAL AND STUDENT OBLIGATIONS**

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The Psychology Department has obligations to all graduate students, and conversely, students have certain obligations to the Department and to themselves. This section of the Handbook details those obligations. The most important of these is to maintain an environment in which there is mutual respect, integrity in research and teaching activities, and a pursuit of excellence in scholarship.

The Department will provide you with:

1. Support and encouragement of creative original research.
2. Periodic reviews and updating of curriculum and program requirements.
3. Oversight of faculty teaching and advising of graduate students.
4. Annual feedback in the form of student evaluations from your Area (see section 3.1).
5. Administrative support for HR issues related to TA/RA positions (e.g., payroll, contracting).
6. Communication regarding changes to policies and procedures as warranted (e.g., directives from the College or Graduate School that impact students).
7. Responsiveness to appropriate academic inquiries (e.g., queries regarding requirements or deadlines).
8. Fostering of a civil educational and work environment.

You are expected to:

1. Approach academic work with diligence and striving for superior performance to meet stated expectations and timelines about progress toward the degree as described in Section 2.
2. Engage in all aspects of scientific research as a means of developing technical proficiency and knowledge, including engaging with relevant literature, designing studies, collecting and analyzing data, and presenting research findings in written and oral formats.
3. Participate in the academic culture of the Department, including attendance at departmental and institutional presentations, weekly seminars and colloquia, as well as at relevant professional meetings.
4. Be a good citizen of the Department by engaging in events and activities designed to sustain the Department (e.g., volunteering for committees, providing input when requested) and engaging with staff, faculty, and other students with civility.
5. Learn and adhere to University and academic unit rules, procedures and policies, including those outlined in this Graduate Handbook.
6. Communicate with your Advisor, committee, Area Director, Associate Chair of Graduate studies, and departmental staff regarding progress and concerns.
7. Comply with disciplinary and scholarly codes of ethics in course work, research, and professional activities (see Sections 3.10 and 4.6).
8. Provide copies of research-related documents (such as grant proposals), HR compliance related documents, university required forms, and other requests in a timely manner as required.
9. Appropriately use departmental resources. (e.g., personal long-distance phone calls cannot be placed on departmental phones; appropriate use of photocopying for teaching activities).

### **3.1 Student Evaluations: Annual and Periodic**

It is critical that you know where you stand with your Advisor, your Graduate Program, and the Department as a whole. Consistent with the [Graduate Rights and Responsibilities Document](#) (GSRR), as a graduate student you have a right to receive periodic evaluations that assess your progress, performance, and professional potential. Each graduate student in the Department will receive written feedback every year by faculty members qualified to provide such feedback (usually the student's Advisor or Area Director) regarding progress toward degree (referred to as the annual review). Students also receive periodic formal evaluations as warranted. You will be provided with copies of all formal evaluations, which will be filed with the Department Graduate Office. Note that students in the CS Area have additional evaluation requirements and procedures that must be followed (see Appendix C).



In addition, you should always feel free to ask your Advisor and your committee members how you are doing. If you have any concerns, you should have a candid conversation with your Advisor and other faculty members. Advisors, as well as other faculty with whom students interact, are expected to provide students with feedback on their work.

**Formal Periodic Evaluations:** A student may receive a formal evaluation at any point during their academic career when concerns are raised by faculty about the student's progress, performance, or professional potential. Relevant faculty will be included in the evaluation process, typically program area faculty, but in some cases, members of the student's guidance committee (MA, PhD) who are outside of the area group will also be involved. Determinations and recommendations made by the faculty during a periodic formal evaluation will be provided in writing to the student. The letter documenting the periodic evaluation will describe the specific concerns with progress, performance, and/or professional potential; expectations for student response(s) to these concerns; and any supports to be provided by the faculty or program to assist in addressing the concerns. Periodic formal evaluation letters will be reviewed and signed by the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.

**Unsatisfactory Performance:** If during an annual or periodic formal review a determination is made that your progress or performance is unsatisfactory, you will be notified in writing (as part of the annual evaluation or in a formal periodic evaluation) and a copy of that notice will be placed in your academic file (see section 3.2). If a determination is made that your status in the program is in jeopardy, you will be notified in writing and provided with specific steps that must be taken within a specific timeframe to improve your standing (i.e., a Performance Improvement Plan or PIP). A PIP is typically used as an early intervention strategy when a student is beginning to exhibit struggles. The purpose of the PIP is to remediate issues before they become problematic for the student in completing program requirements. While the nature of a PIP will vary depending upon the performance issue, it should indicate concrete steps that can be taken to improve the student's standing as well as timelines for completion of those steps. Areas such as CS have more formalized formats for the processes of addressing performance improvement. If you do not meet these requirements to the satisfaction of the faculty in your Area, you may be dismissed from the program. In lieu of dismissal, faculty may also choose to suspend a graduate student from the program until specific requirements are met. Dismissal for cause is also possible in extreme cases (e.g., serious destruction of University property, fabrication of data).

If you disagree with any part of a formal evaluation letter you receive, you may submit a written response to the Psychology Department Graduate Office and this response will be filed along with the evaluation letter. You may also request a meeting with the Department's Associate Chair for Graduate Studies to discuss any concerns about the evaluation letter or process. Students who believe they have been wrongly suspended, terminated or placed on an improvement plan can also request that the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies convene the Psychology Department Graduate Student Grievance Committee to review the case. The Grievance Committee's recommendation is considered the final determination of the Department. (See section 3.3 on Grievance Committee procedures). In some cases, the Department may waive jurisdiction to the College of Social Science to follow the College grievance process.

Academic dishonesty is reported by instructors or research supervisors to the MSU administration at the College of Social Science, the Graduate School, and the Research Integrity Office (if it is a research issue). Academic dishonesty or problems with research integrity may result in dismissal from the program.

Recommendations for dismissal from these administrative units supersede departmental faculty recommendations.

### 3.2 Your Departmental Files

The Psychology Graduate Office keeps two files for you throughout your graduate school career. Your Academic File contains each of the forms you submit to note the achievement of important milestones in your training. Any form that you submit to the Psychology Department Graduate Office will be placed in your Academic File. Copies of your annual evaluations and written responses from you (if you provide them) will also go into this file. You have the right to review the material in your Academic File. To do so, please [contact the Registrar's Office](#) to submit a request.

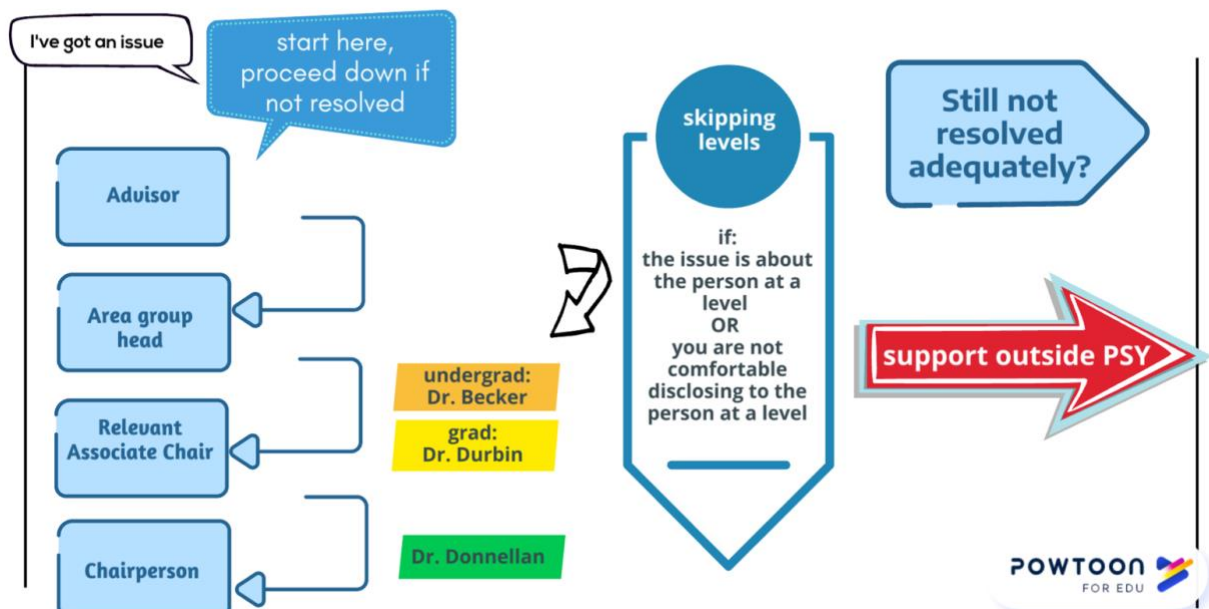
The second file is your Personnel File which contains the records of your employment as a TA, RA and/or hourly employee. Appointment forms and evaluations of your performance in appointment are stored in your Personnel File. You also have the right to review this file. To do so, make a request to the Psychology Department Graduate Program Assistant. According to the GEU contract this request must be in writing, and you are limited to three viewings a year.

### 3.3 Resolution of Conflicts or Concerns

In an academic environment, disagreement over ideas and approaches to research are an expected occurrence and should be resolved by the parties involved. Further, it is expected that many other areas of conflict can be mutually resolved via direct discussion between relevant parties. The first step in any conflict – with a peer, Advisor, instructor, research supervisor, or staff member – always should be a direct discussion with the other individual.

On occasion, discussions with other parties may not lead to satisfactory resolutions. The graphic below provides a decision tree of who to go to in order to address a conflict or concern that is of a serious nature.

## Questions/issues/concerns decision tree



# Support resources outside of PSY

<https://socialscience.msu.edu/about/leadership/assoc-dean-grad-studies.html>



- 1 Grad policies
- 2 CSS rules & regulations

<https://ombud.msu.edu/index.html>



- 1 MSU rules & regulations
- 2 Conflicts & disputes
- 3 confidential



You should first consult with your Advisor about the issue/problem. If the issue is not resolved, then you should consult with your Area Director. If the issue is not resolved, then the Psychology Associate Chair for Graduate Studies is the typical next step. If the issue is not resolved at that level, the Psychology Department Chair should be consulted. The Department Chair and Associate Chair for Graduate Studies will make all efforts to assist the student in resolving the issue in a way that provides support to the student and minimizes conflict between the student and faculty. Thereafter the College of Social Science Associate Dean for Graduate Affairs is the appropriate resource for college and graduate school policies. If the issue is not resolved, then the Graduate School Dean's Office may be consulted. The [University Ombudsperson](#) is another resource for problem solving.

There are three specific instances where you may be directed toward other resources, depending on the nature of a concern.

1. Grievances: If a concern relates to a violation of academic rights (e.g., a dispute regarding a grade) or an allegation of academic misconduct (e.g., plagiarism), this issue may be brought to the Department Grievance Committee (see Appendix D for details regarding academic grievance procedures).
2. Discrimination: If a concern involves an allegation of discrimination, contact should be made with the [Office of Institutional Equity](#) (OIE).
3. Relationship Violence or Sexual Misconduct (RVSM violations): If a concern involves harassment or sexual assault, contact should be made with the OIE as well.

### 3.4 Accommodations for disabilities

If you have a disability that may require an accommodation related to a specific course, you may obtain a verified individual services accommodation (VISA) determination from MSU's Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD) Office. Information on obtaining such accommodation is available at

[RCPD](#). RCPD will provide you with information to provide to course instructors.

If you are seeking an accommodation related to your academic program outside of coursework (e.g., with a milestone or other program requirement), the decision process for such accommodation must involve the Graduate School, RCPD, the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies, and relevant faculty from your Area. Please see the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies if you are planning to seek accommodations for aspects of your academic work. Accommodations are not retroactive and therefore should be sought in advance.

### **3.5 Leave, Absence, and Other Related Policies**

There may be occasions where you may need to take leave or be absent from your academic responsibilities. (Leave and absence policies for TAs and RAs are noted in section 5 on assistantship duties). Absence policies for specific courses are set by instructors. Absence from other academic responsibilities (e.g., independent research, practicum work, attendance at colloquia) should be discussed with your Advisor and/or Area Director.

Below are some other potentially relevant policies regarding less common leave situations that may impact your academic work.

#### **Jury Duty**

If you are called for Jury Duty, notify your Advisor and your course instructors to make arrangements for handling your academic responsibilities. You may be asked for proof of jury duty service.

#### **Grief Absence Policy**

In the case of a grief absence, you should notify your faculty Advisor and faculty of the courses in which you are enrolled of the need for a grief absence in a timely manner, but no later than one week from your initial knowledge of the situation. You will need to provide appropriate verification of the grief absence as specified by the Advisor and faculty, and complete all missed work as determined in consultation with the Advisor and faculty. It is the responsibility of the Advisor to 1) determine with you the expected period of absence - it is expected that some bereavement processes may be more extensive than others depending on individual circumstances, 2) receive verification of the authenticity of a grief absence request upon your return, and 3) make reasonable accommodations so that you are not penalized due to a verified grief absence.

#### **Parental Leave**

Arrangements for any parental leave from academic responsibilities (i.e., coursework, practicum, research) should be made in consultation with your Advisor, Area Director, and the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.

#### **Extended Leaves of Absence**

In cases of major illness or other major concerns, you may request a leave of absence from the program. The request must come after consultation with your Advisor. You and your Advisor should prepare a memo to the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies requesting the leave. This memo should address the following points:

- the beginning date of the leave

- the anticipated end date
- any conditions and/or expectations about when and under what conditions you will return
- expectations about classes
- any reassignment of assistantship duties

If the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies approves your leave, they will sign the memo and place it in your file. The University and College do not formally recognize a leave of absence status. The category exists entirely at the level of the Psychology Department. Please note that students on leave are not eligible for appointments as a RA or TA and may not enroll in classes.

Note that if you are not registered for two semesters in a row, then you must complete an application for readmission. This is a specific [form](#); it is not the full application that you filled out for admission, and there is no fee. Please also note that your program clock keeps ticking during a leave of absence, and so all time limits continue to be in force. You may apply for a time limits waiver by contacting the Psychology Department's Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.

### 3.6 Travel Policies

Any travel that you do as a student that is related to your research (conference presentations, fieldwork) is considered to be 'university business.' Prior to engaging in travel, you should clarify what expenses might be reimbursed via a grant, what funding you might apply for to offset expenses, and what you will be required to self-fund. The University policies on travel as well as information on how to gain approval for travel and submit expenses to the Concur travel system are available at the [Travel@State](#) website. **Note that you must submit a Travel Authorization before you depart to be eligible for any reimbursement.** You can access the travel authorization form and procedures for completion in the [Concur travel system](#).

If you are traveling abroad you should visit the [Traveling Scholar website](#) before your trip. When students appointed as a TA or an RA travel outside the U.S. to conduct required thesis or dissertation research, or to collaborate with investigators conducting research abroad, the research grant supporting the work will be required to pay for all needed vaccinations and/or medications (e.g., anti-malarials) as determined by the [MSU Travel Clinic](#). Graduate students traveling internationally for MSU-related work including research data collection, international professional conferences, courses, or other academic business, are strongly encouraged to sign up using the [MSU Global Travel Registry](#), (even if you are not being reimbursed for travel).

### 3.7 Cybersecurity and Data Use Policies

As you go about your academic work as well as any teaching and research assistantship responsibilities, you may need to access various MSU systems that contain your personal information as well as sensitive information about others (e.g., grades, participant contact information). You need to be aware of cybersecurity concerns and protect any data you might have access to, as well as protect your login and password information to prevent any misuse of data or systems. It is a good practice to never give your MSU password to anyone (and even better to memorize it and not write it down). When accessing MSU systems like EBS, make sure to check the web address. If something seems suspect, don't enter your information. Take a screen shot and report it to [abuse@msu.edu](mailto:abuse@msu.edu). Use caution when clicking on links embedded in emails. Don't open attachments if you are uncertain about the sender or something seems suspicious.

In general, you should be aware of [MSU's data use policies regarding institutional data](#) you might have access to, as well as relevant professional and university ethical guidelines (see Section 4) that pertain to data, confidentiality, and the like.

### **3.8 Use of Online Social Networking Sites**

The MSU Psychology Department recognizes that online social networking has become an increasingly important means of facilitating communication. While social networking has provided unique opportunities to interact, it has also created a forum for potential ethical or professional issues. As professionals bound by social contracts and professional obligations, psychology graduate students must be cognizant of the public nature of social networking forums and the permanent nature of postings therein. Even though these sites offer terrific potential to bolster communication with friends and colleagues, they are also a forum for lapses of professionalism and professional behavior that may be freely visible by many people, despite the impression of privacy these sites portray. As a result, the Psychology Department has drafted the following guidelines to aid students in the safe and responsible navigation of these sites. You should follow these guidelines whether participating in social networks personally or professionally, or whether you are using personal technology or technological resources owned or operated by MSU.

A social networking site is a space on the internet where users can create a profile and connect that profile to others (whether it be individuals or entities) to establish a personal or professional network. Examples include, but are not limited, to “Facebook,” “Twitter,” “Instagram,” and “Tumblr.”

A weblog (blog) is a website, usually in the form of an online journal, maintained by an individual or group, with regular commentary on any number of subjects which may incorporate text, audio, video clips, and any other types of media.

The permanence and written nature of online postings cause them to be subject to higher levels of scrutiny than many other forms of communication. Therefore, the postings within social networking sites are subject to the same standards of professionalism as any other personal or professional interaction, and will be treated as if they are made in a public forum. The use of social networking sites or weblogs can also have legal ramifications. Comments made regarding the care of clients, research participants, or research animals, or that portray you or a colleague in an unprofessional manner, may be used in court as evidence of a variety of claims (including libel, slander, defamation of character, negligence, and others) or in other disciplinary proceedings. Libel, slander, and other forms of defamation refer, generally, to the communication (written, oral, tangible, etc.) of a false statement about a person that injures their reputation. Other potential consequences include the revocation of a clinical internship or research assistantship, or sanctions by a professional licensing board. Comments made by teaching assistants or course instructors that reveal personally identifiable information from a student's educational record without prior student consent are a violation of FERPA law. Also, the statements and photos posted within these sites are potentially viewable by program directors or future employers. It is not uncommon for internship directors or potential employers to search for the social networking profiles of potential interns or employees, and to use the discovered information in making selection decisions. It is important to not engage of inappropriate use of social media (i.e., to investigate research participants, staff, faculty or students). In addition, cyber stalking and other inappropriate postings can be considered forms of harassment or hate crimes. Relationships online with other students are governed by [MSU's sexual harassment policies](#).

The lines between public and private as well as personal and professional are often blurred in online social networks. By identifying yourself as an MSU Psychology graduate student, you may influence perceptions about the Department by those who have access to your social network profile or weblog. All content associated with you should be consistent with your position at the university and with the Psychology Department's values and professional standards. See the University Policies and [Ombudsperson's website](#) for further information about this important issue.

Refer here to the full [MSU guidelines regarding the use of social media](#)

### **3.9 Working with minors**

Graduate students who will be working with minors in their research or clinical activities will be required to undergo a background check, training, and follow other [specific policies regarding working with youth](#). Contact your Advisor for more information

### **3.10 Academic integrity**

Academic integrity stands for many things. Obviously, it means you don't cheat on tests and exams, you don't plagiarize your papers, and you don't falsify your data or misrepresent your research findings. Failure to follow these guidelines leads to consequences for those involved (e.g., for a class it may mean failing the class, it may also mean dismissal from the program). However, academic integrity refers to much more. Academic integrity is more than just a set of rules - it means that we must always think about the consequences of our choices for ourselves, our Department, and our University. **The University also has a statement on *Integrity of Scholarship and Grades* in [MSU Spartan Life](#).**

Scientific misconduct due to unintentional plagiarism can be an issue. There is anti-plagiarism software that is available on [Desire 2 Learn](#) (D2L) as part of the "Turn-It-In" package. "[Ithenticate](#)" is set up so faculty, postdocs, and graduate students can check their manuscripts for unintentional plagiarism before submitting them.

### **3.11 Policies related to change of advisors**

Students are assigned temporary Advisors when they first arrive at MSU; often, because of research interest compatibility, these individuals become permanent Advisors. There may be some circumstances that necessitate a change in Advisor:

- Students and Advisors may mutually agree that a student's research interests better match another faculty member. In those cases, the other faculty member must also agree to taking on the Advising role. Changes such as these can be made by mutual agreement of all parties with changes made to the Master's or PhD Plan of Study.
- A student's advisor may leave MSU due to a change in jobs, retirement, or other circumstances. The Advisor and student are expected to have planning conversations about work and working relationships whenever possible before they leave; in some situations (illness, death), this may not be possible. Because the circumstances surrounding illness and leaving are unique, the student and Advisor should work with the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies regarding next steps. Faculty who are no longer at MSU cannot co-chair a committee, but they may be able to remain on the student's committee while another faculty member takes on the Advising role. In other cases, it may be in the student's best interest to seek a new committee member.
- Section 3.3 outlines the Psychology Department and MSU processes for handling situations of conflict with an Advisor. An outcome of that process may be a change in Advisors.

In all cases, it is important that a new Advisor be competent in the student's area of research in order to provide appropriate guidance; hence, the Area Director and Associate Chair for Graduate Studies should be engaged in any conversations regarding changes in Advisors.

#### 4. DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES REGARDING RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

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Integrity in psychological research is based on a commitment to honesty, transparency, scientific rigor, and respect. A primary goal of your graduate training is for you to develop a strong appreciation for the value of professional integrity and high standards of ethical behavior through interaction with your faculty Advisor and members of your academic community. This section of the handbook lays out the Psychology Department graduate program's expectations for the responsible conduct of research. This section also describes consequences for ethical violations including research misconduct, dishonesty with respect to grades or academic records and scholarship, and violations of professional standards (i.e., the *APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*).

##### 4.1 Laboratory Safety

Faculty and graduate students in the Psychology Department engage in a variety of research activities ranging from self-report surveys to assays of human hormones, to fMRI scans. Graduate students are expected to familiarize themselves with and adhere to all safety protocols relevant to their research. In addition, all students working in research contexts or laboratories outside of regularly scheduled classes must have prior approval by a faculty member.

Michigan State University has a number of [specific policies related to research safety](#), including policies regarding materials handling, training, dress codes, equipment, animal handling, biological safety, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration Guidelines. Please consult with your Advisor, RA supervisor, and Area Director regarding which policies you should be familiar with and what training you may be required to undergo regarding safety in research labs.

At the time of the writing of this handbook, [policies regarding COVID-19](#) and laboratory research are still being developed (e.g., regarding face coverings, social distancing, sanitizing). The Psychology Department expects you will follow relevant policies and directives in relation to the current crisis.

##### 4.2 Human Subjects Research

If your research involves human subjects IN ANY WAY you must receive approval for each project from the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) *prior* to initiating data collection. This is true for your Master's thesis, pre-dissertation research, and your Doctoral dissertation as well. HRPP is an Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Federal and University regulations require that all research projects involving human subjects be reviewed and approved by an IRB before initiation. Under the regulations, research is defined as a formal investigation designed to develop or contribute to general knowledge. A human subject of research is an individual from whom an investigator obtains data by interaction or intervention or about whom the researcher obtains confidential information.

Depending upon the level of risk to subjects in your research protocol, HRPP assigns applications to one of three review categories (exempt from full review, expedited review, and full review) and sends it to one, two, or five reviewers, respectively. If the reviewer(s) is satisfied that the rights and



welfare of the human subjects are adequately protected, the reviewer approves it. However, if the reviewer has concerns, the reviewer returns written comments to the HRPP office for transmission to the investigator. Note that your Advisor or research supervisor is the Principal Investigator for all research you do at MSU – while you may be designated by your Advisor/supervisor as the point of contact for IRB protocol comments, your Advisor/research supervisor is ultimately responsible for gaining approval for all projects you undertake as a student. The PI must then send a response to each comment, in writing, to HRPP which will forward it to the reviewer(s). If the proposal is either an exempt or expedited proposal, an approval letter can be issued as soon as the reviewer(s) approves. When a proposal receives full (five-member sub-committee) review, an approval letter is issued after the proposal is discussed and approved by vote of the full committee at its monthly meeting. (See the [HRPP website](#) for additional information about HRPP policies and review). Note that approval is given for a particular protocol, number of participants, and time period; revisions and extensions to those require approval as well.

Failure to satisfy the University and Department ethical standards and HRPP regulations is considered grounds for dismissal of a student from the program.

#### 4.3 Animal Research

All research with non-human vertebrate animals must be reviewed and approved by the All University Committee on Animal Use and Care. For complete details about the application procedure, please see the website for [IACUC](#), the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.

#### 4.4 Michigan State University Guidelines on Authorship

All MSU researchers are encouraged to share their work in the form accepted within their discipline.

##### Definitions:

- *Author*: creator of and/or contributor to a research/scholarly publication or creative endeavor.
- *Publication*: a publicly shared piece of scholarship or creative work that relates new information and knowledge. This includes books, journal articles, abstracts, websites, exhibitions and performances of works of art or any work that can be explicitly documented.

**Authorship:** A person shall qualify as an Author provided the following conditions are satisfied:

- Participation in conception and design of the creative work, study, review, analysis or interpretation of any data.
- Participation in the drafting of the creative work or manuscript or in the editing of the creative work or manuscript.
- Final approval of the version of the creative work or manuscript to be published.
- Ability to explain and defend appropriate portions of the work or study in public or scholarly settings.

Most journals or sites of publications state criteria for authorship, and **the journal/group to which one intends to submit their work should take precedence over the MSU criteria.** Potential authors should check with the journal-specific criteria with respect to all aspects relevant to publication, including appropriate approval for animal use, human use, exports, material transfer agreements, etc. For example, when considering scientific publications, the MSU criteria follow the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors](#) but are not limited to Biomedical Journals.

**Acknowledgements:** Contributions that do not justify authorship should be acknowledged separately in accordance with disciplinary standards. For example, consult the specific journal or placement of your scholarly piece for requirements of acknowledgement. Contributions to a work that do not constitute authorship can include, for example, technical support or assistance in obtaining funding.

**Lead Author and Order of Authors:** The Lead author is defined as the person who leads a research/scholarly effort or creative work and makes a major contribution to a multi-authored work. The Lead author is also responsible for gathering the appropriate consents necessary (animal, human use) and for validating the integrity of the work.

The Lead author takes the lead of discussing the contributions, recognition and order of all authors that participate in the study. All authors, regardless of position, have a voice in this discussion. Ideally, author arrangement is agreed to proactively, formally, and in writing prior to the initiation of the study. As the study evolves, agreements regarding authorship may need to be further discussed. Most journals and other scholarly outlets do not include statements on author order, so the Lead Author should guide this process and adhere to the norm of the discipline.

**Accountability:** EVERY author listed on a publication or creative endeavor is responsible for:

- 1) Approving the final version of the manuscript, including designation of the Lead Author and order of authors; and
- 2) Verifying the integrity of the research/scholarly/creative work performed. In cases of alleged research misconduct, ALL authors are considered responsible for the integrity of the research or creative endeavor. Thus, every author must strive to hold themselves accountable.

**Disputes over authorship:** If disagreements over authorship occur (e.g., who has a right to be an author, the order of authors), it is the initial duty of the Lead Author to find a resolution in consultation with the other participating authors. If resolution within the immediate author group cannot occur, any concerned party from the group is encouraged to contact a disinterested third party acceptable to all authors. At MSU, this can be resolved by the [Research Integrity Officer \(RIO\)](#), and these discussions are confidential. During the process of resolution, all interested parties should refrain from unilateral actions that may damage the authorship interests and rights of other authors

In addition to MSU guidelines on authorship, there are discipline-specific guidelines with which you should be familiar. Specifically, the *APA Publication Guide* notes that authorship should be consistent with the level of contribution for the concepts, research model, hypotheses, research design, analysis and interpretation, and discussion. Therefore, authorship encompasses not just the actual writing but also making substantial scientific contributions to a study as a whole. The *APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (2010, Section 8.12) offers guidelines for determining authorship such as taking credit only for work to which you have substantially contributed and having authorship reflect relative contributions. These principles note that graduate students should be listed as principal author on work that is substantially based on their doctoral dissertation. The Principles and Guide also recommend that collaborators discuss early on who the authors will be, and in what order they will be listed. We suggest you do this when meeting with your Advisor to discuss the Advisor-Student Expectations Checklist and when meeting with your RA supervisor to discuss your Research Assistant Expectations Checklist. Do not make someone an author without consulting them; authorship is a responsibility as well as a right, and so people should assent to such a role.

#### 4.5 Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

As part of your graduate training, faculty will engage you in readings and discussion (both formal in coursework and more informally in your training) regarding ethical issues in our work, the history of our understanding of research ethics, and best practices for engaging in responsible research practices. This will be an essential part of your career in graduate school and beyond, as fellow scholars and scientists have the responsibility to set and enforce norms regarding responsible conduct of research and scholarship.

The Psychology Department has developed the following requirements to ensure you have adequate training in this regard; the University also requires evidence of completion of these requirements for awarding of MA and PhD degrees. Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) online modules can be accessed at this [website](#).

#### Requirements by year in the program

##### Year 1

- Complete 4 CITI online modules: Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research, Authorship; Plagiarism, Research Misconduct.

##### Year 2

- Complete 3 additional CITI online modules, selected from among the following: CITI Collaborative Research • CITI Conflicts of Interest • CITI Data Management • CITI Financial Responsibility • CITI Mentoring • CITI Peer Review • [IACUC Tutorial for Animal Care Training](#) • [Human Research Protection/ IRB Certification](#) • Rigor and Reproducibility Course

##### Year 3

- 3 hours of refresher training, to be comprised of discussion-based training and/or online courses offered by The Graduate School
  - Discussion-based training can include coursework in the Department of Psychology or another department at MSU. The syllabus for the course must be submitted to the Psychology Department's Associate Chair for Graduate Studies for review and approval. The Associate Chair will document this approval and indicate the number of hours the submission tallies toward the required 3 hours. This decision may require information from the course instructor.
  - Discussion-based training can include professional development seminars or trainings in the Department of Psychology or elsewhere. Materials for the seminar or training must be submitted to the Department's Associate Chair for Graduate Studies for review and approval. The Associate Chair will document this approval and indicate the number of hours the submission tallies toward the required 3 hours. This decision may require information from the organizer of the seminar or training.

##### Year 4

- 3 hours of refresher training, to be comprised of discussion-based training and/or online courses offered by The Graduate School
  - Discussion-based training can include coursework in the Department of Psychology or another department at MSU. The syllabus for the course must be submitted to the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies for review and approval. The Department's Associate Chair will document this approval and indicate the number of hours the submission tallies toward the required 3 hours. The Associate Chair will document

this approval and indicate the number of hours the submission tallies toward the required 3 hours. This decision may require information from the course instructor.

- Discussion-based training can include professional development seminars or trainings in the Department of Psychology or elsewhere. Materials for the seminar or training must be submitted to the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies for review and approval. The Department's Associate Chair will document this approval and indicate the number of hours the submission tallies toward the required 3 hours. This decision may require information from the organizer of the seminar or training.

### **Year 5 and beyond**

- 3 hours of refresher training, to be comprised of discussion-based training and/or online courses offered by The Graduate School
  - Discussion-based training can include coursework in the Department of Psychology or another department at MSU. The syllabus for the course must be submitted to the Department's Associate Chair for Graduate Studies for review and approval. The Associate Chair will document this approval and indicate the number of hours the submission tallies toward the required 3 hours. This decision may require information from the course instructor.
  - Discussion-based training can include professional development seminars or trainings in the Department of Psychology or elsewhere. Materials for the seminar or training must be submitted to the Department's Associate Chair for Graduate Studies for review and approval. The Associate Chair will document this approval and indicate the number of hours the submission tallies toward the required 3 hours. This decision may require information from the organizer of the seminar or training.

To summarize, **before you complete your degree, you must satisfy the following:**

1. Completed 7 CITI modules
2. Completed a minimum of 6 total hours of discussion-based training (i.e., not online modules)
3. Completed 3 hours of refresher training every year in years 3 and beyond (until you graduate); these hours count toward the 6- hour minimum noted above in #2; if you are enrolled for more than 4 years, you will exceed that 6- hour total minimum by completing 3 refresher hours each year in years 3+.

For students graduating with a MA and not continuing to the doctoral program: If you opt to leave the program after completing your MA, then you must complete the requirements listed above under Year 1 and Year 2, plus a minimum of 6 hours of discussion-based training. These hours are defined by the same criteria listed above.

Although the MSU Graduate School does not require discussion-based training in years 1-2 for PhD students, the Department recognizes that this form of RCR training is best suited for providing information specific to research ethics in psychological research and for engaging students and faculty in reasoning about ethical decision-making in our particular research contexts.

Therefore, the Department of Psychology will allow students to account some of such discussion-based training that is conducted *in the Department* (i.e., in coursework or professional development seminars) in years 1 and 2 to count towards the total number of discussion-based hours that are required in years

3+. To do so, the training must meet the other criteria articulated above and be conducted in the Department of Psychology. Further, students may only apply a maximum of 2 hours of discussion-based training that occurred in years 1-2 toward the hourly requirements in subsequent years (year 3, year 4, or year 5+ tally periods). Therefore, students must still do **at least 1 hour** of discussion-based training each year in years 3+ if they count forward any year 1-2 hours. This ensures that students demonstrate that they are engaging in ongoing refresher training each year.

### **Record keeping**

Students will be responsible for tracking their RCR activities in a Google form provided by the Psychology Department Associate Chair for Graduate Studies. It should be updated as activities are completed and updated no later than **April 15** of each academic year so that the Psychology Department Graduate Program Assistant can review this information as degree completion paperwork is being prepared. Logs of RCR completion will be a part of each student's record maintained on file in the Department of Psychology. The Associate Chair will be responsible for maintaining records of syllabi, coursework, and trainings submitted for RCR approval and the decision made in each case; this will ensure continuity and consistency in decision-making.

### **4.6 Ethical Standards and Violations**

We expect you (and the faculty) to adhere to the highest ethical principles of our profession and University as you conduct your research, scholarship, and professional activities. Your behavior is expected to comply with the *APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*. Please familiarize yourself with this code ([Ethics Code](#)). This code and the information you gain in RCR training are important starting points for your continual exploration of this topic. It is appropriate for you to have ongoing discussions with your Advisor about ethical issues as they become relevant. Many situations are ambiguous. Actions can often be interpreted in several ways. Many behaviors can generate disagreements among well-meaning people. Often the only way to resolve these ambiguities is conversation and discussion with colleagues. The Department Chair and Associate Chair for Graduate Studies for the Psychology Department are good places to start or continue these conversations. They invite you to come to them with problems you cannot resolve with your Advisor.

MSU has procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in research activities that apply to your work as a graduate student in the Psychology Department. Depending on the nature of the concern, the first step in this process may be informal and begin with the two parties trying to discuss and resolve the problem in an appropriate way. This first step is consistent with the *APA Ethical Principles*. Beyond that, any allegations of research misconduct will be examined by the Area faculty, Area Director, and the Chair of Psychology. Evidence of unethical or dishonest behavior in the conduct of your research or scholarship will be compared to University policies, the guidelines articulated within our subdisciplines of psychology, policies articulated by relevant professional societies and publishing outlets (when appropriate), external accrediting agencies, and MSU Institutional Review Board guidelines. If you are accused of inappropriate behavior, the University has established a structure and process for reviewing and adjudicating alleged violations. They are detailed in full [here](#).

If you violate ethical principles, you will face sanctions proportional to the gravity of your infraction (e.g., from remedial activities up to and including dismissal from the program). Because of the foundational importance of ethical comportment, violators may not get a second chance. It is critically important for you to be aware of the ethical landscape as you travel through your graduate program. We encourage

you to read the documents referenced above and to engage your faculty and fellow students in discussions of ethics in Psychology *before* problems arise. It is often in these discussions that you will learn to avoid ethical problems.

#### **4.7 Research funding opportunities.**

##### **Internal Funding**

To support graduate student research, training, and travel to conferences, the University offers Graduate Office Fellowships (GOFs) on an annual competitive basis depending on the availability of financial resources. The GOFs are administered at the Departmental level but funding is from centralized sources. These awards, usually between \$500 and \$2,000, may be used to support research activities. GOFs are taxed for international students and, depending on where you live, may be subject to local income taxes as well. GOF funds are typically available for requests between October and March, however the specific details concerning deadlines and availability are set by the Graduate School, and so the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies sends out emails to graduate students that notify you about these elements.

Limited funds are sometimes available on a competitive basis to defray costs of attending professional meetings. To apply for these funds, submit a request to the Psychology Graduate Program Assistant along with the conference information (conference title, dates and location) and proof of presentation. Presentation proof can be either the program listing your contribution or the presentation acceptance email from the conference.

For all GOF requests, you must account for any other sources of support you have received for the same research or travel opportunity (including funds from your Advisor, professional societies, or other MSU sources). After the funds have been expended, you must complete the post-GOF expenses report to account for the funds. Students cannot receive additional GOF monies until prior allocations have been accounted for.

Additional funding opportunities may be found through the Graduate School, the College of Social Science, and through professional organizations (see a list below). Check with faculty in your Area for other potential funding opportunities with professional organizations in your subdiscipline. As with all educational expenses, students may need to self-fund research and travel expenses related to degree progress if other sources are insufficient.

Resources that you might consider:

A. Dissertation Completion Fellowship (DCF): To be eligible for this award you must be enrolled for one credit hour (likely PSY 999). Note that if you have left Michigan, this may incur out of state tuition. This award is for students in their last semester who have not been assigned or funded as a TA, RA, TE or on Fellowship. You must be well-along in your dissertation research to be eligible for this award because it requires that you defend your dissertation that semester or the subsequent semester. The DCF does not typically include payment for health insurance or tuition, although these funds can sometimes be made available through the College of Social Science. See the link [here](#).

B. MSU Emergency Fund: This fund provides up to **\$2,000** to support a range of things including medical bills. Requests must be routed through the Psychology Department Associate Chair for Graduate Studies. There is no specific deadline; decisions are made within three days. See the link [here](#).

C. Graduate Student Research Enhancement Award: These awards provide up to **\$1000** to travel to a workshop or assist in data collection; the funds typically cannot be used to purchase supplies. These are typically one-time requests with no deadlines, although if you do not use the entire amount in the first request you may apply again later on. Applications should be submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant. Decisions are made within three weeks. See the link [here](#).

D. Graduate School Travel Award: These awards provide up to **\$600**. They are one-time awards typically; however, if you do not use the entire amount on the first request you may apply again later. Applicants should be submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant. See the link [here](#).

E. COGS Conference Grant: These awards provide **\$300** to attend an academic conference. These are one-time requests with decisions made in each semester. See the link [here](#).

F. Future Academic Scholars in Teaching Fellowship Program: This fellowship provides **\$2,000** from the MSU Graduate School. The full-year program includes bi-weekly meetings to learn cutting-edge teaching methods, and you must conduct a research project related to teaching. Deadlines to submit an application are at the end of each academic year. See the link [here](#).

G. Residential College in the Arts and Humanities Graduate Fellowship Program: This award is for **\$7,500**, and is a full-year program with bi-weekly meetings to discuss topics related to teaching, learning, and engagement. Awardees also conduct a project related to teaching. Deadlines to submit an application are at the end of each academic year. See the link [here](#).

H. The Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) Scholar Award: This award is for **\$2,000** and is given by a student organization that aims to promote diversity in higher education. Selection criteria include a demonstrated commitment to AGEP goals and participation in the MSU AGEP Learning Community and Community activities. See the link [here](#).

I. Joseph L. White Outstanding Student Multicultural Research Award: This award provides **\$500** and a certificate to a graduate student for outstanding research on multicultural issues, broadly defined. The award is presented during the annual [Multicultural Psychology Distinguished Lecture Student award](#). Applications are usually due near the beginning of the spring semester.

J. Graduate Student Multicultural Research Grant: This award provides **\$300** and a certificate to a graduate student for proposed innovative and promising research in the area of multicultural psychology, broadly defined. Student applications are usually due mid-October and awarded in mid-November.

K. The Bob and Bets Caldwell Land-Grant Values Award: The purpose of this award is to recognize a graduate student from any program within MSU's Department of Psychology who exemplifies the public-spirited attitudes and actions consistent with the Land-Grant values of strengthening communities, supporting equality, and transforming lives. A key criterion is that the recipient demonstrates a commitment to community service that has enriched the lives of others and active

participation in activities that help address societal issues and challenges.

For a more comprehensive list of both internal and external funding opportunities see the [Graduate School list of grants](#) and [library list of grant sources](#)

### **External Funding**

Students are encouraged to apply to sources outside of MSU for funds to support themselves in the graduate program and to support their research. Being able to list these awards on your vita is impressive to potential employers. Often this external support provides more money than you would get from being a TA or RA.

Before applying, you should work with your Advisor/committee chair. You should contact the Psychology Department Graduate Office before you apply as there may be out-of-state tuition waivers and health insurance coverage opportunities available, and because there may be a limited number of submissions possible from a single department. Your external grant may well be configured differently (e.g., more stipend but fewer benefits) than the typical assistantship package. If this is the case, you may have to use some of your excess stipend or discretionary funds to cover the missing benefits.

Receipt of externally funded fellowships by students who have written their own grant applications that are worth at least \$24,000 per year (direct costs) makes the students eligible for the in-state tuition rate (see [here](#) for more information). The in-state tuition rate applies only to the semesters during which the student is supported by the fellowship. This policy applies only to grants funded through a competitive process by a U.S. institution/agency/foundation. Funds obtained through non-competitive processes (e.g., need-based fellowships) or from international sources do not qualify the student for in-state tuition rates.

The National Science Foundation offers Graduate Fellowships. [This part](#) of the NSF website contains their information about support for graduate students.

The National Institutes of Health also welcomes applications from graduate students, see [Individual PreDoctoral National Research Service Awards \(NRSAs\) for M.D./PhD Fellowships](#).

The [National Defense Science and Engineering Fellowship](#) (NDSEG) is also one that students in cognitive, neural and behavioral science may apply.

Note that many external grant applications must be routed through MSU's Contracts and Grants Office, and there are timelines that require submission in advance of the grant deadline (to allow for review and signatures from the department, college, contracts and grants, etc.). If you are planning to apply for any external monies **please consult with your Advisor and with the pre-award Contracts and Grants Administrator for the Psychology Department** (currently Janet Reaume at reaumej1@msu.edu) **regarding what internal deadlines you may need to comply with as well as internal forms you may need to complete.**

## **5 GRADUATE ASSISTANT INFORMATION**

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Graduate assistant (GA) is a generic term referring to a graduate student who is supported by the university in some form of assistantship. In this section, we make explicit the Psychology Department's



expectations concerning graduate student work related to graduate assistantships.

Graduate assistantships are available only to graduate students who are actively pursuing graduate degree programs and who are making satisfactory progress toward their degrees, including maintaining at least a 3.00 grade-point average. Your type of assignment (TA, RA, other GA, fellowship) is determined by any funding sources you have (i.e., a University fellowship), the availability of funding from faculty, your experience and expertise relative to the position, and issues of fit (e.g., your availability to TA a course that meets at a particular day/time).

All policies related to graduate assistantships must be consistent with [GSRR 4.2.1 – 4.2.8](#). For graduate assistants appointed as teaching assistants, the policy also must conform to the specifications of the current [MSU/GEU Contract](#). Note that there are some types of teaching assistantships that are not covered by the GEU; the Department will notify you if you have one of those assistantships that are outside of the bargaining unit.

### **5.1 General Requirements and Benefits of Assistantships**

There are three levels of assistantships, based on experience, that affect rates of pay. Further, there are three time commitment levels of assistantships that affect both workload and pay.

#### **5.1.1 Assistantship Levels and Time Commitments**

Level 1 – graduate student, bachelor’s degree and less than one academic year’s experience as a graduate assistant or as full-support fellow.

Level 2 – graduate student, relevant Master’s degree (30 semester credits or equivalent) and/or two semesters’ experience as a graduate assistant or as full-support fellow in the employing unit.

Level 3 – Either a) Six semesters of experience as a graduate research assistant or teaching assistant and a relevant Master’s degree. Only experience in research-oriented assignments would count toward the six semesters of experience as a research assistant. (Consistent with current practice, 1/4-time and 3/4-time appointments count the same as 1/2-time appointments, and Summer Semesters count the same as Fall and Spring Semesters.) or b) Successful completion of Doctoral comprehensive exams, as defined by the department in which the student is enrolled.

Assistantship appointments are based on **an average number** of weekly hours over an appointment period. There are two appointment periods during the fall and spring: August 16—December 31 and January 1—May 15. Summer appointments cover the period from approximately May 16—August 15. During each appointment period a graduate assistant's duties to the university require an average of:

1. 10 hours per week for a quarter-time stipend.
2. 20 hours per week for a half-time stipend.
3. 30 hours per week for a three-quarter-time stipend. (Note that these types of appointments are exceedingly rare in the Psychology Department.)

#### **5.1.2 Enrollment and English Language Requirements for Assistantship Holders**

Graduate assistants must be registered each semester in which they hold assistantships. The minimum and maximum credit loads are as follows:

- For a **quarter-time** graduate assistant, minimum enrollment is 6 credits for Master’s degree students and 3 credits for Doctoral students (*including* credits in courses numbered 899 or 999);

maximum enrollment is 16 credits (*excluding* credits in courses numbered 899 or 999).

- For a **half-time** assistant minimum enrollment is 6 credits for Master's degree students and 3 credits for Doctoral students (*including* credits in courses numbered 899 or 999); maximum enrollment is 12 credits (*excluding* credits in courses numbered 899 or 999).
- For a **three-quarter-time** assistant, minimum enrollment is 3 credits (*including* credits in courses numbered 899 or 999); maximum enrollment is 8 credits (*excluding* credits in courses numbered 899 or 999). **Appointments of this type are exceedingly rare in the Department.**
- **Minimum enrollment for Doctoral students who have successfully completed all comprehensive exams is 1 credit.**
- RA/TA tuition waivers only cover up to 9 credits in the Fall and Spring semesters, and 5 in Summer semesters

Deviation from the minimum enrollment requirements listed above is permitted only during:

1. Summer session, when a 3-credit minimum enrollment is allowed for all types of assistants with 1-credit minimum for Doctoral students successfully completing all comprehensive exams.
2. The semester in which the degree is granted, when all types of assistants must enroll for at least the number of credits required to complete the degree or meet the university minimum registration requirement of 1 credit.

Any deviation from the maximum enrollment requirements listed above must have the approval of the Dean of the College of Social Science *prior to enrollment*.

In meeting the credit requirements, graduate assistants should be enrolled in courses that are recognized as being of graduate level unless the Psychology Department has granted written permission for course work constituting an exception to this rule. [Visitor credits](#) may count as part of a graduate assistant's credit load, if approved, in writing, by the student's department chair and the Dean of the Graduate School.

### **English Language Proficiency Requirement for TAs**

All students whose first language is not English and who are admitted to graduate studies at Michigan State University are required to meet certain [language proficiency requirements](#).

MSU candidates for TA appointments who were required to demonstrate English proficiency as a condition for regular admission to Michigan State University must also demonstrate that they meet a minimum standard of proficiency in spoken English before they can be assigned teaching work that involves oral communication with undergraduate students. If you received a waiver of the TOEFL or of other accepted tests of English proficiency for admission, you must also meet the requirement of proficiency in spoken English before you are assigned to teaching work that involves oral communication with undergraduate students. To meet this requirement, you may use any of three options listed below:

- Presenting a TOEFL iBT speaking section score of 27 or higher.
- Receiving a score of 50 or higher on the [MSU Speaking Test](#)
- Successfully completing [AAE 451 or AAE 452](#) (ITA language support courses) AND receiving a score of 50 or higher on the [ITA Oral Interaction Test \(ITAOI\)](#)

Individual exceptions from these requirements (on a case-by-case basis in rare circumstances) will be considered by the Graduate School in consultation with the English Language Center upon the request

of the Psychology Department Associate Chair for Graduate Studies and with the endorsement of the Associate Dean of the College of Social Sciences.

### 5.1.3 Assistantship stipend and tuition waivers

**Stipend:** Graduate assistant stipend rates are set by MSU in the summer and become effective on August 15. For the latest information, please consult the [Human Resources Web site](#). Graduate Assistants are paid on Fridays on a bi-weekly basis. You can find the Graduate Assistant Payroll schedule on the [Payroll website](#) (see Payroll schedules). Graduate assistantship stipends are not subject to Social Security and Medicare (FICA) taxes. Stipends are subject to income taxes with few exceptions. The taxability of stipends is subject to review by the Internal Revenue Service. Please call the Payroll office for more information, at 355-5010.

**Tuition waivers:** Tuition waivers are one of the benefits associated with graduate assistantships. Tuition waivers cover the cost of 9 credit hours of courses for fall semester, 9 credit hours for spring semester, and five credits for summer session. Tuition waivers will be provided during the period of the assistantship, to a maximum of 23 credits per year. For PhD students past comprehensive exams with a summer (only) research assistantship following a spring assistantship, there is a 1 credit non-fringe research assistantship option available at [this HR page](#). Tuition waivers are for in-state tuition rates. Students who move out of Michigan while on an assistantship may be charged at the out-of-state tuition rate, and they could be held responsible for the difference in rates.

- **Exemption from out-of-state resident tuition.** This exemption applies to a summer session that precedes or follows consecutive fall and spring appointments, regardless of whether the student was previously enrolled at MSU. If the student does not have a graduate assistantship form completed before registering for summer session, they will pay out-of-state resident course fees and tuition. If an appointment form is submitted prior to the middle of the subsequent fall semester, the Office of the Registrar will refund the full amount of out-of-state tuition that the student paid for the summer session.
- **Note that specific college or program fees, applicable to all graduate students enrolled in a specific college or program, may apply and are not waived.**
- If a graduate assistant resigns an assistantship or the assistantship is terminated early during a semester, such that the appointment does not meet minimum duration standards (53 calendar days in Fall and Spring; 46 calendar days in Summer), they will be assessed tuition for all credits carried, and those who are not Michigan (in-state) residents will be assessed out-of-state tuition.

### 5.1.4 Health Insurance

Graduate assistants (domestic and international) are automatically enrolled in a health insurance plan, the premium of which is paid by the university. The enrollment information is [here](#). The plan provides the following coverage:

- Fall appointment only: Coverage from August 16 to February 15 of the following year.
- Fall and Spring appointments: Coverage from August 16 to August 15 of the following year.
- Spring appointment only: Coverage from January 1 to August 15
- Summer appointment only: Coverage from approximately May 16 to August 15

Enrolled students may also insure their Spouse/Other Eligible Individual and/or dependent children (under the age of 26). For questions regarding coverage, enrollment or premium payment, contact BCN directly at 1-800-859-8452 or go to the [website](#). For questions concerning waiver processing or general information, contact the Michigan State University Human Resources Office at 1-517-353-4434 or 1-800-353-4434, or by e-mail at: [solutionscenter@hr.msu.edu](mailto:solutionscenter@hr.msu.edu). The Human Resources Office is located at 1407 S. Harrison Road, Suite 110 (Nisbet Building), East Lansing, MI 48823 and on the web [here](#). You can also contact [SolutionsCenter@hr.msu.edu](mailto:SolutionsCenter@hr.msu.edu).

**New Enrollees Open Enrollment:** You may enroll at any time.

**Coverage Effective:** The first of the month following enrollment

**Dental and Vision Benefits:** There are also [dental and vision benefits available to GA's](#). MSU offers dental insurance through Delta Dental of Michigan. The dental insurance plan is a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) plan that offers graduate assistants an affordable, quality dental plan.

**Eligibility for Dental and Vision Benefits:**

- Graduate assistants with 1/4, 1/2, or 3/4 appointments (eligible for tuition waiver)
- Michigan State University pays 50 percent of the dental plan premiums for eligible MSU Graduate Assistants with active appointments.

Eligible dependents can be enrolled as well but the premium is paid entirely by the student. [Website for enrollment](#) in Dental benefits.

MSU offers graduate assistants a comprehensive vision coverage through Vision Service Plan (VSP). Graduate Assistants and their eligible dependents can enroll in vision insurance with the premium paid entirely by the student. There is no university contribution for vision.

### **Policy regarding health and accident insurance for international students**

International students are required to have health and accident insurance. Students are required to purchase the Michigan State University Student Accident and Health Insurance Plan unless they have evidence of alternative insurance equal in benefits and provisions to the Michigan State University plan. Fees for the student's insurance are included with the bill for tuition and fees during registration. Waivers to allow purchase of alternative plans must be approved by the Human Resources Office, Human Resources, 110 Nisbet Building (1-517-353-4434 or 1-800-353-4434, or by e-mail at: [solutionscenter@hr.msu.edu](mailto:solutionscenter@hr.msu.edu)).

### **5.1.5 Mandatory Training for RAs and TAs**

All TAs and RAs must complete the on-line training about the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy. Quoted from Title IX website "All graduate students are required to complete an annual online training program, which has been customized to address the unique experiences of graduate students. Students will not be able to access important academic information in the StuInfo system, including grades, until they complete this training. Please note that graduate students who are also employed as graduate teaching assistants or research assistants are also required to complete an online education program for employees."

- [Link to University Policy on Violence and Sexual Misconduct](#)
- [Link to Title IX website and Online Education Programs](#)

## 5.2 Teaching Assistantship Assignments, Expectations and Evaluation Procedures

Teaching assignments are administered by the Psychology Department's Associate Chair for Graduate Studies, in consultation with the Chair of Psychology, and the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies. We endeavor to provide matches between TA and courses/assignments that maximize the undergraduate learning experience, make good use of graduate student skills, and provide training experiences for graduate students to improve your preparedness for positions that involve designing and teaching your own course(s).

Instructional task expectations for specific TA responsibilities will vary across course and instructor. Accordingly, TAs need to consult with the course instructor to clarify expectations throughout the term. The Psychology Department has formalized this process such that, at the start of each semester, each TA must meet with their TA supervisor to discuss TA responsibilities, instructor expectations, and complete the Department's TA expectations checklist. This serves as a useful way of ensuring that expectations are clear and agreed upon.

In the next few paragraphs, we discuss expectations that apply to all TAs in the Psychology Department.

### Work hours

A student funded as a "half-time TA" is being paid for 20 hours per week of work. Because of the nature of teaching obligations and the semester schedule, the Department's expectation (consistent with the GEU collective bargaining agreement with MSU) is that half-time TAs will work – *on average* – 20 hours per week. This means that TAs may have more work to do during weeks of exams, papers, or other heavy preparation or grading periods and less work during quieter periods. Busier weeks may exceed 20 hours while other weeks will require less than 20 hours of work. TAs should discuss workload with the course instructor so that they can plan their semesters in light of the timing of major assignments and evaluations and the anticipated time burden of each. University policy is that graduate students with assistantships may work up to 40 hours during the week of finals week, the periods between semesters, the first week of fall classes, and during summer semester. Other than those specific periods TAs may not work more than 29 hours per week (20 hours max for international students) on all jobs combined.

It is very important that you are aware that TA duties are not completed until the end of the appointment period. TAs should discuss with the course instructor the anticipated date on which duties for the course will be completed. The Department expects that TAs are available to complete their duties for the entirety of the appointment period. Do not plan to be unavailable to work during the first week of classes or before the time and date when final grades are due to the Registrar's office (typically 4 PM on the Tuesday following the end of finals week). The GEU contract allows for TA duties to continue through 3 days past this grade submission date.

Do not schedule time away from campus (especially personal travel during the first and final 2 weeks of the semester) without first clearing absences with the course instructor. The Department recommends that students on half-time time assistantships be granted a total of **5 vacation/time off days each appointment period** (Fall, Spring), which corresponds to roughly 1 day per month allotted. You should give reasonable notice about time away to faculty supervisors and you and faculty supervisor should

work together to allocate those days in ways that offer reasonable time for you and for accommodating work duties that are time critical. Students considering medical leave from the program should consult with the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies for assistance; policies vary for Research and Teaching Assistantships regarding whether a leave may result in a loss of funding.

### **Proctoring Exams**

Departmental TA positions require proctoring exams for courses other than the one for which you provide instructional assistance. All TAs, with the possible exception of those who are running discussion sections, will be asked to serve as proctors throughout the semester, including finals week, to assist in maintaining exam integrity in our large courses. Proctoring assignments are made at the beginning of the semester. Proctors are expected to fulfill their assignments by arriving on time to the assigned exams and assisting the course instructor with exam administration. The number of proctored exams is determined by departmental need and the number of teaching assistants available to meet that need, but these assignments should not result in a TA working more than the 20 hours a week average time commitment.

### **TA Professionalism**

As a TA you are expected to contribute positively to MSU's teaching mission. You are expected to fulfill your role with professionalism, which includes timeliness, decorum, concern for the learning environment created for students, responsiveness to feedback from students and the course instructor, and accuracy and fairness in grading. Supporting the course instructor and the students is the critical role of a TA. The Department expects TAs to show initiative, a willingness to take on tasks to help the course run smoothly, attention to detail, and diligence in performing all tasks. There are also a number of MSU policies that you need to familiarize yourself with as a TA.

- All instructors and TAs are required to be familiar with the [MSU Code of Teaching](#)
- All instructors and TAs are required to be familiar and follow the [Academic Integrity policy](#)
- All MSU employees (including TAs) are mandated to report instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexual misconduct, sexual exploitation, stalking, and relationship violence that are observed or learned about in their professional capacity and involve a member of the university community or which occurred at a university-sponsored event or on university property. More information can be found [here](#).
- MSU faculty, instructors, and TAs are required to be familiar with student rights under the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#)
- It is Psychology Department policy that faculty, staff, and TAs report concerns about student behaviors that may present an imminent risk to the health and safety of the individual or others to emergency services by calling 911 or the MSU Police Department non-emergency line at 517-355-2221. Further, faculty, staff, and TAs are encouraged to forward information about students experiencing non-emergency emotional distress or behavioral concerns to the MSU Behavioral Threat Assessment Team via the online reporting [form](#). This reporting follows the [BTAT Green Folder protocol](#) that includes guidance about reporting and how to support students during crises.

**ALL university communication (e.g. when you are a TA or RA) MUST be done using an MSU email account.** Do not use personal email accounts for correspondence relevant to your TA or RA work.

[Desire2Learn](#) is an online learning repository used by many Psychology faculty for course work, lecture distribution, and communication. [Training](#) is available regularly on campus. Both faculty and graduate students can access nine online modules on improving your classroom teaching. The Graduate School purchased access for 3 years from Epigeum, a spin-off company from Imperial College of London. These are high-quality interactive modules on a variety of topics related to teaching and learning. For more information and to access the modules go [here](#). Other [teaching relevant professional development information](#) is available from the Graduate School.

TAs are evaluated every semester by the instructor of the course for which they serve as a TA. In addition to being in good academic standing in the program, you must meet minimum performance and professionalism standards in your TA responsibilities to be eligible for subsequent TA funding. Graduate students who have underperformed in these capacities may not be eligible for future TA funding. The [GEU contract](#) contains specific language regarding unsatisfactory performance that you may wish to refer to. This information will also be communicated to your faculty Advisor and Guidance Committee for incorporation into your yearly academic performance evaluation.

For further materials related to a TA assignment, you can find the details of the most recent GEU/MSU contract governing your position [here](#).

### **5.3 Research Assistantship Assignments, Expectations and Evaluation Procedures**

Research assistantships involve working closely with one or more faculty members on research and scholarship related activities. You may be funded on an RA position by your faculty Advisor, or in some cases, by another faculty member. The duties and responsibilities of RA positions vary greatly in connection with the type of research being conducted. Task expectations for specific RA responsibilities will vary across research areas and supervisors. Accordingly, you are advised to consult with your supervisor to clarify expectations. The Psychology Department has formalized this process such that, at the start of each semester, each RA must meet with their RA supervisor to discuss their RA responsibilities, faculty expectations, and complete the Department's RA expectations checklist. This serves as a useful way of ensuring that expectations are clear and agreed upon.

A student funded as a "half-time RA" is being paid for 20 hours per week of work. Because of the nature of research activities, our expectation is that half-time RAs will work – *on average* – 20 hours per week. This means that RAs may have more work to do during certain data collection periods or in preparation for data collection and less work during quieter periods. Busier weeks may exceed 20 hours while other weeks will require less than 20 hours of work. RAs should discuss workload with their RA supervisor so that they can plan their semesters in light of the timing of major activities and the anticipated time burden of each. RAs may not work more than 29 hours per week (20 hours max for international students) in their university positions.

Do not schedule time away from campus without first clearing absences with your RA supervisor as soon as possible. Discuss how these may impact your RA duties so that you can come to an agreement about how any anticipated issues will be addressed. Some research conducted in the Department occurs in time-intensive bursts (e.g., animal research in BNS) or is time sensitive (e.g., a study must occur at the end of the semester). Failure to provide reasonable notice concerning absences, or failure to collaborate with faculty who are funding the student's RA concerning absences, may result in a negative review of the student's RA performance.

The Department recommends that students on half-time time assistantships be granted a total of **5 vacation/time off days each appointment period** (Fall, Spring), which corresponds to roughly 1 day per month allotted. You should give reasonable notice about time away to faculty supervisors and you and your faculty supervisor should work together to allocate those days in ways that offer reasonable time for students and for accommodating work duties that are time critical. Students considering medical leave should consult with the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies for assistance; policies vary for Research and Teaching Assistantships.

As an RA, you are expected to fulfill your role with professionalism and to contribute positively to the research mission of the Department. That includes timeliness, decorum, concern for the research workspace environment, responsiveness to feedback from others on the research team and your supervisor, accuracy in your work, upholding all ethical standards, and generally treating the assistantship as a regular job. The Department expects RAs to show initiative, a willingness to take on tasks, attention to detail, and diligence in performing all tasks.

Research assistants are also expected to conform to ethical and professional standards regarding working with animal and human subjects, radiation, chemical, and biological safety, and adherence to federal guidelines on data generation, management and control. Policies you may wish to be familiar with:

MSU Research Ethics and Academic Integrity Policy:

- All faculty, research supervisors, and RAs are required to be familiar with the MSU Research Ethics (RCR) protocols and policies: **(see section 4.6 above)**
- All faculty, supervisors, and RAs are required to be familiar and follow the [Academic Integrity policy](#)
- Additional information about research Integrity including authorship guidelines and data management can be found on the website for the Research Integrity Officer (rio.msu.edu)

MSU and Psychology Department Policies regarding Confidentiality:

- All MSU employees (including RAs) are mandated to report instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexual misconduct, sexual exploitation, stalking, and relationship violence that are observed or learned about in their professional capacity and involve a member of the university community or which occurred at a university-sponsored event or on university property. More information can be found [here](#).
- MSU faculty, supervisors, and RAs are required to be familiar with student rights under the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#). FERPA issues are relevant to RAs, for example when providing letters of recommendation for students working with you on research.
- It is Psychology Department policy that faculty, staff, and RAs report concerns about MSU student behaviors that may present an imminent risk to the health and safety of the individual or others to emergency services by calling 911 or the MSU Police Department non-emergency line at 517-355-2221. Further, faculty, staff, and RAs are encouraged to forward information about students experiencing non-emergency emotional distress or behavioral concerns to the MSU Behavioral Threat Assessment Team via the [online reporting form](#). This reporting follows the [BTAT Green Folder protocol](#) that includes guidance about reporting and how to support students during crises.



**All university communication (e.g. when you are a TA or RA) MUST be done using the MSU email account.** Do not use personal email accounts for correspondence relevant to your TA or RA work.

RAs are evaluated every semester by their supervisor. In addition to being in good academic standing in the program, students must meet minimum performance and professionalism standards in their RA responsibilities to be eligible for subsequent RA funding. Graduate students who have underperformed in these capacities may not be eligible for future funding. This information will also be communicated to your faculty Advisor and Guidance Committee for incorporation into your yearly academic performance evaluation.

#### **5.4 Work Hours, Leave, and Other Policies Relevant to all GAs**

The University has overall employment policies that apply to all employees of the university (which includes TAs, RAs, and other GAs), as well as specific employment policies for student employment and international student employment. Key policies are noted here.

##### **Hours of work:**

U.S. citizens and permanent residents cannot work over 29 hours per week on ALL jobs combined (including Graduate Assistantships during the fall and spring semesters). However, students may work up to 40 hours per week in the following periods:

- finals week
- the periods between semesters
- the first week of fall classes
- during summer semester

if these are part of assistantship requirements. Outside of that, if U.S. citizens and permanent residents work over 29 hours a week three separate times during the academic year, they will be removed from student employee payroll for six weeks.

International students cannot work over 20 hours per week on ALL jobs combined to include Graduate Assistantships during the fall and spring semesters. If international students work over 20 hours a week three separate times during the academic year, they will be removed from student employee payroll for six weeks.

##### **Rest Periods:**

- It is University policy that student employees should be given a 15-minute rest period during each continuous four hours of work. Rest periods are scheduled by the supervisor to ensure the continued efficiency of the work unit.
- The rest period is to be preceded and followed by a work period. It should not be used to cover a student's late arrival or early departure. Rest periods cannot be accumulated.

##### **Medical Leave for illness, injury, or pregnancy**

If you are unable to fulfill the duties of your GA appointment because of illness or injury you must notify the Department HR Administrator (Erin Laudenslager at [laudensl@msu.edu](mailto:laudensl@msu.edu)) as soon as circumstances permit. Similarly, if you are unable to fulfill the duties of your appointment because of pregnancy related restrictions, you must notify the HR Administrator as soon as circumstances permit.

During the illness, injury, or pregnancy restrictions period, the Department will adjust (reduce, waive, or reschedule) your duties as those duties and your physical circumstances reasonably dictate. If total absence from duties becomes necessary, the Psychology Department will maintain the stipend of the appointment, provided you are still enrolled, for a period of two months, or to the end of the appointment period or the end of the semester, whichever should occur first. You have the right to return to your assistantship, within the original terms of the appointment, at such time as you are able to reassume the duties of the position. If you are planning to take a leave under this policy you must notify the Department Chair as soon as circumstances permit.

### **Parental Leave**

If you adopt a child while being funded as a GA, you are entitled to adoption leave of up to two (2) months, the first week of which will be paid by the Psychology Department and the balance of which will be unpaid, to commence on or before the date of adoption, as determined by you.

If you become a parent by birth and are not otherwise covered by the pregnancy leave policy, you are entitled to parental leave of up to two (2) months, the first week of which will be paid by the Psychology Department and the balance of which will be unpaid to commence on or before the date of birth as determined by you. Additional unpaid leave may be arranged on an ad hoc basis, as mutually agreed with the Psychology Department.

Eligibility for adoption leave or parental leave is determined under the following conditions: (1) It must be completed within six (6) weeks of the birth or adoption of a child under the age of six (6); (2) It may not extend beyond your previously scheduled appointment end date; and (3) It must be requested in writing no less than four (4) weeks prior to the scheduled start of the leave.

### **Grief Absence Policy**

If employed as a RA or TA, you must notify your employer/supervisor of a grief absence. Notification should occur no later than 1 week from your initial knowledge of the situation. You should provide appropriate verification of the grief absence. Both you and your employer/supervisor will swiftly communicate to determine how your responsibilities will be covered during your absence. Graduate TAs should refer to the bereavement policy in GEU CBU Article 18.

### **Jury Duty**

If you are called for Jury Duty, notify your RA supervisor to make arrangements for coverage of your work duties; if you have a TA, notify your TA supervisor to make arrangements for coverage of your teaching duties. Note that the [GEU Contract](#) provides specific information regarding what is required for TAs in terms of proof of jury duty service, payment during times of service, and reporting back to work.

### **Accommodations for Disabilities**

MSU employees, including student employees, can request reasonable accommodations for the workplace. The Statement of Employee Accommodation Determination (SEAD) is the primary method of documentation that enables employees to validate and communicate their needs to supervisors. Reasonable employee accommodations are determined through a partnership between RCPD, MSU's Office of Employee Relations (OER) Accommodations Specialist, the employee, and the supervisor. The SEAD is individualized and cannot be generated until the employee completes the following steps:

1. [Identify and Register a Disability](#). This includes self-identifying through the [RCPD MyProfile](#) and submitting sufficient medical [documentation](#).
2. Request Accommodations
3. Participate in the employee accommodation review process, including a needs assessment meeting with RCPD and OER and submission of a current position description.

The OER Accommodations Specialist also engages with the supervisor regarding the accommodation requests prior to determination and production of the SEAD. For a comprehensive overview of the employee accommodation process, please see the [MSU Disability and Reasonable Accommodations Policy](#).

### **5.5 Summer Support**

While students are guaranteed four years of support during the academic year, summer support is a separate process and may take many forms. Each Fall semester, you will receive an email from the Psychology Department Administration asking if you want to teach a face-to-face course or an on-line course the following summer. While this is one way to secure funding for the summer and to add teaching experience to your curriculum vitae as well, there are often more requests for these slots than positions available. Students can also receive summer support in the form of a research assistantship if you have made such an agreement for support with your Advisor or as part of a fellowship. Students in some Areas may take on applied internship experiences outside of the university.

Please make sure you have conversations about summer funding opportunities with your faculty Advisor while completing the Advisor-Student checklist (and throughout the year, as appropriate).

Summer stipends for those funded as a TA or RA include up to a five-credit tuition waiver. You are required by the University to enroll in a minimum of **3** credits to hold a summer assistantship as a TA, TE or RA. Typically the 3 credits will be research oriented credits like PSY 899 (thesis credits) as graduate courses are not offered during the summer.

Summer support can also come in the form of an hourly wage on a project. In that case, students do not need to be registered for summer course credits as hourly wages do not include the tuition waiver. Summer hourly positions are subject to FICA taxes. Be sure to talk with your faculty Advisor about the form of summer funding (hourly or assistantship), if you will be funded in their research lab over the summer. The Graduate Program Assistant can provide additional information on hourly rates, benefits, and so on.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Key Campus Departments and Resources

**Student Services.** Michigan State University provides extensive student personnel services to assist students and enhance the educational experience. Michigan State University recognizes that the total development of the individual, personal, social, and physical, as well as intellectual, is of equal importance. Important telephone numbers include

- [Financial Aid/Student Loan](#) 556 E. Circle Drive, Room 252, 517 353-5940
- [University Housing](#) 550 S. Harrison Road, 517-884-5483

**Graduate School.** The Graduate School at MSU, 466 W. Circle Drive, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Chittenden Hall offers many professional development workshops and other programs for graduate. For more info see [Graduate School website](#) or call 517 353-3220.

**[Michigan State University Library.](#)** It is strongly suggested that you take advantage of the library tours in order to more thoroughly familiarize yourself with all the available resources. There are also a number of branch libraries on campus. Information Desk phone is 517 353-8700

**[Office for International Students and Scholars,](#)** 103 International Center 353-1720, The Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) serves international students and international faculty. OISS is a resource center for information and consultation on matters related to international students and faculty/scholars. The staff is prepared to help in any of the various areas of concern, including academic problems, immigration questions, social health, employment or financial matters. The office also organizes seminars and workshops on topics of interest to the broad university community. These have included immigration regulations, cross-cultural communication, pre-departure programs for graduating students and various training programs.

- [English Language Center](#) 1 International Center, 517 353-0800
- [International Studies & Programs,](#) Deans Office, 209 International Center, 517 355-2350

**[Collaborative Learning Center.](#)** This is a self-paced, individualized learning center that offers free assistance to students who want to improve their study skills. Its goal is to help you develop the strategies and techniques you need to be successful student. Workshops on specific study skills are offered throughout the year.

**[The Writing Center,](#)** 300 Bessey Hall 517 432-3610. This center offers writing consultation to graduate as well as undergraduate students. One on one consultations are best for small papers or projects like vitas, abstracts and cover letters, while peer response writing groups offer help developing drafts of larger projects like research and conference papers, and even theses and dissertations. The center also has a library with books on resumes, vitas and cover letters, and examples of all of the above. Call 432-3610 to make an appointment, or email [grammar@msu.edu](mailto:grammar@msu.edu) for grammatical questions. This is an excellent place to have one more set of eyes offering advice on important writing assignments.

**[Career Services Network,](#)** 113 Student Services 517 355-9510. The Career Services and Placement office assists students in career advising and seeking employment upon graduation. Their office is

located in 113 Student Services Building. Their staff does workshops, classes and individual advising on topics such as how to interview successfully and steps to creating a well-written resume or C.V. You may also interview for internships or full-time employment through the Career Placement office. The Career Information Center, located in room 6 Student Services Bldg. (353-6474) provides up-to-date information on career possibilities, self-evaluation tools, and resource material on career choice, planning and strategy.

**[Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities](#)**, 120 Bessey Hall 517 884-RCPD (4-7273); TTY 517 355-1293. Staff specialists available to respond to mobility, visual, hearing, alternative learner, and other populations to enable their involvement in University activities. Other resources are available to students with special needs.

**[Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#)** 3rd Floor of Olin Health Center 517 355-8270. Students should feel free to contact CAPS for personal concerns and crises. Professional counseling and psychological services are offered to assist with personal, as well as career concerns. All services are confidential. Initial consultations are free of charge

**[Olin Health Center](#)** 517 355-7573. The Student Health Service is located in Olin Health Center and is the primary location for student health services on campus.

- **[What to do when Olin is closed?](#)** Not sure if it is an emergency? Call the Olin Phone Information Nurse 24 hours a day at **517 353-5557**. For a serious emergency when Olin Health Center is closed – go to the nearest hospital emergency department. The hospital emergency department closest to campus is Lansing’s Sparrow Hospital at 1215 East Michigan Avenue.
- Olin Health Center Information Desk 517 355-4510
- Olin Health Center Appointments 517 353-4660
- Olin Pharmacy 517 353-9165
- Travel Clinic 517 353-3161
- Student Insurance Questions 800-353-4434  
[solutionsCenter@hr.msu.edu](mailto:solutionsCenter@hr.msu.edu)

**[Recreational Sports and Fitness Services](#)**, 517 355-5250. Students have access to equipment and facilities in the intramural facilities located in the IM West, IM East, and IM Circle. Students must present a current MSU student ID in order to be admitted to these facilities and borrow the equipment. Use of most of the facilities is free to currently enrolled students, although there are a few exceptions, such as a fee for the use of the weight room in IM East and IM West.

**[MSU Student Food Bank](#)**. COGS and ASMSU jointly established a Student Food Bank to address the problems of students and their families with financial hardship. The SFB is located at Olin Health Center. For distribution hours check website or email [foodbank@msu.edu](mailto:foodbank@msu.edu)

**[The LGBT Resource Center](#)** leads university-wide initiatives that enhance campus climate and support services for MSU students who identify as lesbian, bisexual, gay, or transgender.

**[Council of Graduate Students \(COGS\)](#)**, 316 Student Services 517 353-9189 (353-COGS). COGS is the official graduate student organization at Michigan State University. Officers and departmental

representatives (one representative per department for the entire University) are voting members. The primary objective is improvement of the academic, social, and economic position of graduate students at MSU. The organization has official delegates to the Graduate Council, the Academic Council and standing committees thereof, and several all-university and presidential committees. Through membership in these and other bodies, COGS participates in decisions on such matters as tuition and fees, the grading system, traffic regulations, academic and extracurricular programs of the university, graduate assistant stipends, improvements in on and off campus student living conditions, academic freedom and responsibilities, student representation in university government, and the selection of principal administrative officers. Meetings are open to all graduate students. For further information, contact the department for the name of your representative

**Computing and Statistical Information and Services** There are various services to assist students with computing and statistical questions. [Technology Support](#) is for general IT questions regarding classroom tech support and MSU systems (D2L, EBS, StudentInfo, etc..). [MSU Technology Store](#) offers computer repair assistance and consulting in room 110 of the Computer Center. [The Center for Statistical Training and Consulting](#) (CSTAT) offers consulting help on canned statistical programs and 'helps students help themselves.' They also periodically offer courses and workshops that may be of interest to students seeking to improve their knowledge and skills. [The Scoring Office](#) in 114 Computer Center offers services such as scoring of scantrons for classroom examinations.

**Graduate Employees Union (GEU)** The Graduate Employees Union (GEU) is the legal collective bargaining unit for all graduate employees designated as teaching assistants at MSU. The University is obligated to bargain a contract with GEU concerning pay, benefits (including health insurance and tuition waivers), and working conditions. The current contract guarantees yearly wage increases, protection from overwork, a grievance procedure that addresses a variety of issues arising in the workplace, University contributions for family health coverage, and many other benefits and protections. The Graduate Employee Union can be contacted via 332-2824

- **Teaching Assistants** Nothing in the application of Michigan Right to Work Laws affects the daily terms and conditions of employment of TAs. Union membership is voluntary; meeting the definition of a TA under the GEU contract is independent of union membership. One can be a TA, covered by the contract and enjoy all the rights and responsibilities of the agreement but not be a member of the union. Union membership is not tied to the employment relationship and is a private matter between the employee and union.
- **Research Assistants** If you have been awarded a RA, you have the *option* to become part of the collective bargaining unit of GEU or to join as a dues paying member.

**Campus Safety: [MSU Police Department](#)**

To report a Crime or Emergency:

- Emergencies: Call 911
- Non-emergencies, crimes, or suspicious activity: Call the MSU Police Department (MSUPD) at (517) 355-2221
- MSUPD anonymous texting: Text the word MSUPD along with a tip to CRIMES (274637)
- MSUPD toll-free tip line: Call 844-99-MSUPD (844-99-67873)

To report students, employees, or other individuals on campus who have engaged in behavior indicating a possible threat of harm to self or other members of the campus community:

- Emergencies: Call 911
- Non-emergencies: Submit a report to MSU's Behavioral Threat Assessment Team via an [online referral form](#)
- To report Ethical, Policy, Compliance Violations or Other Misconduct: Including but not limited to athletics misconduct, conflicts of interest, discrimination and harassment, employment misconduct, fiscal misconduct, medical and HIPAA violations, privacy violations, research misconduct, retaliation, safety, or other area of concern not specifically listed.
- [Submit an anonymous report online](#)
- Call the anonymous (24/7) hotline: (800) 763-0764
- [Report suspected misconduct](#) by contacting a specific university office
  - Visit the [Misconduct Hotline website](#) for more information.
- The Misconduct Hotline does not replace the [University Reporting Protocols](#) regarding child abuse, sexual assault, child pornography, relationship violence, sexual violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation. While such issues may be referred to the Misconduct Hotline, employees are also required to follow the reporting protocols.

#### **Other Useful Contact Information**

Dean's Office, [College of Social Science](#), 203 Berkey Hall, 517 355-6676

[Admissions and Scholarships](#), 250 Admin. Bldg., 517 355-8332

[Registrar's Office](#), 150 Admin. Bldg, 517 355-3300

[Student Accounts](#), 142 Admin. Bldg, 517 355-3343

[Payroll](#), 350 Admin. Bldg, 517 355-5010

[Transcripts](#), 50 Admin. Bldg, 517 355-5150

## APPENDIX B – Comprehensive Exam Requirements by Area

### B.1 Comprehensive Exam Requirements for BNS.

Your comprehensive exam involves preparing components of course materials appropriate for an upper-level undergraduate honors course in Behavioral Neuroscience. You may someday use these materials to assist in your preparation and teaching of such a course. The course materials must cover five different topics, the scope of each topic covering approximately the equivalent of a chapter in a typical undergraduate textbook of Behavioral Neuroscience, Physiological Psychology, Biological Psychology or the like.

First, you will decide five different topics that are chosen from the following list:

- Learning and memory;
- affect and its disorders;
- neuroanatomy;
- neurophysiology;
- sensory-systems;
- reproductive behavior;
- sleep and circadian rhythms;
- drugs of abuse;
- ingestive behavior;
- degenerative disorders (focus on one);
- stress and homeostasis;
- development;
- sex and gender;
- attention and higher-order cognition.

Only one of the topics should be directly in the area that you are working in for your research studies. It is also possible to work with your committee to select other topics related to Behavioral Neuroscience, however the choice of these topics must be approved by all committee members. When the topics have been decided, you will present a list of these topics in a logical pedagogically sound outline (no more than two pages, double-spaced) to the Doctoral Guidance committee which we encourage to be no later than June 15<sup>th</sup> of your second year in the graduate program (by August 15<sup>th</sup> of your 2<sup>nd</sup> year for students who entered with Master's degrees in Psychology or a closely related field). The department deadline of May 15<sup>th</sup> of your third year is the absolute deadline for submission of this material.

The Doctoral Guidance Committee's responsibility is to ensure that a sufficient breadth of material from the field of Behavioral Neuroscience is covered by the topics chosen. For example, your course cannot consist of more than one facet of hormone action, or more than one aspect of learning, etc. The idea is to decide which topics ought to be covered so the undergraduate "students" will know the fundamental of Behavioral Neuroscience.

Within two weeks of providing the outlined list of topics to the Doctoral Guidance Committee, you will convene a meeting with your Doctoral Guidance Committee to provide an opportunity for you and committee members to discuss the procedures to be followed for the remainder of the comprehensive exam, as well as the committee's expectations for your level of preparation for and performance on the written summaries and oral defense of them.



After you and the Doctoral Guidance Committee have met as a group to agree on the five topics to be covered and discussed expectations, you will have approximately 14 weeks to prepare a lecture summary for each of the five topics. Each summary should be 5-8 double-spaced pages and should be in the form of an essay or a narrative, and not in outline form or a list of bulleted facts. These summaries will describe the major themes to be communicated to the undergraduate "students", place the themes in context within the field, and provide full citations for at least three papers that the undergraduate students would be assigned to read to help them incorporate the material. The papers chosen should have had some kind of significant impact to the field, could involve notable controversies, or provide good summaries of particularly important developments in the field that would be especially appropriate for advanced undergraduates to read. Each lecture summary should briefly indicate the importance of the assigned papers to the field. Papers that are assigned for one topic cannot also be assigned for another topic, so you must identify at least 15 different scientific papers across subfields of Behavioral Neuroscience.

For each of the five topics, you must identify a member of their Doctoral Guidance Committee who is willing to offer guidance for that particular topic. Each Doctoral Guidance Committee member will provide guidance for 1-2 topics. You should feel free to meet with your Doctoral Guidance Committee members while preparing commentaries, to discuss any difficulties you are having mastering the literatures on the chosen topics and to help ensure you are going in an appropriate direction you're your work. Furthermore, the Doctoral Guidance Committee members must approve the three (or more) important papers on the two topics they are providing guidance on that you would assign to your undergraduate students. These five summaries constitute the written portion of the comprehensive examination.

These five summaries must be provided to the Doctoral Guidance Committee within 14 weeks after your group meeting with your committee (for example students not starting this component of their comprehensive exams before June 30<sup>th</sup>, this would be by October 1st). Summaries will be reviewed and discussed by the Guidance Committee, and you must receive a passing grade on all five summaries to continue with the examination process. If you do not receive a passing grade on all five summaries, you will be notified within one week after the summaries were first submitted. You will then have one more week to consult with the appropriate Guidance Committee member(s) about how best to remediate the failed written summary(ies) and rewrite them. Remediation must be completed within one week after notification of failure of the written component of the comprehensive exam.

Within two weeks after receiving a passing grade on all five summaries, you will submit to a 2-3 hour oral examination by your Doctoral Guidance Committee about the proposed course materials. You will choose the order of topics discussed at which point you will be questioned on the broad concepts of your topic, its importance to the field; pedagogical relevance as well as questions detailed questions about the readings, etc. Each topic will be examined for 25-30 mins approximately and/or until the Doctoral Guidance Committee is satisfied that you have incorporated a sound understanding of the basic state of research in that topic. You should be very familiar with each of the assigned papers. When you have demonstrated this depth of knowledge for at least 4 of the topics (as decided by the Doctoral Guidance Committee), you will have passed the comprehensive examination. Should you not achieve this level of mastery, but show mastery of 3 of the five topics, you will receive a temporary "non-pass" and have the opportunity to retake the oral examination within one month. If you show mastery of fewer than 3 topics, you will fail the comprehensive exam and will not have the opportunity to retake it. If you received a "non-pass" but do not revise the written portion within one week after notification of

failure you will be dismissed from the graduate program. Likewise, if you do not retake the oral examination within one month of the failed oral defense date, or do not pass the comprehensive exam on the second try, you will be dismissed from the graduate program.

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## **B.2 Comprehensive Exam Requirements for CCN**

The comprehensive exam consists of two parts each tailored to your needs and interests. The Core Knowledge Exam is designed to expose you to foundational literature and must be passed before you take the more specialized Review Paper portion of the comprehensive exam.

### **Core Knowledge Exam:**

**Purpose and composition.** The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that you have core knowledge of major areas of cognition and cognitive neuroscience. You must pass a written exam testing three topic areas. You choose your three topic areas from a set maintained by Cognitive and affiliated faculty. Each topic area has a topic area committee (usually three faculty members) responsible for maintaining the reading list and designing and grading exam questions for that topic area. The topic committee may revise and update reading lists, but the reading list for a given exam date will be set by the date of the prior exam.

**Procedures.** Each academic year the exam will be given on three pre-specified dates: a date during the week before classes begin in both Fall and Spring term, and a date during the week after final exams in Spring term. You must sit for the exam within the first two times that it is offered after your admittance to the PhD program. You must inform your adviser of the intended date and the three topic areas for the exam at least two months in advance. On the day of the exam, you will receive two questions for each topic area you have selected. You will answer one question for each topic area. The exam period will begin at 9am and end at 4pm, allowing you six hours of writing time (two hours per topic area) and an hour for lunch and breaks. During this time, you will type your answers at a computer and may use the papers and your notes. If you choose not to take breaks, you should turn your exam in after six hours of writing time. Answers should be concise but thorough. Although there are no hard page limits, we expect that each answer will be four to six APA-style pages.

**Evaluation.** Each answer will be evaluated by the members of that topic area committee. For each topic area, you will receive a pass or fail grade and a written summary evaluation of your answer, within three weeks of sitting for the exam. The expectation is that students will pass all three topic areas during their first sitting for the exam. If you fail one or more topic areas, you must sit for the exam the next time it is offered, taking as many topic areas as you failed during the prior sitting. During the second and third sittings you will have two hours of writing time per exam topic area. You can choose to retake failed topic areas or new topic areas, and you must inform your adviser of the topic areas at least two months before each exam. Failing all three topic areas on your first sitting, or failure to pass three topic areas within three sittings, is grounds for dismissal from the program.

### **Review Paper:**

**Purpose.** The purpose of this portion of the comprehensive exam is to ensure that you are able to independently identify an area of study, study and synthesize relevant material from the literature, and orally defend your work.

**Composition.** In consultation with your advisor, you define a research area/approach for the comprehensive exam. The research area should be directly relevant to your research interests and must be approved by your Doctoral Guidance Committee. Within 4 months of the committee's approval of

the research area, you must write a review paper, and give an oral defense. While the advisor and Guidance Committee are involved in the initial identification of the research area/approach, the writing of the paper should be done independently (i.e., without significant input and/or proofreading from the advisor). However, we encourage students to have their peers in the program serve as peer reviewers of the document before the paper is submitted to the committee. Note that there is an expectation of the program that other graduate students in the program will be willing to be peer reviewers. The paper may serve as a basis for your dissertation. The paper should be similar in scope and depth to published review papers and will generally (a) review the relevant literature, (b) identify consistencies and inconsistencies between results and theoretical frameworks that are currently in the literature, (c) offer a synthesis of the current state of the topic, and (d) suggest avenues for future research.

**Evaluation.** The Doctoral Guidance Committee will consider the review paper and the oral defense together in determining whether you pass or fail this part of the comprehensive exam. Failure is grounds for dismissal from the program. The Guidance Committee may ask for revisions to the paper and/or a second oral defense before making a final decision. The timeline for the revision and/or second defense will be at the discretion of the Guidance Committee

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### **B.3 Comprehensive Exam Requirements for CS**

There are two requirements for the comprehensive exam – the submission of a first author publication and a Comprehensive Paper.

#### **First Author Publication**

Each student is required to submit at least one first-author, empirical paper for publication. This paper can be the Master's thesis or an unrelated study, but ideally, the paper topic is related to your cognate area. Successful completion of this part of the Comprehensive Examination is not contingent upon the paper being accepted for publication; the paper merely needs to be submitted for publication for successful completion.

#### **Comprehensive Paper**

Each student is required to propose and complete a Comprehensive Paper. The goals of the Comprehensive Paper are to: a) develop meaningful integration of science and practice as they relate to a specific area(s) of clinical science; b) increase your breadth of understanding of the field of psychology as a whole as well as your depth of understanding in the cognate area (see Appendix C for a full description of the CS Area cognate); and c) ensure that you have a firm grasp of the conceptual and theoretical basis for your dissertation.

The Comprehensive Paper must be a theoretical and empirical comprehensive review of at least one area of research relevant to the student's Doctoral plan of study. The paper must be integrative and critical (i.e., not an annotated bibliography) and must include a discussion of the clinical implications of the paper's major findings. The Comprehensive Paper must meet your training goals and must be judged by the Doctoral Guidance Committee to have scholarly merit. Importantly, the Comprehensive Paper is expected to be your own work. Your advisor may provide input into the development of the Comprehensive Paper Proposal (see more on the proposal below) prior to approval by the Guidance Committee. However, after approval, you must work independently on the writing of the paper without further input or consultation from anyone.

#### **Comprehensive Paper Proposal**

Before beginning the Comprehensive Paper, you submit a Comprehensive Paper Proposal to your Guidance Committee for review and approval. This proposal consists of a 500-word abstract describing the focus/aims and conceptual basis of the Comprehensive Paper. A reference list is also included that details the literature that will be reviewed in the Comprehensive Paper. The reference list should be thorough and comprehensive. A 1-page outline of the body of the Comprehensive Paper is also allowed, but not required. Some students have submitted outlines for review to obtain feedback from the Guidance Committee on the overall structure of the review.

The Comprehensive Paper Proposal is reviewed by the Doctoral Guidance Committee in a committee meeting. The Guidance Committee will evaluate the appropriateness of the topic and the reading list. The Guidance Committee must approve the proposal (i.e., abstract and reading list) before you proceed with writing the Comprehensive Paper. The Committee review of the Comprehensive Paper proposal is typically done during the same committee meeting as the review/approval of the Doctoral plan of study.

## Comprehensive Paper

As noted above, the Comprehensive Paper must represent your own work. Your advisor may provide input into the development of the Comprehensive Paper topic as well as the reference list prior to sign off by the Doctoral Guidance Committee. However, after approval of the Comprehensive Paper Proposal by the Guidance Committee, you will work independently on the writing of the Comprehensive Paper without further input or consultation from the faculty. In this way, the Comprehensive Paper functions like a take-home comprehensive examination. It is also expected that you will not seek active help from other colleagues on the paper. It is recognized that some conversation about the topic will occasionally occur in the course of carrying out scholarly duties in the program (e.g., courses, lab meetings, conferences, and so on). You are expected to recognize and abide by the spirit and intent of the examination, which is an independent scholarly review paper that reflects your own thinking and writing.

Listed below are some resources for you to help with writing the Comprehensive Paper:

- Siddaway, A.P., Wood, A.M., & Hedges, L.V. (2019). How to do a systematic review: A best practice guide for conducting and reporting narrative reviews, meta-analyses, and meta-syntheses. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *70*, 747-770.
  - This paper has several tips for writing review articles that past students have found helpful when writing the Comprehensive Paper.
- Some journals in clinical psychology (and related fields) regularly publish review papers. Reviewing papers published in these journals can give students some good models for how to structure and write the Comprehensive Paper:
  - *Psychological Bulletin* (generalist journal)
  - *Clinical Psychology Review* (clinical psychology journal, somewhat more applied in focus)
  - *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology* (clinical psychology journal, somewhat more basic science in focus)
  - *Current Directions in Psychological Science* (APS journal; generalist journal, but often with clinical material both at the applied and basic level)
  - *Harvard Review of Psychiatry* (more applied clinical/psychiatry)
  - *Psychological Review* (theoretical, often more cognitive psychology focused)
  - *Personality and Social Psychology Review* (mostly social psychology, some personality papers, sometimes with clinical implications)

## Scoring/Grading Criteria

The Doctoral Guidance Committee will review and evaluate the Comprehensive Paper according to the explicit criteria detailed below. The Chair of the Guidance Committee will be responsible for compiling the scores and feedback from the committee members into a written document that will be provided to you. This document will contain: a) descriptive summaries of the committee's view of the strengths and weaknesses of the paper; and b) the final overall score/grade assigned to the paper. The Chair of the Guidance Committee will meet in-person with you to discuss this feedback. The written feedback must be presented to you within six weeks of the date of the original paper submission, unless the paper is submitted during the summer term. If it is submitted during the summer term, feedback must be provided within 6 weeks of the beginning of fall term.

## Scoring Criteria

All Comprehensive Papers will be graded according to the criteria outlined below. After reviewing these areas, each Guidance Committee member will provide an overall “score” of the paper using the following 1-5 scale:

- 1 = Excellent: No revisions required
- 2 = Very Good: No revisions required
- 3 = Minor to Moderate Revisions Required
- 4 = Substantial Revisions Required
- 5 = Major and Significant Concerns: A new paper must be written

Guidance Committee members may give scores in-between these anchor points to accurately depict their level of concern or enthusiasm.

Scores will be based on the rating of each of the following areas:

1) Abstract requirements:

- Includes stated goal of review
- Includes a brief description of relevant literature(s) to be reviewed
- Describes conclusions of review (both theoretical and empirical)
- Addresses clinical, theoretical, and empirical implications of review

2) Introduction requirements: The goal(s) of the review must be clearly stated. Thus, readers should be able to answer the questions:

- What is the purpose of this review?
- Why is this review of scholarly importance?

3) Literature review requirements:

- Adequately covers the relevant literature(s)
  - Addresses theoretical underpinnings of area(s) and/or overlap of areas
  - Critically reviews and integrates empirical papers with each other and the theory (cannot read like an annotated bibliography)
  - Critiques the methodology of the literature
- Adequately discusses the stated goal(s) of the review

4) Conclusion section requirements:

- Integrates theoretical and empirical findings in relation to stated goal(s) of review
- Discusses findings vis-à-vis methodological limitations of extant literature
- Addresses the clinical implications of reviewed theoretical and empirical work
- Addresses possible directions for future research

5) Reference section requirements:

- References are appropriate and comprehensive - important papers from the literature are covered (*Note: This should already have been approved by the Guidance Committee but will likely need to be updated with the most current work prior to submitting the final paper.*)

6) Formatting requirements:

- APA format

- Expected length is 50-100 pages of text (i.e., not including references, tables, etc.)

### Grading Criteria

Based on the average score across the Guidance Committee members, one of three grades will be assigned to the Comprehensive Paper:

- Pass (average score = 1-2.0): No revisions are necessary; the student has successfully passed the Comprehensive Paper requirement.
- Revisions Required (average score = 2.1-4.0): The student must revise the Comprehensive Paper and address the concerns raised in the Guidance Committee's written review. The revised Comprehensive Paper will be reviewed by the Doctoral Guidance Committee using the procedures outlined above.
- Fail (average score = 4.1 - 5.0): The Comprehensive Paper fails to meet the minimum criteria outlined below. The student must write a new version of the paper to be re-submitted to the Guidance Committee for a new review. The new Comprehensive Paper will be reviewed by the Guidance Committee according to the procedures outlined above.

### Revisions

Only one re-submission of the Comprehensive Paper is allowed. The procedures for reviewing the re-submission will be identical to those for the original submission detailed above, with the exception that the revision will only be graded as "Pass" or "Fail". No further revisions will be requested or accepted. A grade of "Fail" on the second submission indicates that the Comprehensive Paper requirement has not been successfully met.

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## B.4 Comprehensive Examination Requirements for ECO

**Goals.** The comprehensive exam provides the opportunity for you to be evaluated on your readiness to complete the Doctoral degree and on the degree to which you are competent to perform as an independent scholar. Comprehensives also provide an opportunity for you to integrate knowledge and skills **and/or** develop and expand a skill or competency congruent with your professional aims. The comprehensives are designed to ensure that you know Community Psychology in general **and** how it applies to your specific substantive area of interest. This requires a balance between the topic/format of the comprehensive exam and general field of Community Psychology. The philosophy of the Community Psychology Faculty is to have you complete the comprehensives successfully.

**Areas to be covered.** Comprehensive exams can be accomplished through one of four formats. It is the intention that the same areas of knowledge will be assessed by each comprehensive option. In the interest of specifying the areas to be covered by all options, the non-exhaustive list below is provided.

- **Background Information**
  - *History and Systems.* This area is necessarily very broad and covers the **historical** perspectives that defined the field, the values that guided the development of the field, and alternate historical models that impacted the field (e.g., person-environment fit, value base, collaboration, prevention as a service ideology, multilevel conception of behavior, and philosophy of science). Examples of this domain include the major historical and theoretical events leading to the development of Community/Ecological Psychology.
  - *Major Theoretical Positions.* This area covers the major theoretical positions or philosophies in the field. This domain is interdisciplinary in scope and includes coverage of individual, group, organizational, institutional, and societal perspectives as applicable. Examples of this domain include such major theoretical positions such as ecological models and empowerment theory.
- **Contemporary Work**
  - *Social Change Strategies.* This area addresses the major intervention paradigms and approaches used in the field. The comprehensive exam needs to demonstrate linkages, or lack thereof, to the theoretical positions or social philosophies covered above. This analysis provides the background for an in-depth description of the field's major intervention approaches. Examples of this domain include alternative setting creation, prevention, self-help, dissemination, policy change, organizational change, consultation, community organizing, and advocacy.
  - *Knowledge of Existing Research.* This area includes description and critique of the research results presented in the scientific literature. Examples of this domain include literature reviews, meta-analyses, methodological critique.
  - *Research Design.* This area includes knowledge of research designs and logical inference procedures used in the field and critiques of their adequacy for addressing the important questions. Examples include review of designs used, critique of the adequacy of the designs, and alternative research designs. Coverage includes sampling, experimental designs, quasi experimental designs, mixed method designs, and qualitative designs. This area also includes coverage of statistical techniques.
  - *Assessment Procedures.* This area includes coverage of the major assessment and measurement approaches. Central to this area is coverage of the adequacy of the major approaches to assessment (i.e., participant-observation, systematic observation, interviewing, paper-pencil surveys/questionnaires). There should also be a concern with the applicability of relevant measurement approaches and their psychometric adequacy in terms of reliability, validity, and generalizability.

- **Ethics and Social Values.** This area includes coverage of potential and existing ethical issues in the field in terms of treatment of participants. The social values implied in the use of the social change and/or measurement techniques should also be discussed.
- **Future Directions and Policy Implications.** This area includes a projection of future work that needs to be done in the field and the policy implications of the work to date. Included in this area are suggested future theoretical developments, change strategies, research methodologies, and systems of implementation.

**General Format for Administering the Comprehensive Exam.**

*Timing.* You are expected to take your comprehensive exam after you complete your Master's thesis. The comprehensive exam must be completed before submission of the Doctoral dissertation proposal, and before May 15 of your 4<sup>th</sup> year in the program. We expect you to complete your comprehensive exam within 90 days after your exam proposal has been approved by your Doctoral Guidance Committee. As described below, there are four options for your comprehensive exam: You can take a written exam, write a review paper, write a policy white paper, or design an undergraduate course.

**The Comprehensive Proposal.** Each of the options described below will be carried out according to a general format consisting of an agreement between you and your Doctoral Guidance Committee. Each option calls for you to propose to the committee, in writing, the option that will be taken and a detailed plan for execution. The proposal will describe two areas.

- First, the format of the comprehensive option will be described and how it will be executed will be detailed. For example, a proposal for a written test will specify the areas to be covered. A reading list will detail the material for which you will be held responsible. A proposal for design of a course will include the areas to be covered, a preliminary syllabus, and an outline of the final product. A proposal for a review paper will provide a detailed description of the literature to be covered and a tentative outline of the review including a specification of the methodology to be employed. A proposal for a grant application will include a statement specifying the potential funding agency, a detailed summary of the domains to be covered, and a preliminary outline of the grant. A proposal for a policy white paper will identify what scientific research will be translated into feasible and appropriate policy directives. The proposal will take the form of a detailed outline that includes the history of the problem, a review of prominent theories, a review of existing research and ethical issues, and reasonable policy alternatives. The proposal should also include a detailed time line for completion including: 1) a deadline for completion of comprehensive exam not to exceed three months from the time of acceptance of the proposal, 2) provisions for faculty review of drafts, and 3) a detailed plan for retaking the exam in the event of a failing grade, including when the retake examination will occur and which examination option will be pursued.
- Second, the proposal will detail how each of the areas mentioned above will be covered. In other words, the proposal will specify how History and Systems, Major Theoretical Positions, Contemporary Work, and Ethics and Values will be addressed.
- A meeting between you and your Doctoral Guidance Committee will occur before the comprehensive begins. This meeting will result in a written agreement between you and the committee as to what will be expected for the comprehensive.

**Options for Comprehensive Exam**

**Written Test.** Each faculty member on your Doctoral Guidance Committee will submit to your committee chair two essay questions to be answered in writing. The questions will cover the domains outlined by a reading list that must be part of your comprehensive exam proposal.

You have two options for taking the test. In the **first option**, on an agreed upon date, you will receive eight questions (two from each of four committee members). During the next 48 hours, you would prepare answers to four of the eight questions (one of each of the two submitted by each committee member you chose) in a take-home format. At the end of the 48 hours, the written answers would be turned in. A strict 10-page limit (typed, double spaced, one-inch margins, 12 CPI) per question applies.

In the **second option**, on an agreed-on date, you would receive four questions (two from each of two committee members). During the next 24 hours, you would prepare answers to two of the four questions (one of each of the two submitted by each committee member) in a take home format. The same page limit per question applies. At the end of the 24 hours, the answers would be turned in. After a 24-hour pause, the process would be repeated with questions from the two remaining committee members.

Administration. The written exam will be administered by the chair of your Doctoral Guidance Committee. Each committee member will evaluate their submitted question and at least one other comprehensive exam question, although the chair may request that all committee members evaluate all questions. Thus, all four questions will have at least two evaluators.

**Review Paper.** You will prepare a comprehensive review of an area of professional and scientific interest. The goal of the review paper is to allow you a format for developing and reinforcing writing skills and to increase your expertise in an area of interest. The proposal for this option will take the form of a detailed outline for a literature review covering some social, theoretical, or empirical area of interest to you. The topic of the review paper can be, but does not have to be, consistent with the topic planned for the dissertation. The review paper is not to exceed 40 pages, double spaced, one-inch margins, 12 CPI excluding references. When the proposal is approved by all committee members, you will proceed to write and submit to the committee a review paper covering the material proposed. The review paper is modeled after articles appearing in Psychological Bulletin, Psychological Review, American Sociological Review, Social Service Review, etc.

**Policy White Paper.** You will prepare a paper in an area of professional and scientific interest and translate that literature into useful policy directives. The proposal will take the form of a detailed outline and will include history of the problem, review of prominent theory, review of existing research and ethical issues. Upon acceptance by the committee, you will proceed to write and submit to the committee a Policy White Paper. In essence the policy white paper option would include most of the material in a review paper but be focused on the translation to policy of that material. The body of the review is not to exceed 40 pages, double spaced, one-inch margins, 12 CPI excluding references.

**Design an Undergraduate Course.** You will prepare a course in Psychology, typically Psychology 270 - Introduction to Community Psychology. The course must cover the domains of the comprehensive exam specified by the guidelines. In general, the proposal requires a course description, a course syllabus, and an outline of all class sessions. The final product will consist of course materials, including a syllabus, handouts, homework assignments, tests, quizzes, exercises, and evaluation procedures for the course. You will develop a sample set of four lectures (not to exceed 40 pages, double spaced, one-inch margins, 12 CPI).

### **Grading System.**

Each option will be graded using the following system. It is the expectation that you will demonstrate performance in the comprehensives commensurate with that expected of independent scholars at the Doctoral level. Demonstration of that level of proficiency is the criterion for successfully completing the comprehensive. Each Guidance Committee member will provide the following ratings of performance on the comprehensive.

- Pass - performance indicative of demonstrating knowledge/skills expected of an independent scholar.
- Pass with revisions - performance that requires minor modification to achieve a pass. To assign this rating, the individual faculty member must specify in writing what would be needed to make the performance achieve a pass.
- Fail - performance failing to demonstrate knowledge/skills expected of an independent scholar.

You will pass the comprehensives if you receive at least 75% "pass" ratings. You will fail the comprehensive if you receive more than 25% "fail" ratings. If you do not receive 75% pass ratings and not more than 25% fail ratings, you may do revisions. For example, if you selected the review paper option, you would receive a single rating from each Guidance Committee member and need to receive passing ratings from at least three-quarters of the committee members in order to pass outright. If you selected the written test, you would need to receive pass ratings on three-quarters of the ratings given. In this instance, it would be expected that each committee member would rate all four answers resulting in at least 16 ratings and requiring 12 pass ratings. If revision is an option, you may elect to rewrite only the parts of the comprehensives necessary to attain 75%. If successful, you would then pass the comprehensives.

At the completion of the comprehensives, you may request a second meeting with your chair, individual faculty, or the committee as a group for the purposes of discussing the comprehensives and receiving feedback.

In the case of failing the comprehensive exam, you will have the right to a second attempt at the exam. If, after a second attempt, you do not pass, you will be terminated from the graduate program. All cases of failing grades will be filed with the Department's graduate office by the faculty.

### **Study Guides and Scholarly Independence**

Given that the Comprehensives are designed to provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate your independence as a scholar, it is imperative that the proposal and final comprehensive materials represent your independent work. Any material that is directly copied from another source will not be accepted. For example, it would be considered plagiarism for you to directly copy lecture or syllabus content from another student, faculty member, or Internet site. If such a situation arises, the Comprehensives Committee would determine appropriate action, as outlined by the Graduate College.

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## **B.5 Comprehensive Exam Requirements for ORG**

Demonstration of competency and the ability to integrate knowledge are necessary steps before undertaking a dissertation. We view this demonstration of competency and integrative capacity as a multi-faceted process. It is expected that you complete all elements of this demonstration by May 15 in your 4<sup>th</sup> year in the program.

This demonstration of competency and integrative capacity consists of two elements:

1. In the semester after completing the MA thesis, you will take a comprehensive exam that is one day, closed book (i.e., use of a locked down, no internet or file access computer), scheduled twice a year (during the last two weeks in September and last two weeks in February). The exam is developed and evaluated by a rotating committee of three organizational psychology faculty. Individuals will be asked to answer substantive content questions and methodological questions. Substantive questions will focus on describing theoretical concepts, models, and empirical research and will cover the areas of competency noted in the annual review form. The methodological questions can focus on understanding of statistical and quantitative issues facing the field and possible solutions. To prepare for the examination, students are expected to interface with the literature in the field by reviewing classic works, handbook summaries, course syllabi, and the contents of top journals over the last 5 years. We encourage active interchange with peers as part of the preparation process. After grading exams independently, faculty will meet to discuss students' performance. Each question will be evaluated on a PASS, REVISION REQUIRED, or FAIL basis. In the case of marginal performance, faculty may require additional work. In the case of failure, additional activities or a retake of the exam in the next semester would be required at the discretion of the committee. A failure of the retake would constitute grounds for dismissal from the program.

2. A second element is designed for you to demonstrate your particular depth focus. No later than two weeks prior to the closed book exam, you need to submit a 2-3 page statement that specifies a chosen area of depth, an indication of how you will demonstrate that depth, and the names of two organizational psychology faculty members who will serve as a committee to guide and review this work. An expected means of demonstration would be a paper that integrates two domains of research, provides a conceptual framework for future research, and captures cross-currents in the literature (of a Journal of Applied Psychology integrative conceptual review; Journal of Management review issue; Academy of Management Review; Psychological Bulletin or Psychological Review quality). Before the closed book exam, you will meet with their chosen committee to discuss the proposal and any modifications that the committee may suggest. Within one month of passing the closed book exam, you will submit the integrative paper. The expectation is that you will have sufficient planning time so that writing this paper is an expected part of ongoing workload (i.e., no suspension of RA/TA duties, no missing classes or other project work). After evaluating the paper independently, faculty will meet to discuss students' performance. The paper will be evaluated on a PASS, REVISION REQUIRED, or FAIL basis. In the case of marginal performance, faculty may require additional work. In the case of failure, additional activities or an additional paper requirement may be required at the discretion of faculty.

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## B.6 Comprehensive Exam Requirements for S/P

The comprehensive exam in social/personality psychology focuses on both breadth of your knowledge base of this field and its research methodology, as well as the depth of your knowledge in your primary area of concentration.

**Format.** The comprehensive exam is a written closed-note, closed-book exam that occurs in two four-hour sessions on consecutive days. Your exam will be comprised of four topic areas based on reading lists provided to you (see reading list topics below). One of these areas may be your area of doctoral research, but two must be outside the immediate focus of your doctoral research. In addition to these three content areas, all students will be tested on methodology/quantitative approaches, which brings the total number of topics to four. Each topic area has a topic area committee (usually two faculty members) responsible for maintaining the reading list and designing and grading exam questions for that topic area. The reading lists will not necessarily be tied to course reading lists and will contain both original research and overview articles. Lists are approximately 20-30 readings each, depending on the number of chapter/review versus empirical articles. The faculty who maintain the lists for the topics you choose will coordinate in writing and grading your exam questions.

There are two question types: Identifications and Essays. Identifications require short answers (approximately 1 paragraph), and you select 7 out of 10 identification items on each day. Each day, you will receive 4 essay questions that focus on two of the topic areas that you've selected for your exam. You will need to answer three of the four essay questions

### Reading Lists:

Content Lists (pick 3 of the following 8 options: 1 in your primary research area, 2 outside your area):

1. Close relationships // Social networks
2. Emotions // Happiness & well-being
3. Evolutionary psychology (basic principles plus content areas including, for example, altruism, intergroup dynamics, etc.)
4. Personality: Structure // Personality: Assessment
5. Personality: Development // Personality: Processes
6. Social Cognition // Stereotyping and prejudice
7. Political Psychology // Attitudes & Persuasion
8. Motivation // Self-Regulation

Methods List (all students must read the full methods list), which includes:

Experimental Methods// Non-experimental methods //Open science & replication methods

**Timing.** There are two administrations of comprehensive exam each year, one date will be in September and the other will be in February. **You must notify your advisor of your intention to take comps at least 4 weeks before the preceding comps administration.** That is, if you intend to take comps on the spring date in February, you must notify your advisor of that intention in August, 4 weeks before the September administration. This notification will provide faculty with adequate time to update the reading lists. Finalized reading lists for a given exam date will be set by the date of the prior exam (i.e., reading lists for September will be finalized by the February administration).

If you came into the program with a BA or BS you will complete the comprehensive exam after the end of the semester during which you defended your Master's Thesis, but before May 15 of your 4<sup>th</sup> year in the graduate program. We recommend that you take the exam during your 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the program to allow for adequate time to retake the exam if needed. If you came into the program with a MA or MS we encourage you to complete the exam during your 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Your doctoral guidance committee will assist you in choosing your three content areas (along with the methods/quant area) for the exam.

**Grading policy:**

The faculty members who maintain the four reading lists for the topics you choose for the exam will grade your answers on a 5-point scale (1 = Fail, 2 = Marginal, 3 = Low Pass, 4 = Pass, 5 = High Pass); partial points (e.g., 3.5) can be assigned. Grades will be averaged across faculty members and across questions.

Grades for identifications for each day will be averaged into a total that is equivalent in weight to one essay, and so identifications will count for 25% of the total comprehensive exam grade. If you receive an average grade of less than 3.0 on the identifications for either day, *regardless of whether or not the overall average comps grade is above 3.5*, you will be required to write more extensive identification information (1-2 pages each) on all identifications with individual scores lower than 3.0. Rewritten identification items will be due within 1 week.

An average grade of 3.5 is required to pass the exam. Students who score between 3.0 and 3.5 are required to rewrite essay questions on which they scored below a 3.5. Students have one-week to re-do all questions. Re-written identifications and essays will be graded by the faculty members responsible for that topic area and average grades of 3.5 or above will result in successful completion of the exam.

If you fail the exam (i.e., receive a total grade lower than 3.0) you will be required to take it again at its next administration. You will be allowed to take the exam a total of 2 times. Failure to pass the exam after 2 tries will result in dismissal from the PhD program. You cannot change the reading topics after the first attempt at the exam.

**Notification of exam results:**

You will be notified of your exam results in writing within 14 days of completing the exam. You should meet with their faculty advisor to discuss their results.

APPENDIX C  
Clinical Science Program Requirements TO BE ADDED

DRAFT



## Appendix D

### Academic Grievance Procedures

The *Michigan State University Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR)* and the *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR)* documents establish the rights and responsibilities of MSU students and prescribe procedures to resolve allegations of violations of those rights through formal grievance hearings. In accordance with the SRR and the GSRR, the Psychology Department has established the following Hearing Board procedures for adjudicating graduate student **academic grievances** and complaints. (See GSRR 5.4.). **If a complaint is not about an academic issue, please refer to processes noted in Sections 3.3**

#### I. JURISDICTION OF THE PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT HEARING BOARD:

- A. The Hearing Board serves as the initial Hearing Board for academic grievance hearings involving graduate students who allege violations of academic rights or seek to contest an allegation of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards, or falsifying admission and academic records). (See GSRR 2.3 and 5.1.1.)
- B. Students may not request an academic grievance hearing based on an allegation of incompetent instruction. (See GSRR 2.2.2)

#### II. COMPOSITION OF THE HEARING BOARD:

- A. The Department shall constitute a Hearing Board pool no later than the end of the tenth week of the spring semester according to established procedures. Hearing Board members serve one-year terms with reappointment possible. The Hearing Board pool should include both faculty and graduate students. (See GSRR 5.1.2 and 5.1.6.)
- B. The Chair of the Hearing Board shall be a faculty member with rank who shall vote only in the event of a tie. In addition to the Chair, the Hearing Board shall include an equal number of voting graduate students and faculty. (See GSRR 5.1.2, and 5.1.5.)
- C. The Department will train hearing board members about these procedures and the applicable sections of the GSRR. (See GSRR 5.1.3.)

#### III. REFERRAL TO THE HEARING BOARD:

- A. After consulting with the instructor and appropriate unit administrator, graduate students who remain dissatisfied with their attempt to resolve an allegation of a violation of student academic rights or an allegation of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records) may request an academic grievance hearing. When appropriate, the Department Chair, in consultation

with the Dean, may waive jurisdiction and refer the request for an initial hearing to the College Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.3.6.2.)

- B. At any time in the grievance process, either party may consult with the University Ombudsperson. (See GSRR 5.3.2.)
- C. In cases of ambiguous jurisdiction, the Dean of The Graduate School will select the appropriate Hearing Board for cases involving graduate students. (See GSRR 5.3.5.)
- D. Generally, the deadline for submitting the written request for a hearing is the middle of the next semester in which the student is enrolled (including summer). In cases in which a student seeks to contest an allegation of academic misconduct and the student's dean has called for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student has **10** class days to request an academic grievance to contest the allegation. (See GSRR 5.3.6.1 and 5.5.2.2.)
- E. If either the student (the complainant) or the respondent (usually, the instructor or an administrator) is absent from the university during that semester, or if other appropriate reasons emerge, the Hearing Board may grant an extension of this deadline. If the university no longer employs the respondent before the grievance hearing commences, the hearing may proceed. (See GSRR 5.4.9.)
- F. A written request for an academic grievance hearing must (1) specify the specific bases for the grievance, including the alleged violation(s), (2) identify the individual against whom the grievance is filed (the respondent) and (3) state the desired redress. Anonymous grievances will not be accepted. (See GSRR 5.1 and 5.3.6.)

#### **IV. PRE-HEARING PROCEDURES**

- A. After receiving a graduate student's written request for a hearing, the Chair of the Department (or designated Associate Chair) will promptly refer the grievance to the Chair of the Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.3.2, 5.4.3.)
- B. Within **5** class days, the Chair of the Hearing Board will:
  - 1. forward the request for a hearing to the respondent and ask for a written response.
  - 2. send the names of the Hearing Board members to both parties and, to avoid conflicts of interest between the two parties and the Hearing Board members, request written challenges, if any, within **3** class days of this notification. In addition to conflict of interest challenges, either party can challenge two hearing board members without cause (GSRR 5.1.7.c).
  - 3. rule promptly on any challenges, impanel a Hearing Board and send each party the names of the Hearing Board members. If the Chair of the Hearing Board is the subject of a challenge, the challenge shall be filed with the Dean of the College, or designee (See GSRR 5.1.7.). Decisions by the Hearing Board chair or the College Dean (or

- designee) on conflict of interest challenges are final;
4. send the Hearing Board members a copy of the request for a hearing and the respondent's written response and send all parties a copy of these procedures.
- C. Within **5** class days of being established, the Hearing Board shall review the request, and, after considering all requested and submitted information:
1. accept the request, in full or in part, and promptly schedule a hearing.
  2. reject the request and provide a written explanation to appropriate parties, e.g., lack of jurisdiction. (The student may appeal this decision.)
  3. the GSRR allows the hearing board to invite the two parties to meet with the Hearing Board in an informal session to try to resolve the matter. Such a meeting does not preclude a later hearing. However, by the time a grievance is requested all informal methods of conflict resolution should have been exhausted so this option is rarely used. (See GSRR 5.4.6.)
- D. If the Hearing Board calls for a hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly negotiate a hearing date, schedule an additional meeting only for the Hearing Board should additional deliberations on the findings become necessary, and request a written response to the grievance from the respondent.
- E. At least **5** class days before the scheduled hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall notify the respondent and the complainant in writing of the (1) time, date, and place of the hearing; (2) the names of the parties to the grievance; (3) a copy of the hearing request and the respondent's reply; and (4) the names of the Hearing Board members after any challenges. (See GSRR 5.4.7.)
- F. At least **3** class days before the scheduled hearing, the parties must notify the Chair of the Hearing Board the names of their witnesses and Advisor, if any, and request permission for the Advisor to have voice at the hearing. The chair may grant or deny this request. The Chair will promptly forward the names given by the complainant to the respondent and vice versa. (See GSRR 5.4.7.1.)
- G. The Chair of the Hearing Board may accept written statements from either party's witnesses at least **3** class days before the hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.9.)
- H. In unusual circumstances and in lieu of a personal appearance, either party may request permission to submit a written statement to the Hearing Board or request permission to participate in the hearing through an electronic communication channel. Written statements must be submitted to the Hearing Board at least **3** class days before the scheduled hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.9c.)
- I. Either party to the grievance hearing may request a postponement of the hearing. The Hearing Board may either grant or deny the request. (See GSRR 5.4.8.)

- J. At its discretion, the Hearing Board may set a reasonable time limit for each party to present its case, and the Chair of the Hearing Board must inform the parties of such a time limit in the written notification of the hearing.
- K. Hearings are closed unless the student requests an open hearing, which would be open to all members of the MSU community. The Hearing Board may close an open hearing to protect the confidentiality of information or to maintain order. (See GSRR 5.4.10.4.)
- L. Members of the Hearing Board are expected to respect the confidentiality of the hearing process. (See GSRR 5.4.10.4. and 5.4.11.)

**V. HEARING PROCEDURES:**

- A. The Hearing will proceed as follows:
  - 1. Introductory remarks by the Chair of the Hearing Board: The Chair of the Hearing Board introduces hearing panel members, the complainant, the respondent and advisors, if any. The Chair reviews the hearing procedures, including announced time restraints for presentations by each party and the witnesses, and informs the parties if their advisors may have a voice in the hearings and if the proceedings are being recorded. Witnesses shall be excluded from the proceedings except when testifying. The Chair also explains:
    - In academic grievance hearings in which a graduate student alleges a violation of academic rights, the student bears the burden of proof.
    - In hearings in which a graduate student seeks to contest allegations of academic misconduct, the instructor bears the burden of proof.
    - All Hearing Board decisions must be reached by a majority of the Hearing Board, based on "clear and convincing evidence." (See GSRR 8.1.18.)

(See GSRR 5.4.10.1 and 8.1.18.) For various other definitions, see GSRR Article 8.)
  - 2. If the complainant fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may either postpone the hearing or dismiss the case for demonstrated cause. (See GSRR 5.4.9a.)
  - 3. If the respondent fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may postpone the hearing or, only in unusual circumstances, hear the case in their absence. (See GSRR 5.4.9-b.)
  - 4. If the respondent is absent from the University during the semester of the grievance hearing or no longer employed by the University before the grievance procedure concludes, the hearing process may still proceed. (See GSRR 5.3.6.1.)

5. To assure orderly questioning, the Chair of the Hearing Board will recognize individuals before they speak. All parties have a right to speak without interruption. Each party has a right to question the other party and to rebut any oral or written statements submitted to the Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.4.10.2.)
6. Presentation by the Complainant: The Chair recognizes the complainant to present, without interruption, any statements relevant to the complainant's case, including the redress sought. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the complainant by the Hearing Board, the respondent and the respondent's advisor, if any.
7. Presentation by the Complainant's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the complainant's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, any statement directly relevant to the complainant's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the respondent, and the respondent's advisor, if any.
8. Presentation by the Respondent: The Chair recognizes the respondent to present without interruption any statements relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the respondent by the Hearing Board, the complainant, and the complainant's advisor, if any.
9. Presentation by the Respondent's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the respondent's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, statements directly relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the complainant, and the complainant's advisor, if any.
10. Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Complainant: The complainant refutes statements by the respondent, the respondent's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.
11. Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Respondent: The respondent refutes statements by the complainant, the complainant's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.
12. Final questions by the Hearing Board: The Hearing Board asks questions of any of the participants in the hearing.

## **VI. POST-HEARING PROCEDURES**

### **A. Deliberation:**

After all evidence has been presented, with full opportunity for explanations, questions and rebuttal, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall excuse all parties to the grievance and convene the Hearing Board to determine its findings in executive session. When possible, deliberations should take place directly following the hearing and/or at the previously scheduled follow-up meeting. (See Section IV.D above.)

B. Decision:

1. In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving graduate students in which a majority of the Hearing Board finds, based on "clear and convincing evidence," that a violation of the student's academic rights has occurred and that redress is possible, it shall recommend an appropriate remedy to the Department Chair. Upon receiving the Hearing Board's recommendation, the Department Chair shall implement an appropriate remedy, in consultation with the Hearing Board, within **3** class days. If the Hearing Board finds that no violation of academic rights has occurred, it shall so inform the Department Chair. The Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly forward copies of the final decision to parties and the University Ombudsperson. (See GSRR 5.4.11.)
2. In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving graduate students in which the Hearing Board serves as the initial hearing body to adjudicate an allegation of academic dishonesty and, based on "clear and convincing evidence," the Hearing Board finds for the student, the Hearing Board shall recommend to the Department Chair or School Director that the penalty grade be removed, the Academic Dishonesty Report be removed from the student's records and a "good faith judgment" of the student's academic performance in the course take place. If the Hearing Board finds for the instructor, the penalty grade shall stand and the Academic Dishonesty Report regarding the allegation will remain on file, pending an appeal, if any to the College Hearing Board within **5** class days of the Hearing Board's decision. If an academic disciplinary hearing is pending, and the Hearing Board decides for the instructor, the graduate student's disciplinary hearing before either the College Hearing Board or the Dean of The Graduate School would promptly follow, pending an appeal, if any, within **5** class days. (See GSRR 5.5.2.2 and 5.4.12.3)

C. Written Report:

The Chair of the Hearing Board shall prepare a written report of the Hearing Board's findings, including recommended redress or sanctions for the complainant, if applicable, and forward a copy of the decision to the appropriate unit administrator within **3** class days of the hearing. The report shall indicate the rationale for the decision and the major elements of evidence, or lack thereof, that support the Hearing Board's decision. The administrator, in consultation with the Hearing Board, shall then implement an appropriate remedy. The report also should inform the parties of the right to appeal within **5** class days following notice of the decision, or **5** class days if an academic disciplinary hearing is pending. The Chair shall forward copies of the Hearing Board's report and the administrator's redress, if applicable, to the parties involved, the responsible administrators, the University Ombudsperson and the Dean of The Graduate School. All recipients must respect the confidentiality of the report and of the hearing board's deliberations resulting in a decision. (See GSRR 5.4.12 and 5.5.2.2)

**VII. APPEAL OF THE HEARING BOARD DECISION:**

- A. Either party may appeal a decision by the Hearing Board to the College Hearing Board for

cases involving (1) academic grievances alleging violations of student rights and (2) alleged violations of regulations involving academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, professional standards or falsification of admission and academic records.) (See GSRR 5.4.12.)

- B. All appeals must be in writing, signed and submitted to the Chair of the College Hearing Board within **5** class days following notification of the Hearing Board's decision. While under appeal, the original decision of the Hearing Board will be held in abeyance. (See GSRR 5.4.12, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.3.)
- C. A request for an appeal of a Hearing Board decision to the College Hearing Board must allege, in sufficient particularity to justify a hearing that the initial Hearing Board failed to follow applicable procedures for adjudicating the hearing or that findings of the Hearing Board were not supported by "clear and convincing evidence." The request also must include the redress sought. Presentation of new evidence normally will be inappropriate. (See GSRR 5.4.12.1, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.4.)

#### **VIII. RECONSIDERATION:**

If new evidence should arise, either party to a hearing may request the appropriate Hearing Board to reconsider the case within **30** days upon receipt of the hearing outcome. The written request for reconsideration is to be sent to the Chair of the Hearing Board, who shall promptly convene the Hearing Board to review the new material and render a decision on a new hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.13.)

#### **IX. FILE COPY:**

The Chair of the Department shall file a copy of these procedures with the Office of the Ombudsperson and with the Dean of The Graduate School. (See GSRR 5.4.1.)