

Handbook for the On-Campus Graduate Program

**Department of Psychology
Michigan State University**

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1. Overview

1.1 Structure of the Graduate Program and the Department

Congratulations! You are a graduate student in one of the top Psychology Departments in the country. You should be proud of yourself for this achievement. This next phase of your career will immerse you in the practices and scholarship of your discipline and prepare you to make important contributions to the science and application of psychology. The goal of your graduate training program is to help you become a first-rate scientist, scholar, teacher, and/or practitioner.

The Psychology Department has six interest groups, each of which supports a graduate training curriculum. These are:

1. Behavioral Neuroscience
2. Clinical
3. Cognition & Cognitive Neuroscience
4. Ecological/Community
5. Organizational
6. Social/Personality

Each interest group has a chairperson (sometimes referred to as the interest group head; referred to as the Director of Clinical Training (DCT) in the Clinical interest group). The Department also has a Chair of the Department, a Graduate Programs Director (Associate Chair for Graduate Studies) and the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Psychology (Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies).

In addition, we have an Office of Graduate Studies (240E) that is staffed by the Graduate Programs Administrator to serve the graduate students and to ensure that policies and procedures are followed. The “**Graduate Program**” for which this handbook applies is a Ph.D. program which includes obtaining a master’s degree on the way to your Ph.D. degree. Therefore, in this handbook, we refer to the Master’s portion of the Graduate Program as your “**Master’s Program**,” and the post-Master’s portion as the “**Doctoral Program**.”

The Psychology Department at MSU also offers a fully online terminal M.A. in Program Evaluation. It requirements are described in a separate document. **M.A. in Program Evaluation Handbook**

The six on-campus interest groups each have their own graduate curricula as described in this handbook. Although you have a primary home within one of these interest groups and will follow their curriculum, you are first and foremost a graduate student within the Department of Psychology. In addition to Departmental policies and guidelines, each interest group has additional, specific policies and guidelines that apply to students within that program. Students with strong interdisciplinary interests may be eligible to develop individualized training plans that span two interest groups. 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. Information on this interdisciplinary work is provided below, and early

discussion with the Graduate Programs Director is encouraged if you wish to pursue this option.

There are University policies and guidelines that describe policies that are University-wide followed by all graduate programs at Michigan State University (see [The Graduate School Policies and Procedures](#)).

1.1.b Overview/Introduction to the Clinical Psychology Program

The MSU Clinical Psychology Program is a doctoral-level clinical psychology training program that has been accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) since 1948 and was designated a clinical science program by the Academy of Clinical Psychological Clinical Science in 2014. The Clinical Psychology Program is committed to training clinical scientists who conduct clinically relevant research that will further the etiological understanding of mental health disorders and inform their treatment and prevention. The program places a high value on diversity and multi-cultural responsiveness in the program milieu and in the curriculum, including a dedicated course, a colloquia series, and research and clinical training. Finally, the program is committed to training students in clinical science and evidence-based assessment and treatment for children and adults across multiple theoretical clinical approaches including CBT, third-wave CBT, and relational psychodynamic.

The Clinical Psychology Program is named the “Clinical Interest Group (CIG)” within the Department of Psychology, and both names (Clinical Psychology Program and CIG) appear interchangeably throughout this document.

Commitment to Diversity and Multicultural Training

The MSU Clinical Psychology Program is committed to understanding and promoting mental health in an increasingly diverse society. An enhanced understanding of all types of diversity is critical for the development of students and faculty as clinical scientists and professionals in the field. The MSU Clinical 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, all graduate students are expected to educate themselves about multiple diverse populations with whom they may interact both in research and clinical settings. Graduate students will be required to treat and evaluate clients of diverse ages, ethnic/racial backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, and religions.

1.1.d Overview/Introduction to the Ecological/Community Psychology Program

The Ecological-Community Psychology Program has been designed to bring humanitarian and scientific thought and research to the understanding and solution of critical human problems. For this reason, students entering the program should have both scientific and humanitarian interests. Ecological-Community Psychology is concerned with a broad range of human problems. Gender-based violence, child-abuse, juvenile delinquency,

developmental disabilities, substance abuse, race relations, over-population, mental health, educational deprivation, public health delivery systems and alternative system creation are current examples of such problems. The intent of the program is to produce psychologists who can carry out socially relevant research aimed at understanding and solving such problems in their natural setting.

It is recognized that students will vary in their speed of progress through the program. It is the goal of the program that students will complete the Master's portion of the program in approximately two to three years beyond the Bachelor's degree and the Ph.D. portion of the program in two to three years beyond the Masters. Students who enter the program with a Master's degree from another institution may be asked to complete a Master's thesis equivalency paper if their Master's degree did not include a research oriented thesis. Whether or not a Master's equivalency paper is required is at the discretion of the student's Doctoral Guidance Committee.

1.2 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 "PID" which includes the letter "A" followed by eight digits. This piece of information 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 can obtain your photo ID from the International Center.

You also have an **MSU NetID**. Your NetID allows you to do things electronically at MSU, including access to email, library resources, and your student record. Your NetID is the first part of your MSU email address **something@msu.edu**. Using your NetID, you can also access some server storage space which you can use to create personal web pages.

You should also work with your interest group Chair and/or faculty advisor regarding assignment to your office space. You and your Chair/faculty advisor will need to sign off on a form for you to obtain a key to your office assignment. Keys can be obtained from the staff in room 262.

1.21 Attend an Orientation Session

You are required to attend an orientation session for all incoming graduate students in Psychology. The orientation session 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. New students are sent a letter over the summer providing the date and time for the orientation session.

Some interest groups also do a program-specific orientation (e.g., the Clinical Program). These orientations are also required and are scheduled/arranged by the interest group chair.

1.22 Take care of your financial support paperwork

You have been provided four years of financial support for your graduate education. Financial support comes in five main types – your source of funding can change over the course of your time here:

- 1) Teaching assistantships (TA); students are eligible to join the Graduate Employees Union
- 2) Teaching assistantships not eligible to join the Graduate Employees Union (e.g., Clinic Coordinators who are labeled as Teaching Excluded or TE)
- 3) Research assistantships (RA)
- 4) MSU fellowships (e.g., University Distinguished Fellowships, University Enrichment Fellowships)
- 5) External fellowships (e.g., from the National Science Foundation or National Institutes of Health)

If you have been awarded a TA, you will be asked at the Orientation session if you want to join the Graduate Employees Union (GEU). During that session, you will be given a card on which you indicate your decision to join or not join the GEU. This issue is discussed during the Orientation Session.

1.23 Meet Your Advisor

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. Your Temporary Advisor may become your Advisor when you choose your Master's Committee, but this is not necessary. Some of you might already know who you want as your advisor—he or she is the person who contacted you during the admissions process, who might be supporting you on a research grant, or who has simply said "I will be your advisor when you get here." Make sure you meet with this person as soon as possible after you arrive in East Lansing. In addition, within a month of your arrival on campus you must meet with your advisor to (1) talk about who will be on your guidance committee and (2) begin to explore research ideas.

Your advisor is one of the most valuable resources you have for information, guidance, and advice.

1.24 Next Summer Support and Credit Requirement

It is not too early to think about funding for next summer after your first year here at MSU. While your acceptance letter notes that you have four years of support during the academic year, almost all our students are funded in some way over the summer semester. Each Fall

semester, you will receive a letter from the Psychology Department Administration asking if you want to teach a face-to-face course or an on-line course the following summer. This is one way to secure funding for the summer and to add teaching experience to your curriculum vitae as well. Students can also receive summer support in the form of a research assistantship if they have made such an agreement for support with their advisor or as part of a fellowship.

Therefore, make sure you have conversations with your faculty advisor in your Graduate Program about summer funding opportunities by the middle of the Fall semester.

Summer stipends 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).

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. See the Graduate Programs Administrator for additional information.

1.3 How to Use this Document

This Handbook summarizes the Department-wide policies, as well as additional policies that are in place for each of the six interest groups (they are designated by letters at the end of each section # as follows; a = Behavioral Neuroscience; b = Clinical; c = Cognitive/Cognitive Neuroscience; d = Ecological/Community; e = Industrial/Organizational; f = Social).

All Departmental forms that you need to fill out can be downloaded using links in the relevant sections of this Handbook or from our [Forms web page](#). The files are in MSWord format, so you can fill them in electronically.

This Handbook is divided into these main sections:

Program Components

Degree Requirements for Masters and Ph.D. Programs

Selection of the Thesis/Dissertation Advisor

Formation of the Guidance Committee

Thesis/Dissertation Defense

Departmental Policies: Academic Performance

Departmental Policies: Integrity and Safety in Research and Scholarly Activities

Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution

Work-Related Policies

University Resources

1.4 Expectations of the Program

Specific policies and guidelines related to all aspects of the programs are detailed comprehensively below. Broadly, the Department expects that our graduate students engage productively in their 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 one's training stage and which increases during one's time in the program; (3) participating in opportunities for professional development, mentorship, and skills development, such as departmental "Brown Bag" and colloquia relevant to your interest group, attendance at professional meetings, and the like; and (4) contributing to a culture of mutual respect, inclusion, and respect for differences within our department and the field.

1.4.b Statement of expectations for professional development, service, and professional comportment for students in the Clinical Program

The MSU Clinical Psychology Program is committed to understanding and promoting mental health in an increasingly diverse society. An enhanced understanding of all types of diversity is critical for the development of students and faculty as clinical scientists and professionals in the field. The MSU Clinical 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, all graduate students are expected to educate themselves about multiple diverse populations with whom they may interact both in research and clinical settings. Graduate students will be required to treat and evaluate clients of diverse ages, ethnic/racial backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, and religions.

In addition, students are expected to engage in lifelong learning and to develop habits of professional self-development via participation in the field, attendance at professional meetings, participation in interest group and departmental activities, and participation in service committees that carry out program functions, such as the diversity committee, admissions committee, and faculty search committees. Doing so is a valuable opportunity to learn about and to influence program activities. Although it is not a formal requirement, students should anticipate some professional service during graduate school, and all are strongly encouraged to serve on at least one service committee during their time in program.

1.5 Program highlights

Although the timelines may vary somewhat across programs and by virtue of individual training plans, you can expect that your graduate career will largely follow this trajectory. Maintaining progress towards degree requirements consistent with this timeline is good practice. Below is the most general schematic of the highlights of graduate training in Psychology that are shared across all 6 Ph.D. programs.

Year 1 highlights: take PSY 815; establish your research relationship(s) with faculty mentor(s); MA thesis proposal

Year 2 highlights: complete master's research and MA thesis defense

Year 3 highlights: form doctoral guidance committee; complete comprehensive exams

Years 4-5 highlights: conduct doctoral research; dissertation proposal; dissertation defense

1.5.f An example of program highlights for one of the 6 programs: Overview for Students in the Social Program

During your first year, in addition to getting involved in research with members of the S/P faculty, you will complete a great deal of your coursework and begin working on your Master's Thesis. Keep in mind that your first few years are generally the most intensive. Good planning and focus at this stage will pay off greatly in the years that follow. By the end of your first year, you should have a well-formed thesis topic or thesis proposal, which you will present at Spring brown bag series.

During the summer between your first and second years you will prepare your Master's Thesis proposal or, if you have already defended your proposal, work on collecting your Master's Thesis data.

By the beginning of your second year you should have a Master's proposal that is ready to present to your committee. During your second year you will continue to participate in various research projects as well as take most of your remaining courses. It is also a good idea to think about courses for your minor or concentration. Getting these requirements finished early allows for more time to focus on research later in the program. You will also collect your Master's thesis data, analyze these data, and write your thesis. You will need to defend your Master's Thesis by May 15th of your second year. Formal admission to the Ph.D. program typically occurs after completion of the Masters.

At the very start of your third year, you will take your PhD comprehensive exam (having studied during the summer between your second and third year, and assuming you have completed your Master's thesis). In addition, you will continue to work on research, but in all likelihood the focus will shift from data collection and analysis to writing so that you will have some published research when you enter the job market.

Sometime before or during your fourth year you will write dissertation proposal and present it to your dissertation committee. You may also begin collecting dissertation data. There

may be one or two courses you wish to take during this year, but we encourage you to limit your coursework at this point so that you can focus on research and writing. Given that the summertime is generally less intense, it is a good time to think and write.

Finally, during your fourth and fifth years you will continue working on research, and you will complete your dissertation. (Note that you should not worry about deriving a topic for your dissertation until you have been in school for a couple of years. The topic for this project generally develops over time as you are exposed to the many areas within social/personality psychology.) Students generally get the opportunity to teach their own courses during this time - which provides them with important experience as well as a teaching record that is an important component for academic job applications.

2. Program Components

Graduate students in the Department complete the following degree components: (1) MA thesis; (2) comprehensive exam; and (3) dissertation.

This section introduces you to the main components of the program (through Master's and Doctoral degree components), their purpose, and how these fit into your graduate school timeline. The next section (**3: Degree requirements**) details the requirements for successful completion of these components; refer to that section to answer any questions about requirements, deadlines, and timelines for completion and submission of all relevant paperwork and forms).

While all 6 interest groups include the same components for the degree, the way in which these components are composed, administrated, and evaluated can vary somewhat across interest groups. Comprehensive information about how each program administers these components is available in section (a-f) below.

2.1 Master's Thesis

It is expected that graduate students will complete either a formal Master's thesis (the University calls this the Plan A option) or a project-based research study (Plan B option).

Programs in Clinical, Ecological/Community, Organizational and Social/Personality typically require a Plan A Master's thesis while the Behavioral Neuroscience and Cognition & Cognitive Neuroscience Programs typically require a Plan B research project.

Students with individualized, interdisciplinary plans of study must work with their committees to determine whether a Plan A or Plan B project will be completed. The Department's Graduate Office must be informed prior to data collection.

Your Master's Guidance Committee helps you with your Master's Plan of Study and also supervises your Master's research. See Section 4 of this document for more guidance regarding the selection of your thesis/dissertation advisor.

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 of Study Amendment Form" with the Graduate Office (room 240E).

The committee requirement is for a minimum of three members including your Chair.

The restrictions on committee membership include:

The Chair of your Guidance Committee must be a Psychology Department faculty member within your Graduate Program.

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 maintain a courtesy appointment) or a regular faculty member from outside the Psychology Department. Inclusion of such members is subject to approval by the Graduate Program Director/Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.

You can have an additional (4th) committee member who can be an adjunct faculty member. Your committee membership is reviewed and must be approved by the department's Graduate Program Director.

It is occasionally appropriate for a student to request a fixed-term (non-tenure-stream) faculty member from MSU or a regular faculty member from another University to serve on their committee. In this case, you need to seek approval from the Graduate Programs Director. This request must be subsequently approved by the College of Social Science and the Graduate School.

If you are developing an individualized, interdisciplinary plan of study that spans two of the department's graduate programs, then you must have one faculty member from each of these programs on your committee. The chair of this committee must come from one of the two programs.

2.1.1 For Students who Entered MSU with a Master's Degree

If you were admitted as a graduate student in the Psychology Department with a previously earned master's degree, your requirements and timeline in your program may differ from those of students who entered with a Bachelor's Degree. Each interest group has policies by which the faculty make these determinations, which are guided by one or more of the following criteria: 1) whether your master's degree is in Psychology or another discipline; 2) the research requirements of your previous master's program; 3) the coursework in the master's program and your grades in those courses.

In this handbook, differences for students entering without and without a master's degree will be noted throughout.

If you are entering with a master's degree, you should begin the discussion of how this impacts your program requirements and timeline at MSU as soon as possible, including your faculty advisor and the Graduate Program director, as well as any other faculty who are involved in your training (i.e., those on your guidance committee).

2.1.1a Policy on Students Entering the Behavioral Neuroscience Program Who Have Previously Earned a Master's Degree

Students who enter the Graduate Program with a Master's degree in Psychology or a closely related field have a different timeline than students entering with a Bachelor's degree (see specifics detailed in each section below). Because they are not necessarily more advanced in the field of Behavioral Neuroscience, incoming students with a Master's degree in fields other than Psychology will be decided on a case-by-case basis during discussions among the student, the student's BNS faculty advisor, and the remainder of the BNS faculty.

2.1.1b Policy on Students Entering the Clinical Program Who Have Previously Earned a Master's Degree

If a student completed an acceptable research thesis in psychology or a related field as part of Master's degree work at another institution, the CIG faculty will review whether the Master's thesis can be transferred. The advisor and one other CIG faculty member (most commonly, the DCT and/or aDCT) will be asked to judge whether the previous work qualifies or whether the student needs to demonstrate additional research competence at the Master's level. If approved, a copy of the thesis and a letter documenting the faculty's judgment of acceptability must be filed with the Psychology Department's Graduate Office by the student.

Students with a Master's degree earned elsewhere who did not complete a data-based thesis, or whose previous thesis work is judged not to be acceptable, must demonstrate research competence. This is usually accomplished by conducting a thesis-equivalency project during the first year that the student is enrolled in the MSU Clinical Psychology Program.

2.1.1f Policy on Students Entering the Social/Personality Program Who Have Previously Earned a Master's Degree

Students may enter the graduate program with a Master's Degree already attained. Students must present formal evidence of having obtained the degree to the graduate program director in psychology, at which point the student is automatically and directly admitted to the Ph.D. program. No additional S/P faculty vote is needed, as admission to the graduate program is admission to the Ph.D. program. In such cases, some number of course requirements may be waived. This is done on a student by-student and course-by-course basis, in consultation with the student's primary advisor and course instructors.

2.2 Doctoral Plan of Study

When you begin your Doctoral program, you will need to create a **Doctoral Guidance Committee**. The Doctoral Guidance Committee must consist of four MSU faculty members, at least three of whom are regular faculty members of the Psychology Department (in the tenure track or tenured). The chairperson of the committee must be a member of the student's Graduate Program. No more than one of the four faculty may be Emeritus, or from outside the Psychology Department.

If you are pursuing an individualized, interdisciplinary plan of study that spans two of the department's programs, your Doctoral Guidance Committee must contain at least one current faculty member from each of the two programs, and the chair must come from one of them. The Doctoral Guidance Committee members work with you to develop your Plan of Study.

The Doctoral Guidance Committee will assist you with preparation of your **Doctoral Plan of Study** and will approve of the final plan of study and any modifications thereof. The Doctoral Plan of Study includes: 1) courses you will take (not including any that were part of your Master's plan of study); 2) your dissertation subject; 3) your committee members; and 4) plans for your comprehensive exam.

Individual interest groups may have additional requirements; see details in following sections for clarification of additional requirements.

2.3 Comprehensive Exams

Each Graduate Program specifies the requirements for the Comprehensive Examination. Thus, the format, structure, and content are determined almost entirely by your Graduate Program and your Guidance Committee.

The Comprehensive Examination serves several purposes within the student's training program, including (1) demonstrating that the student has an appropriate breadth of understanding of the field of psychology as well as sufficient depth of understanding of topics and methods within their subdiscipline; (2) demonstrating that the student is prepared to conduct a dissertation, based on their conceptual, theoretical, and/or methodological topics in their subdiscipline.

In each program, the program faculty generate the procedures by which the Comprehensive Exam is conducted and faculty serve as evaluators for student performance on the Comprehensive Exam. Some programs use an exam format, while others use a different format (e.g., the student writes a review paper). Details for each program are described below.

The University requirement is that all **Comprehensive Exams must be passed WITHIN FIVE YEARS** from the time when a student begins the first class at MSU that appears on his or her Doctoral Plan of Study. Your Graduate Program likely has even stricter

requirements for a student to be considered to be making adequate progress. Consult the relevant sections below pertinent to your graduate program.

Requests for time extensions to the University requirement must be made by the chair of the student's committee and endorsed by the Graduate Programs Director. 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 for a Ph.D. candidate, **the student is required to retake the comprehensive examinations by that date.** If the student believes there is justification for not requiring a retake of the exams, he or she 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 typed on the **MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Record of Comprehensive Examinations** form, and each examiner should sign under his or her typed name. The student must be enrolled for at least one credit the semester in which the exams are passed. The Record of Comprehensive Exam form should be submitted to the Graduate Program Administrator after all committee members have signed. The approved written comprehensive exam must be emailed to the Department's Graduate Program Administrator.

2.4 Dissertation Proposal

Once you have reached the stage of working on your dissertation, you can select committee members to take advantage of different faculty members' expertise. At that point, you will amend your Doctoral Guidance Committee membership to reflect those changes to the 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. Before that time, should you need to change the membership of your committee, you must file an amendment to your Plan of Study. The Doctoral Plan of Study may be amended through GradPlan.

Regulations concerning **who may serve on Doctoral Dissertation Committees** are the same as those for the Doctoral Guidance / Plan of Study Committee: 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 Graduate Program to which you were admitted (or one of the two if you are pursuing an individual, interdisciplinary plan of study). Also, the Graduate Director of Psychology has the discretion to approve or not approve a committee or to add a committee member to any Doctoral Committee.

Your Doctoral Guidance Committee provides feedback, guidance, and mentorship on your dissertation research and the content of your proposal. Once your doctoral guidance committee chair determines that your proposal is sufficiently developed, you may schedule

a proposal defense meeting. At this meeting, your committee may approve your proposal. 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 that are mutually agreed upon between yourself and the committee during the proposal meeting.

2.5 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. It is typical to provide the document to the committee members at least 3 weeks prior to the scheduled date of the defense (although please see the relevant sections below for any modifications to this expectation for your specific program).

The process followed during the dissertation defense meeting is outlined by the specific Graduate Program. In all programs, 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, interdisciplinary plan in which students are spanning two programs, 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.

The Department of Psychology encourages all dissertation committees and doctoral students to arrange for a public presentation of the dissertation as part of, or in addition to, the oral defense. The **Ph.D. Notification of Final Oral Examination** form should be filled out to allow the presentation to be advertised. Announcements and scheduling of rooms must be made three weeks prior to the oral defense.

3. Degree Requirements, Guidelines, and Forms

This section outlines all of the departmental requirements necessary for advancing successfully through the degree program, including requirements and policies for the MA and Ph.D.

Please attend carefully to all requirements and deadlines and seek guidance from the Graduate Program Director with any questions or clarifications needed.

Each section details universal requirement and guidelines (those set by Graduate School and the Psychology Department) and additional requirements and guidelines set by your program (when these exist).

3.1 Master's Program

You are considered to be in the **Master's Program** if you were admitted to the Graduate Program in the Department of Psychology and you don't have a Master's Degree from another University. If you have a master's degree from another University, it is up to your Graduate Program to determine if you will be required to complete an additional master's thesis at MSU. This issue should be clarified **before the start of your first academic semester** at MSU. If you have been admitted directly into the Ph.D. Program (accepted master's thesis), go to Section 4 on Ph.D. Program requirements.

This section refers to a number of forms that need to be completed. Click [here](#) to access all Master's Program relevant forms.

3.1.1 Set up Master's Guidance Committee: Departmental Requirements

Your Master's Guidance Committee helps you with your Master's Plan of Study and also supervises your Master's research. The Master's Guidance committee membership can be changed as it becomes clearer which faculty members are the best fit, given the direction of your thesis. To change the membership of your committee, you must file "The Master's Plan of Study Amendment Form" with the Graduate Office (room 240E).

The Master's Guidance committee requirement is for a minimum of three members including your Chair. The restrictions on committee membership include:

The Chair of your Guidance Committee must be a Psychology Department faculty member within your Graduate Program

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 maintain a courtesy appointment) or a regular faculty member from outside the Psychology Department.

You can have an additional (4th) committee member who can be an adjunct faculty member.

Your committee membership is reviewed and must be approved by the department's Graduate Program Director.

It is occasionally appropriate for a student to want a fixed-term (non-tenure-stream) faculty member from MSU or a regular faculty member from another University to serve on their committee. In this case, you need to seek approval from the Graduate Programs Director.

If you are developing an individualized, interdisciplinary plan of study that spans two of the department's graduate programs, then you must have one faculty member from each of these programs on your committee. The chair of this committee must come from one of the two programs.

The MA Guidance Committee is an important resource to you as you plan and conduct your master's thesis work. In the department, there is an explicit expectation that the thesis is designed to facilitate the development of student's core research skills, methods, and scholarship as shaped by the norms of psychological science generally and the subdiscipline field more specifically. It is expected that students will demonstrate in-depth understanding of the topic(s) of central focus in their thesis. It is the MA Guidance Committee who will have the responsibility of both providing assistance during this process and also evaluating your work, culminating in your defense of the MA thesis.

3.1.1.a Master's Guidance Committee: Additional Requirements for Students in the Behavioral Neuroscience Program

The Master's Guidance Committee should be formed **by October 1** during the Fall Semester of your first year in the program.

The Committee must consist of at least three regular faculty members including the student's supervisor (normally serving as chair) and at least one other faculty member from the Behavioral Neuroscience graduate program. The other members may be from outside BNS or from another department, as outlined in section 3.1.1 above.

By **no later than November 1**, the student must schedule a meeting with the Guidance Committee to secure approval of the proposal for Year 1 research activities. These dates for Year 1 apply equivalently to students with Bachelor's and Master's degrees.

3.1.1.b Master's Guidance Committee and Thesis: Additional Requirements for Students in the Clinical Program

The Master's thesis is designed to expose students to the research process early in their career and facilitate the development of core research skills and methods. Soon after the start of fall semester of the first year, the student should work with their advisor to develop a thesis topic idea and timeline. The Master's Guidance Committee consists of no less than three faculty members, at least two of whom must be members of the Clinical Psychology Program. The student's advisor serves as Chair of this committee. Other rules about this committee are set forth by the Department of Psychology and are described above.

3.1.1.d Master's Guidance Committee: Additional Requirements for Students in the Ecological/Community Program

Upon entry into the program, an incoming Masters level student is assigned a faculty member as temporary advisor. During the second semester, the student must form a three-person Master's Guidance Committee of at least two regular faculty members from the Department of Psychology. The chair of this committee must be a member of the Ecological-Community Psychology Interest Group. This is done by discussing the formation of this committee with the chair of one's committee and then involving two other faculty. Once this committee is formed, the chair of the Master's Guidance Committee will officially become the student's advisor. The student and their Guidance Committee will jointly develop a Master's Plan of Study consisting of courses, seminars, research, and community experience. The [Master's Plan of Study](#) form must be submitted to the Graduate Office by the end of the second semester of graduate study. The Master's Guidance Committee may waive or enhance the course requirements noted below.

3.1.1.e Master's Guidance Committee: Additional Requirements for Students in the Organizational Program

When you begin your M.A. thesis research, you should enroll in PSY 899 (thesis credits). As soon as you are prepared to begin your thesis work, you should form a master's thesis committee. This committee consists of at least three faculty members, some of whom may be the same people who are on your M.A. guidance committee. The chair of this committee must be an I/O faculty member.

3.1.2 Write your Plan of Study

To obtain a Master's degree you must complete a minimum of **30 credit hours** of coursework and research credits. It is expected that graduate students will complete a formal Master's thesis (the University calls this the Plan A option) or a project based research study (Plan B option). Programs in Clinical, Ecological/Community, Organizational and Social/Personality typically require a Plan A Master's thesis while the Behavioral Neuroscience and Cognition & Cognitive Neuroscience Programs typically require a Plan B research project.

On your plan of study, graduate students pursuing a Plan A Master's thesis must have a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8 credits of PSY 899 (Thesis Research) and Plan B Master's Project students must have a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8 credits of PSY 890.

Students with individualized, interdisciplinary plans of study must work with their committees to determine whether a Plan A or Plan B project will be completed. The Department's Graduate Office must be informed prior to data collection.

Work with your advisor/committee to determine the agreed upon course and thesis credits (if applicable) to reach the 30 credit minimum. **You should not exceed the 30 credit minimum on your plan of study as any credits over 30 cannot count towards your PhD plan of study.**

3.1.2.1 Master's Plan of Study Forms

Your Plan of Study is an important document, so work with your advisor/committee members. The Plan of Study contains information about

- The courses you will take
- The number of research credits you will sign up for
- Your research area
- Your Guidance Committee members

The plan of study must be signed by all members of your Master's Guidance Committee and is not official until it has received departmental approval by the Graduate Director.

The Plan of Study must be filed before the end of your second semester (typically spring semester, first year) as a graduate student for you to remain eligible for fall registration.

As noted, your Plan of Study (including the composition of your committee) may be amended with a **Master's Plan of Study Amendment Form**. As you can see from the form, before it is official it must be signed by you, the Chair of your Guidance Committee, and the Graduate Programs Director.

3.1.2.a Master's Plan of Study: Additional Requirements for Students in the Behavioral Neuroscience Program

By November 1 during the Fall Semester of your first year in the program, you must write a proposal (≤ 3 pages, double-spaced) for the Year 1 research activities and submit it to the Guidance Committee. This proposal includes the rationale for the activities and a timetable for the specific plan of action. For students who entered the program with Bachelor's Degrees only, the activities might be an experiment, or might involve learning techniques or collecting pilot data.

For students entering the program with a Master's Degree, the activity should involve conducting a hypothesis-driven experiment.

In all cases, pertinent literature, handling of a model organism, and new research skills should be mastered. For many students these activities may arise from the supervisor's grant(s) or ongoing research program.

The fundamental purpose of these activities is to involve the student in research early in Year 1 and provide information of an evaluative nature to the faculty of the BNS graduate program.

No later than two weeks after the last day of Spring semester finals, students without Master's degrees must submit a written summary (≤ 3 pages, double-spaced) of the year's

research activities to the Guidance Committee. Students with Master's degrees are not required to turn in a summary at this time. Requests for a deadline extension must be in writing (via email to the BNS graduate program chair), will be considered by the entire BNS faculty and granted only under extraordinary circumstances.

A student who neither meets the deadline nor is approved for an extension risks receiving a failing grade in PSY 890.

3.1.2.b Master's Plan of Study and Thesis: Timeline and Requirements for Students in the Clinical Program

The Master's thesis proposal should be brief (e.g., 6-10 pages double-spaced) and should describe the background literature supporting the thesis work, the study hypotheses, and study methods. The structure of the thesis proposal (and of the final thesis project itself) will vary depending on the lab/advisor, but it should be written in APA format and according to any requirements of the MSU Graduate School for a "Plan A" thesis.

If the student has submitted an NSF graduate research fellowship (or equivalent grant), the Research Statement can serve as their Master's thesis proposal (although it may be helpful to add a figure or some additional text, as needed).

The Master's thesis proposal should be submitted to the Master's Guidance Committee two weeks before the scheduled committee meeting in which the thesis proposal will be discussed.

During this proposal meeting, the student will give a brief (i.e., ~10-15 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.

It is recommended (but not required) that students hold their proposal committee meeting before the last day of fall semester in their first year. However, the latest date by which this meeting must take place is **April 15th of the first year of the program, and the final proposal must be approved (after all revisions are made) by May 15th of the first year of the program.**

After the thesis proposal is defended, students typically work on the thesis project throughout their first year and during the summer in-between the first and second year in the program. The time it takes to complete the Master's thesis will vary depending upon the scope and nature of the project. However, **it is recommended that the student hold the final thesis defense with their Master's Guidance Committee during the fall semester of their second year.** This timeline might not be possible for all students, but it is a timeline that promotes maximal productivity in the second year of the program. **The latest date by which the student can hold their final defense is March 15th, and the Master's thesis must be passed by the committee (including all revisions) by April 1st of the second year.**

Once again, the student should submit the final thesis to the committee for review at least two weeks prior to the meeting date. During the final defense meeting, the student will give a relatively brief presentation of the full Master's thesis project. The Master's Guidance Committee will ask questions about the work and will decide on the overall grade for the Master's thesis. The CIG Master's Thesis Research Day then takes place around April 15th. This event is attended by all CIG faculty and students and is a time in which the second-year students present their final theses and answer questions.

Students are expected to complete their Master's thesis by the end of their second year of graduate study. The advisor and student should be aware of any problems by spring/summer semester of the student's first year and make all efforts to get the project back on schedule. If the student is unable to meet the required deadlines, then the student must petition, in writing, the full CIG faculty for an extension of the April 15th/May 15th proposal deadlines in Year 1, or the March 15th/April 1st final thesis deadlines in Year 2. The faculty will decide if an extension will be granted. Ordinarily, the maximum extension will be one month.

If the student has not completed the MA thesis by the agreed deadline, he/she is placed on probation with a deadline for completing the project. During the probationary period, the student cannot register for any courses except for thesis credits (PSY 899) in order to focus on completing the project. Students must complete the MA thesis by the end of the probationary or face dismissal from the program for inadequate progress.

Since the M.A. thesis is a Plan A thesis, it must be formatted in accordance with the University Guidelines and be submitted to the MSU Graduate School according to their spring deadlines (see Graduate School handbook) in order to receive the Master's degree in spring of the second year. The student should check with the Graduate School for these deadlines. Please note that any student who does not meet these deadlines and is not approved for an extension (see above) risks receiving a failing grade in PSY 899.

Summary of Master's Thesis Deadlines

Year 1 (Master's thesis proposal):

Last week of Fall Semester (recommended – not required): Date by which the student has had their Master's Guidance Committee meeting when the thesis proposal is discussed/defended.

April 15: Latest date by which there must be the Master's Guidance Committee meeting when the thesis proposal is discussed/defended.

May 15: Latest date by which the proposal is approved by the Master's Guidance Committee when the thesis proposal is discussed/defended.

Year 2 (Master's thesis):

Fall semester: Recommended time by which the student completes the Master's thesis and holds the final oral defense with the Master's Guidance Committee. The committee will determine whether the thesis is approved or whether revisions are necessary.

March 15: Latest date by which the student has an oral defense of the thesis with the Master's Guidance Committee. The committee will determine whether the thesis is approved or whether revisions are necessary.

April 1: Latest date by which the final thesis with revisions must be approved by the committee. Also, latest date by which the student must email a copy of the Master's thesis to the CIG faculty and students so that all may read it in preparation for the CIG Master's Thesis Research Day.

April 15 (approximate): The CIG students and faculty attend the Master's Thesis Research Presentation Day when the second year students present their Master's theses. This research day is scheduled on a regular CSF meeting day that occurs as close as possible to April 15th.

Students with M.A. earned elsewhere

If a student completed an acceptable research thesis in psychology or a related field as part of Master's degree work at another institution, the CIG faculty will review whether the Master's thesis can be transferred. The advisor and one other CIG faculty member (most commonly, the DCT and/or aDCT) will be asked to judge whether the previous work qualifies or whether the student needs to demonstrate additional research competence at the Master's level. If approved, a copy of the thesis and a letter documenting the faculty's judgment of acceptability must be filed with the Psychology Department's Graduate Office by the student.

Students with a Master's degree earned elsewhere who did not complete a data-based thesis, or whose previous thesis work is judged not to be acceptable, must demonstrate research competence. This is usually accomplished by conducting a thesis-equivalency project during the first year that the student is enrolled in the MSU Clinical Psychology Program.

3.1.2.d Master's Plan of Study and Thesis: Timeline and Requirements for Students in the Ecological/Community Program

The primary goal of the Master's thesis is for the student to begin gaining experience in conducting community research. A wide variety of topics, issues, theoretical perspectives and methods may be used in the Master's thesis. The scope of the Master's thesis may vary

considerably across students. However, a number of benchmarks are relevant. First, the thesis could begin as early as the end of the student's first year in the program. It is the goal of the program that the master's thesis will be finished by early in the student's third year. Second, while the methods may also vary across students, it should be kept in mind that a reasonable thesis project will be accomplished within a 12-month time frame from proposal acceptance to thesis completion. In this regard, data collection should not extend beyond a six-month period. Third, the research methodology should be driven by the student's research question and the methodological scope (e.g., sample, numbers of constructs or variables, measures, sites) of the project should be reasonable given the six-month data collection time frame and resources available to the student.

The topic area for the thesis may be driven by the student's area of interest or may involve the student taking advantage of ongoing projects or existing data sets. In combination with the dissertation, the Master's thesis should build skills relevant to the student's career goals. The thesis is carried out in a community setting. It may include a needs assessment, intervention, survey, longitudinal data collection, systems analysis, and use either qualitative or quantitative methodology. It is often desirable, but not required, that the thesis serves as a prelude to the dissertation in terms of topic area, theoretical perspective, setting, or methodology.

Master's thesis committee. The thesis committee is comprised of at least three faculty members. Two of the three must be members of the Psychology Department. The Chair must be a member of the Ecological Interest Group. Three of the committee members must be regular faculty (as defined by the [Graduate Student Handbook](#)). There may be additional committee members.

Master's thesis process. Procedurally, the thesis is done working closely with a chair and two additional members of the thesis committee. The student prepares a proposal working closely with the chair. The proposal includes an introduction, literature review, and proposed methodology. After the student and the chair are satisfied with the proposal, it is distributed to the other thesis committee members. A proposal defense/thesis planning meeting is then held. A defense meeting usually consists of a brief oral presentation by the student followed by questions from the committee. The conclusion of the meeting involves reaching consensus as to precisely how the thesis will be completed. This often involves revision of the research proposal. Once the committee has approved the proposal, the student executes the proposed research using faculty as resources as needed. Once the Master's project is completed, a Master's thesis document is prepared by the student working closely with the chair. This may involve several drafts. After the student and the chair are satisfied with the thesis, it is distributed to the other committee members for review. A final defense of the Master's thesis is then held. In terms of process, the final defense is similar to the proposal defense. Please consult the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) for the necessary forms (filed with the Graduate Office) to mark your progress on your thesis. In the case of both the thesis proposal defense and final defense, the student will "pass" if all or all but one of the committee members assign a grade of "pass". In the case of failure, the student will, at the discretion of the committee, be given a second chance to pass the defense. All cases of failing grades will be filed with the department's graduate office by the faculty.

3.1.2.e Master's Plan of Study and thesis: Requirements for Students in the Organizational Program

By the end of your first semester of residence in the program, you should form a master's level guidance committee of three faculty members, and together with your committee develop an appropriate masters plan of study.

You should work closely with your chair to develop a defensible research proposal. You should submit a thesis proposal to the thesis committee, which details the problems to be addressed, hypotheses (if any) to be tested, and the methods to be used in the study. The proposal is written in a format that serves as the introduction and method of a completed thesis. Oral defense of this proposal to the thesis committee must take place before the research is conducted. Thesis research will typically be an empirical investigation with the potential of publication in the standard journals of the field.

After you submit a final thesis draft, the thesis committee administers an oral examination based on the thesis and makes two recommendations to the psychology department. One recommendation concerns the student's successful completion of the thesis requirement. The second is the committee members' recommendation regarding admission into the doctoral program. The entire I/O faculty must then approve the second recommendation for you to be formally admitted into the Ph.D. program.

You are 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. In addition, students are encouraged to present their studies to the I/O community here at MSU through weekly brown bags throughout the fall and spring semesters.

3.1.2.f Master's Plan of Study and thesis: Requirements for Students in the Social Program

The Master's thesis is often an extension of your advisor's research program. The Master's thesis is intended to be a research project that is a synthesis of independent work with the support of an established research program. All S/P students complete a Plan A thesis.

The following guidelines are intended to help you gauge your progress toward meeting M.A. degree requirements relative to S/P program expectations for good progress. These guidelines provide a gauge for typical progress, though the S/P faculty reserve the right to add additional stipulations to help prompt progress as conditions may warrant. The goal is to work with you to successfully complete your thesis **by April 15th of your second year** in the program.

You should form your M.A. guidance committee and submit a Plan of Study for the M.A. (i.e., course work plan) to your guidance committee for approval **by the end of the first semester of your first year**.

The M.A. guidance committee is made up of three members. The chair of the committee is always the students' advisor, who should be consulted about the selection of other committee members. Two of the three members must be regular members of the Psychology Department, and only one of the committee members may be either Emeritus or a regular faculty member from outside the Psychology Department. The members of the guidance committee will also serve as your Master's Thesis committee. Should it become necessary for you to change the membership of your committee, you must file The Master's Plan of Study Amendment Form with the Graduate Office.

3.1.3 Master's Course Requirements

The only Departmental requirement is that all students take (and pass) PSY 815, "Quantitative Research Design and Analysis in Psychology", or its equivalent. Equivalency of courses to replace the departmental 815 requirement is evaluated by Psychology Department faculty who administer the Concentration in Quantitative Methodology and Evaluation (QMES) faculty. The process is overseen by the Graduate Program Director/Associate Chair for Graduate Studies. Additional course requirements are set at the Graduate Program level.

The courses you take must satisfy the requirements of your graduate program. If you wish to pursue an individualized, interdisciplinary plan of study that spans two of the department's programs, your committee may recommend a unique set of core course requirements to be approved by the Graduate Programs Director. If you wish to make an alteration or substitution to the specific curriculum set out by your program, it must be approved by program faculty. Any such decisions should be documented in your student file. The Graduate Program Director/Associate Chair for Graduate Studies is responsible for obtaining this documentation in the form of a memorandum of understanding that is signed by the faculty and student involved in this decision.

Finally, a University restriction you should be aware of is that no more than 6 of your 30 credits may come from courses at the 400 (undergraduate) level. It is not expected that you will take undergraduate courses as part of your Master's plan, but that decision rests with your Master's Guidance Committee.

3.1.3a Master's Course Requirements for Students in the Behavioral Neuroscience Program

BNS students must complete 30 credits total, at least 22 from formal courses, no more than 8 from PSY 890.

BNS students must complete a minimum of 6 credits in PSY 890 (Independent Research). Note that PSY 899 is not required, since Behavioral Neuroscience students do not do a thesis for the MA.

BNS students must complete 2 semesters of coursework 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. The second course must be approved by the student's master's guidance committee.

Additional course requirements include:

1. PSY811: Advanced Behavioral Neuroscience
2. Two courses from among: Psychology 801: Sensation and Perception; Psychology 809: Developmental Psychobiology; Psychology 839 (NEU 839): Systems Neuroscience; Neuroscience 804: Molecular and Developmental Neurobiology; Neuroscience 827: Physiology and Pharmacology of Excitable Cells

Other courses must be approved by the master's Guidance Committee and listed on the Master's Plan of Study.

Some recently offered courses of potential interest to BNS students and not mentioned immediately above include Neuroscience 807: Strategies in Neuroscience Research; Pharmacology 810: Synaptic Transmission; Natural Science 837: Confocal Microscopy; Neuroscience 992: Writing and Manuscript Preparation in the Neural and Behavioral Sciences; Pharmacology 831: Endocrine Pharmacology and Toxicology; Physiology 828: Cellular and Integrative Physiology; Biochemistry and Molecular Biology 802: Metabolic Regulation and Signal Transduction; Computer Science and Engineering 841: Artificial Intelligence; Computer Science and Engineering 865: Artificial Neural Networks; Philosophy 867: Nature and Practice of Cognitive Science. Note that some of these courses may require overrides obtained only from the instructor before students could be able to register for them.

3.1.3b Course Requirements for Students in the Clinical Program: Master's and Doctoral Degrees

Course Requirements:

1. Two quantitative courses: Quantitative Research Design & Analysis in Psychology (PSY 815) and Psychometric Theory & Test Construction (PSY 818)
2. Behavior Disorders (PSY 853)
3. Diversity and Social Justice in Psychology (PSY 992)

4. Cognitive Assessment (PSY 852)
5. Two adult-focused therapy and assessment courses: Psychodynamic (PSY 952), Cognitive-Behavioral (PSY 954)
6. One child-focused therapy and assessment course (also covers normal development): Child Therapy and Assessment (PSY 992)
7. Scientific and Professional Ethics (PSY 926)
8. Social Cognitive Affective Neuroscience (SCAN) (PSY 930)
9. Master's Thesis Project (PSY 899) (4-8 credits)
10. Course(s) for the cognate (as determined in collaboration with the Doctoral Guidance Committee – see below)
11. Doctoral Research (PSY 999) (24 credits)
12. Practicum credits (PSY 994): See details in the practicum section below

Program Activity Requirement:

- Clinical Science Forum (CSF). This is a program-wide, weekly meeting that aims to contribute to the advancement of clinical science through research and clinical presentations conducted by faculty and students. Program business is also discussed. Students do not sign up for course credit for CSF, but attendance is required throughout the student's time in the program.

APA Discipline-Specific Knowledge (DSK) Requirements:

- Category 1: History & Systems of Psychology. Distributed among courses in the curriculum
- Category 2: Basic Content Areas in Scientific Psychology.
 - Affective, Biological, Cognitive, and Social Aspects of Behavior. Covered in Social Cognitive Affective Neuroscience (SCAN; PSY 930) and distributed among courses in the curriculum and through the Clinical Science Forum
 - Developmental Aspects of Behavior. Covered in Child Therapy and Assessment (PSY 992) and distributed among courses in the curriculum and through the Clinical Science Forum
- Category 3: Advanced Integrative Knowledge in Scientific Psychology. This APA required training activity must integrate across at least two of the basic DSK content areas above: affective, biological, cognitive, social, or developmental aspects of behavior. Covered in Social Cognitive Affective Neuroscience (SCAN) (PSY 930). This course includes an evaluated educational experience that integrates across two or more of the DSK areas covered in this course – affective, biological, cognitive, and social aspects of behavior – to meet this APA requirement. This course will be offered in the Fall semester of odd years, starting in Fall 2019, so plan accordingly.
- Category 4: Research Methods, Statistical Analysis, and Psychometrics.
 - Research Methods. Distributed among courses in the curriculum and through the Clinical Science Forum
 - Statistical Analysis. Covered in Quantitative Research Design & Analysis in Psychology (PSY 815)
 - Psychometrics. Covered in Psychometric Theory & Test Construction (PSY 818)

Michigan Licensing Requirements:

- Michigan licensing law requires no additional courses, but rather that the program is accredited (i.e., by APA in our case)

Program Schedule for Students in the Clinical Program

**ANY deviations from the Years 1 and 2 course schedule detailed below MUST be approved by your advisor and the DCT/aDCT team. The schedule for Years 3-6 represents a sample and thus does not need to be followed exactly as laid out below.*

Year 1, Fall (9 credits)

- Social Justice & Diversity (PSY 992)
- Behavior Disorders (PSY 853)
- Statistics (PSY 815)
- Form Master's thesis committee and write/defend Master's thesis proposal
- Attend Clinical Science Forum

Year 1, Spring (9 credits)

- Cognitive Assessment (PSY 852)
- Psychodynamic Therapy and Assessment (PSY 952)
- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy and Assessment (PSY 954)
- Defend Master's thesis proposal (if not defended in the fall)
- Attend Clinical Science Forum

Year 1, Summer (no credits required)

- Attend Clinical Science Forum (meets bi-weekly in the summer)

- Begin taking PSY 899 credits for thesis, if you have a tuition waiver in the summer and would like to have more credits available to you in the fall and spring semester.
- Complete one comprehensive psychological assessment at the MSU Psychological Clinic

Year 2, Fall (9 credits)

- Child Therapy and Assessment (PSY 992)
- SCAN (PSY 930; offered Fall every odd year); cognate course or an advanced statistics course(s) if SCAN not offered (in even years)
- Practicum (PSY 994) (1 credit)
- Take PSY 899 credits for Master's thesis
- Attend Clinical Science Forum
- Work on/complete Master's thesis

Year 2, Spring (9 credits)

- Ethics (PSY 926)
- Psychometric Theory & Test Construction (PSY 818)
- Take 899 credits for Master's thesis
- Practicum (PSY 994) (1 credit)
- Attend Clinical Science Forum
- Complete Master's thesis

Year 2, Summer (no credits required)

- Attend Clinical Science Forum (meets bi-weekly in the summer)
- Form Doctoral Guidance Committee
- Submit 1st author publication to fulfill part of Comprehensive Examination Requirements (if not done earlier)
- Continue practicum work at the MSU Psychological Clinic

Year 3, Fall (6-9 credits)

- Convene Doctoral Guidance Committee
- Obtain approval of Comprehensive Paper proposal
- Submit 1st author publication to fulfill Comprehensive Examination Requirements (if not done earlier)
- SCAN (PSY 930; offered Fall every odd year) if not taken Year 2, cognate course, or an advanced statistics course(s)

Note: The CIG faculty strongly recommend taking statistics courses beyond the required two courses (PSY 815 and PSY 818). Additional courses help prepare students for their dissertation work as well as for clinical science careers beyond graduate school. There are advanced statistics courses offered every semester in the MSU Psychology Department, Human Development and Family Studies, as well as in the Education Department. Students should can consult their advisor as to which course(s) would be most appropriate.

- Practicum (PSY 994) (1 credit)
- Attend Clinical Science Forum

Year 3, Spring (6-9 credits)

- Write Comprehensive Paper
- Submit 1st author publication to fulfill Comprehensive Examination Requirements (if not done earlier)
- Practicum (PSY 994) (1 credit)
- Attend Clinical Science Forum

Year 3, Summer (no credits required)

- Attend Clinical Science Forum (meets bi-weekly in the summer)
- Continue clinical work at the MSU Psychological Clinic

Year 4, Fall (6-9 credits)

- Write and defend dissertation proposal
- Take credits (PSY 999) for dissertation
- Practicum (PSY 994) (1 credit)
- SCAN (PSY 930; offered Fall every odd year) if not already taken, cognate course (if not already taken), or an advanced statistics course(s) (if not already taken)
- Attend Clinical Science Forum

Year 4, Spring (6-9 credits)

- Work on dissertation
- Take credits (PSY 999) for dissertation
- Practicum (PSY 994) (1 credit)
- Cognate course (if not already taken) or an advanced statistic course(s) (if not already taken)
- Attend Clinical Science Forum

Year 4, Summer (no credits required)

- Attend CSF (meets bi-weekly in the summer)
- Take credits (PSY 999) for dissertation (as needed; not required)
- Continue clinical work at the MSU Psychological Clinic or off-site practicum

Year 5, Fall

- Complete dissertation
- Take credits (PSY 999) for dissertation
- Apply for clinical internship
- Practicum (PSY 994) (1 credit)
- Attend Clinical Science Forum

Year 5, Spring

- Defend Dissertation
- Take credits (PSY 999) for dissertation
- Participate in internship interviews and internship match
- Practicum (PSY 994) (1 credit)
- Attend Clinical Science Forum

Year 6

- Pre-doctoral Internship
- If dissertation has not yet been defended, sign up for 1 dissertation credit (PSY 999) in the semester you will be defending (see Dissertation section below for more information).
- Graduation

3.1.3c Master's Course Requirements for Students in the Cognitive Program

Students must complete a total of 30 credits. These must include:

1. A minimum of 6 credits in PSY 890 (Independent Research) (Note that PSY 899 is not required, since Cognitive students do not do a thesis for the M.A.)
2. Two semesters of coursework covering quantitative analysis and statistics. Normally the sequence would consist of PSY 815 and another quantitative course taught in the psychology department, or in another department, at the 400-level or above. The second course would be approved by the student's committee and the department.
3. At least two courses, from the following list: Psychology 801 (Sensation & Perception); Psychology 802 (Basic Cognitive Processes); Psychology 803 (Higher Order Cognitive

Processes); Psychology 805 (History of Psychology); Psychology 811 (Advanced Behavioral Neuroscience); Psychology 867 (Nature and Practice of Cognitive Science; cross listed with Zoology 867)

4. Other courses are to be approved by the guidance committee. In all cases, the program of courses selected for the Master's degree has to be approved by the Master's Guidance Committee and listed on the Master's Plan of Study.

3.1.3d Master's Course Requirements for Students in the Ecological/Community Program

All students will be expected to acquire a sound background in psychology and social science relevant to their chosen problem area. Specific required course work for all students is as follows: 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), Community Interventions (PSY 873 and PSY 992), and Models of Community Change (PSY 970) or equivalent. Students are also required to enroll in 2 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.

Area of Specialization and Breadth

Students are required to become multi-disciplinary scholars, with breadth of knowledge within and outside of Psychology. There are two options students can pursue to achieve these goals: select a minor in Psychology or chose a cognate outside of Psychology. Both options include 18 credits; both require courses inside and outside of Psychology:

- If a student takes a **minor in Psychology** (e.g., 12 credits in Social/Personality, Organizational) they must take 6 additional credits outside of Psychology.
- If they do a **cognate of courses outside of Psychology** (12 credits), organized around a theme (e.g., international development, power and oppression), they must take 6 additional credits within Psychology.

If a student does a:	# credits in PSY	# credits outside of PSY
Minor in Psychology	12	6
Cognate	6	12

Students who want to use the online PSY Program Evaluation courses to fulfill this requirement can make a case to their committee to either count this as a minor (since they are PSY courses) OR as a cognate (since they could easily be taught in other disciplines and are a "theme.") This will be individually determined based on the needs of each student, in consultation with their committee. Please note if a student pursues a certificate in Program Evaluation they cannot also use these credits toward the minor or cognate.

The PSY credits taken to fulfill this requirement are **in addition to** the PSY 970/992 requirement. Students must also meet departmental course requirements or other requirements agreed to by the student and their committee. The student may also make a case to their committee to waive any of the above requirements.

The Sequence of Course work

During the first year, the student will enroll in PSY 815, 871 & 873 in the Fall Semester and PSY 870 and 874 in the Spring semester (along with an elective or 3 credits of thesis credits). In the second year, students will enroll in PSY 872 and 818. Following the first year in graduate school, other than PSY 872, the sequence of course work will be determined by the relevant Plan of Study.

3.1.3e Master's Course Requirements for Students in the Organizational Program

In pursuing the Masters and then the Ph.D. degrees, you must successfully complete a set of course requirements. The requirements to obtain a Ph.D. in I/O Psychology are listed below. Your Master's Guidance Committee and Ph.D. Guidance Committee will help you to apportion the course requirements to meet the Department of Psychology standards to obtain a master's degree and a Ph.D. degree.

In accordance with the departmental policy, you are allowed to transfer up to a maximum of 9 semester credits from other accredited institutions toward your degree. Credit transfer is evaluated by your guidance committee and you must submit relevant course materials (e.g., course syllabus, grading rubrics, exam materials, course projects or papers) for evaluation. Application and evaluation for credit transfer needs to be completed no later than the end of your first semester at MSU. Note that any transfer courses that appear on your doctoral plan of study mark the official MSU start date for your doctoral degree completion calendar. You should consider carefully whether transferring credits you earned elsewhere may pose a challenge for you in terms of completing your degree within the departmental and MSU deadlines.

Statistics, research methods and their application to problems in industrial and organizational psychology. You are required to complete the following courses before completing your M.A. work: PSY 815, 818, 865. Students are also strongly urged to consider a Department of Psychology concentration in Quantitative Methods (QMES). Beyond the courses required by the I/O program, a QMES concentration requires two additional courses in advanced quantitative statistical techniques. Typically, these courses will be offered as sections of PSY 992 in topical areas such as multivariate design, general linear model, structural equations modeling, categorical data analysis, meta-analysis, regression methods, cluster analysis, configural frequency analysis, and longitudinal data analysis. Students must conduct an independent project on a topic reflecting their interests in quantitative methods and/or evaluation science (see departmental section on QMES Concentration for details).

Independent Study. You are also required to take PSY 890 both semesters your first year. This course provides you with an opportunity to be involved in a research project during your first year. The course is also structured to provide exposure to the research programs of faculty in I/O and OB and to discuss topics related to starting your own program of research.

Theory and research in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. At the M.A. level you will complete PSY 860, I/O Psychology, and PSY 992 Organizational Behavior.

3.1.3f Master's Course and Other Requirements for Students in the Social Program

Each S/P student has a unique set of needs and course requirements, so it is difficult to establish a standard degree program that will suit all students. In general, we recommend that students complete as many core course requirements as possible within the first two years. We also suggest that students complete the bulk of all coursework in the first 3 years so that their final year or two can be devoted to research and to the dissertation. We also recommend you take full advantage of the outstanding statistical and methodological course offerings throughout your time here. Please note that because of our course rotation, some courses are offered once every other year or so.

Offered below is a general guide to course completion for a student finishing the program in four years. Each student will need to tailor this plan to meet his/her own specific needs. In addition, students may need to tailor their course plan depending on when particular courses are offered. The plan represents the minimum number of courses needed to graduate. We anticipate that students will take additional courses, as approved by their advisory committee, to meet specific training needs. For example, most students will wish to take additional courses in statistics. In the past, many students have taken five years to complete their degree in order to acquire these additional skills and research experiences.

For your Masters plan of study, you must have between 4 and 8 credits of PSY 899.

You must sign up for 6 credits every semester to maintain official full-time student status (exception below).

Required Coursework

1. PSY 815 (Quantitative Research Design and Analysis in Psychology)
2. PSY 834 (Social and Personality Psych)
3. PSY 836 (Personality Processes and Social Behavior)
4. PSY 818 (Psychometric Methods)
5. PSY 835 (Research Methods: Interpersonal and Individual Behavior)
6. 3 of the following (3 of 4 required): ◦ PSY 837 (Social Cognition) ◦ PSY 838 (Interpersonal Behavior and Relationships) ◦ PSY xxx (Evolutionary Psych) ◦ PSY xxx (Stereotyping & Prejudice)

Brown Bag Research Seminar

The S/P group holds a required weekly brown-bag research seminar. These meetings offer S/P students and faculty an opportunity to present their ongoing work or to hear the work of visiting scholars. These meetings also serve as an opportunity to further our graduate training by discussing issues relevant to success in graduate school and career development. In addition to presenting your Master's Thesis proposal/project at the end of your first year, you should plan to present at Brown Bag at least once each academic year to gain practice presenting your work.

3.1.3 Course Credits and Funding

Students 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 Graduate Assistantship is 9 credits, so you may not enroll for more than 9 credit or you will be billed for the cost of the credit exceeding 9.

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). They can be reviewed here:

<https://reg.msu.edu/roinfo/enrreg/lateadds.aspx> and
<https://reg.msu.edu/roinfo/calendar/ImportantDates.aspx?Term=SS18>

As noted in your offer of admission letter, the Psychology Department will provide 4 years of support during the academic year, as long as you remain in good standing. Click [here](#) for more information about Graduate Assistantships.

Summer stipends for Assistantships 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.**

Summer support can also come in the form of an hourly wage on a project. In that case, students do not need to register for summer course credits as the hourly wage does not cover the tuition waver.

3.1.4 Master's Proposal

Your Master's Proposal is a formal description of your Master's thesis research. Your committee will provide guidance on what is expected in the proposal, and your Graduate Program describes the expected timeline for the proposal to be defended.

Your Master's proposal defense is a formal meeting with your committee. Work with your advisor/committee chair to prepare the written proposal to be ready to defend your 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 particularly careful 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, 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.

3.1.4.a Master's Research: Additional Requirements for Students in the Behavioral Neuroscience Program

By **October 1 of your 2nd year in the program**, students who entered with a Bachelor's degree must submit a written proposal for the second-year research project and schedule a Guidance Committee meeting that will occur within a month. If changes are made in committee membership an amendment form must be filed with the Graduate Office.

The committee may recommend changes to the proposal at that meeting, and the student then has one month to revise to the committee's satisfaction. Ideally, the second year project is publishable work. However, additional experiments necessary to attain closure do not have to be part of the second-year project.

By **September 1 of your 3rd year in the program**, students who entered with a Bachelor's Degree must submit the second year project in the form of a professional journal article and must schedule an oral defense with the Guidance Committee. This document replaces the traditional Master's thesis and satisfies the Department's 'Plan B' requirements (appropriate paperwork must be filed with the Psychology Graduate Office). Request for a deadline extension must be in writing to be considered by the entire BNS faculty and granted only under extraordinary circumstances. A denial of the request for the extension would occur when the BNS faculty considers the student to have had adequate time and opportunity to write up the project and prepare for the oral defense.

For students entering the program with a Master's Degree, by **three weeks before the last day of Fall semester finals** (refer to the Registrar's Office website for the university calendar), the student submits to his/her committee, in the form of a professional journal article, a description and analysis of the research experiment begun in Year 1. This document need not be fully publishable at this stage, although that is preferable. Also, by **three weeks before the last day of Fall semester finals**, the student must schedule a meeting with the Guidance Committee for an oral defense of this project that will occur **before the end of Fall semester**. Request for an extension of the deadline must take the form of a written petition (via email to the BNS graduate program chair), to be considered by the entire BNS faculty and will be granted only under extraordinary circumstances. A denial of the extension request would occur when the BNS faculty considers the student to have had adequate time and opportunity to write up the project and prepare for the oral defense.

3.1.4.c Master's Research: Additional Requirements for Students in the Cognitive Program

Academic Year 1

For students entering the Master's program: By **October 1** of the first year, the student obtains tentative approval of a plan for first-year research activities from their advisor, and forms a Master's Guidance Committee.

By **November 1** of the first year, the student submits a brief proposal (typically about 5-10 pages) of the Year 1 research activities to their Guidance Committee. This proposal includes a description of the research question/problem, the proposed methods and activities, and the rationale for them. The proposal should also include a time-table for the specific plan of action. The activities might be an experiment, or might include collection of pilot data or performance of feasibility studies while mastering the pertinent literature and research skills. For many students these activities may arise from the supervisor's grant(s) or ongoing research program.

The fundamental purpose of these activities is to involve the student in research early in Year 1 and to provide information of an evaluative nature to the CCN program.

By no later than **November 15**, the student meets with their Guidance Committee to present their proposal and secure approval of the proposal for Year 1 research activities. This would be an excellent time to have the Guidance Committee approve the Master's Plan of Study.

Towards the **end of spring term**, first year students give a brief (usually ~ 15 minutes) conference-style talk that presents their first year research. This talk is typically given to the entire CCN program during the Cognitive Forum speaker series.

No later than **two weeks after the last day of spring semester finals**, students without Master's degrees submit a written summary of the year's research activities (plus documentation that may be appropriate or available) to be evaluated by the Masters Guidance Committee. (See below for policies regarding students entering the program with Master's degrees.) Any request for an extension of these deadlines must take the form of a written petition, and be approved by the Masters Guidance Committee.

Any student who neither meets the deadline nor is approved for an extension risks receiving a failing grade in PSY 890 (see Evaluation of Master's Work below). Feedback on the report will be given by the Committee.

For students entering the Doctoral program: These same dates and policies for Year 1 also apply to students entering the program with Master's degrees. The only difference is that they would form a Doctoral Guidance committee instead of a Master's Guidance committee.

Academic Year 2

Students with Bachelor's Degrees: By **November 1** the student submits a written proposal for the second-year to the Masters Guidance Committee. By **November 15**, the student will meet with the Committee to obtain approval for the project. The committee may recommend changes to the proposal at that meeting, which the student then has one month to implement. By **December 15**, the proposal must be approved by the committee. Exceptions are determined on a case-by-case basis.

Students with Master's Degrees: By **three weeks before the last day of fall semester finals** (refer to the Registrar's Office web site for the University calendar), the student submits in the form of a professional journal article submission a description and analysis of

the previous year's research activities. This document replaces the traditional Master's thesis. Any request for an extension of the deadline must take the form of a written petition, to be considered by the entire CCN faculty, and to be granted only under extraordinary circumstances. A denial of the request for the extension would occur when the CCN faculty considers the student to have had adequate time and opportunity to write up the project and to prepare for the oral defense. **Two weeks before the last day of fall semester finals of the student's second year**, the student gives an oral defense to the guidance committee (this is equivalent to the traditional qualifying exam).

Ideally, the second year project is publishable work. However, any additional experiments necessary to attain closure do not have to be part of the second-year project. The project is evaluated on the basis of successful execution and defense of the proposal.

Academic Year 3

Students with Bachelor's Degrees Only. By no later than **three weeks before the last day of fall semester finals** (refer to the Registrar's Office web site for the university calendar) of the student's third year (or the student's fifth semester of residence, if the student started the program in January or had a leave of absence from the program), the student submits the second year project to their Masters Guidance Committee in the form of a professional journal article submission. This document replaces the traditional Master's thesis. Any request for an extension of the deadline must take the form of a written petition, to be considered by the entire CCN faculty and to be granted only under extraordinary circumstances. A denial of the request for the extension would occur when the CCN faculty considers the student to have had adequate time and opportunity to write up the project and to prepare for the oral defense.

By **two weeks before the last day of fall semester finals of the student's third year**, the student gives an oral defense to the Guidance Committee (this is equivalent to the traditional qualifying exam).

3.1.4.c Master's Degree timeline for Students in the Organizational Program

The following guidelines are intended to help you gauge your progress toward meeting M.A. degree requirements relative to I/O program expectations for good progress. These guidelines provide a gauge for typical progress, though the I/O faculty reserve the right to add additional stipulations to help prompt progress as conditions may warrant. Faculty meet with each student each spring to provide formal feedback as to progress and to discuss next steps to advance in the program. The goal is to work with you to successfully complete your thesis by the end of your second year in the program. This allows you to have more flexibility in pursuing avenues to contribute to your development as an I/O Psychologist (e.g., additional field experience, internships, global experience).

1. You should form your M.A. guidance committee and submit a Plan of Study for the M.A. (i.e., course work plan) to your guidance committee for approval **by the end of the first semester of your first year**.

2. You should plan on defending your M.A. thesis proposal by the end of the first semester (**Dec. 15**) of your second year. If this timeline is not met, a letter making clear the consequences of a lack of progress as described in point 3 and 4 below will be sent to you.

3. If your M. A. thesis proposal has not been successfully defended by the end of the second semester (**May 15**) of your second year, you will be informed that the I/O faculty will not recommend you for advancement to the Ph.D. program. You will be considered a terminal M.A. student. If this happens to you, you may petition for reconsideration for entry to the Ph.D. program at the completion of your M.A. thesis, assuming there are legitimate extenuating circumstances. Reconsiderations, however, are not expected to be common.

4. If your thesis has not been successfully defended (i.e., final oral defense) by the end of the second semester (**May 15**) of your third year, you will be informed that you will not be funded by the I/O program and faculty, pending completion of the thesis. If you are subsequently admitted to the Ph.D. program, you may be funded again if graduate support is available and other requirements have been met.

3.1.4.f Master's Proposal guidelines for Students in the Social/Personality Program

You should present your M.A. thesis idea or thesis proposal in a Brown Bag during the **Spring of your first year**. This will allow you to get feedback on your thesis idea or thesis proposal from the group.

You should plan on defending your M.A. thesis proposal no later than **the beginning of the first semester (September/October) of your second year**. This will allow you to complete your M.A. thesis in time for the **April 15th (of your second year) deadline**. Earlier completion of your M.A. thesis proposal than Fall (September/October) of your second year is encouraged, if possible.

The written thesis proposal will ordinarily be supplied to your committee at least two weeks before the proposal meeting. The thesis proposal will be presented orally before your master's thesis committee. The proposal meeting is typically a "working meeting" and students should expect that changes in the methods and goals of the project will result from the meeting.

Upon approval of the proposal, thesis committee members will sign a form that is turned into the psychology graduate secretary.

The responsibilities of the master's thesis committee shall be: • To approve a proposal submitted by the student for a master's thesis. • To assist the thesis committee chairperson in supervising the thesis research project. • To administer an oral defense of the completed master's thesis • To make recommendations to the S/P concerning the admission of the student to the doctoral program (see below).

3.1.5 Terminal Master's Degree

For students who have determined that a research oriented Ph.D. degree is not the career direction they now desire or if they are not making satisfactory progress, there is an option to obtain a non-thesis terminal Master's degree. See the Graduate Programs Director or the Graduate Programs Administrator for further information.

3.1.6 Defend Master's research

You will write up the master's research according to the guidelines that are appropriate given your area of work.

Set up a defense meeting, giving committee members at least a 2 week lead time.

Guidelines concerning formatting of the thesis are on the web.

After your defense, your committee will evaluate your research and your defense of it and decide upon a grade. This grade will be applied to all of your previously deferred PSY 899 credits (for Plan A). Usually, you will have some revisions to do, no matter what grade is assigned.

Students should bring a copy of the **Report on MA Level Achievements Form for Plan A Master's students** form or **Master's Plan B Completion Form** to the meeting. Once completed and signed by your committee, return the form to the Graduate Programs Administrator.

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 "Master's Level Report on Plan A MA Level Achievements" form. Your thesis grade is determined by your entire committee, with the chairperson making the final determination only in the event of a deadlock on the part of the committee.

Once your proposal is accepted by your committee, you must complete either a **Plan A Master's Proposal Approval Form** or a **Plan B Master's Project Approval Form** as appropriate. In addition, you must email a copy of your proposal to the Graduate Program Administrator.

3.1.6f Master's thesis defense requirements for students in the Social/Personality program

At this point, the master's thesis research is conducted just as students would conduct any other investigation; i.e., they would secure approval from the university's human subjects committee, reserve lab space, organize RAs, and so on. (Students should check with their advisor regarding these issues). 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.

Once the advisor has approved and the thesis is distributed to the committee members, an oral presentation (defense) of the thesis is scheduled. Note that the thesis should be distributed to committee members 2 weeks prior to this presentation. An oral defense of the thesis is held **before the April 15 deadline**. Typically, this consists of a presentation of the research lasting between 10 and 20 minutes and then questions from committee members; the exact format of the meeting is chosen by the guidance committee. A thesis defense is a public meeting and other members of the S/P group are encouraged to attend.

The approved and formatted thesis must be submitted electronically to the Graduate School (see Psychology Department Handbook for details).

Tips for a successful thesis experience • Start early! • Get a current formatting guide from the graduate school, read it, and follow the directions. It is best to read through this before you begin to write the complete draft of your thesis. It will save you time later in having to reformat tables, etc. • Do not delay in turning in your thesis to the Graduate School once it has been approved and formatted. It can be turned in anytime during the semester. However, the Graduate School office gets very busy at the end of the semester. • Talk to students who have recently completed the thesis for helpful hints on how to make tables fit within the required margins and other brain frying formatting problems that come up during revision. • Take advantage of your elders – attend as many thesis, comprehensive exam, and dissertation defense as you can, so that you learn the process before you have to do it yourself.

3.1.7 Obtain Master's degree

All Master's degree candidates must be enrolled during the semester in which they orally defend their thesis or research project. When you register for classes for the semester you plan on receiving your degree, you must complete an application for graduation. This begins the procedure by which the various offices involved will be notified of your intention to graduate. Check the university calendar for specific deadlines to be eligible for each semester's graduation.

After all signatures have been obtained on the necessary forms, file them with the Graduate Programs Administrator in the Departmental Graduate Office (room 240E Psychology Building).

Plan A Master's Program students **MUST** submit their thesis electronically to The Graduate School via ProQuest The instructions for electronic submissions are available from [Theses and Dissertation Submissions page](#). The target date for the **FINAL APPROVAL** of an electronic Thesis or Dissertation to the Graduate School for graduating the semester of that submission is FIVE working days prior to the first day of classes for the next semester (see future target dates below). **Be aware that a submission via ProQuest does not mean that the document has been ACCEPTED.** 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 Graduate School now permits the submission of supplementary materials to ProQuest, in addition to the main body of a thesis or 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 need the written approval of the thesis/dissertation committee chair.

3.1.8 Admission to the Ph.D. program

Your Master's Guidance committee reviews all of your work and makes a recommendation to your Graduate Program Chair on your admission to the Ph.D. program. After consultation with the regular faculty members in your Graduate Program, the Program Chair signs off on the Master's completion forms and makes a recommendation on your admission to the Ph.D. program. Once the Graduate Programs Director has approved, you are now officially admitted in the Ph.D. Program.

Therefore, admission to the Ph.D. program is not automatic upon completion of the master's thesis. Students may not be recommended for advancement to the Ph.D. Program for a variety of reasons. The regular, written feedback you have received from your Graduate Program Chair 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.

3.1.8a Requirements for Advancement to Ph.D. Program for Students in the Behavioral Neuroscience Program

Any student who fails to complete and defend the second year project without receiving a deadline extension will receive a grade of 0.0 for their deferred PSY890 credits and the faculty of the BNS program will recommend to the Graduate Program Director and the Psychology Department Chairperson that the student be dismissed from the graduate program without being awarded a Master's degree.

No student with a grade lower than 3.5 on the PSY 890s will be considered for admission to the doctoral program, no matter their overall GPA across all graduate courses.

The final recommendation for admission to the doctoral program in Behavioral Neuroscience is made by the faculty of the BNS graduate program following the evaluation by the Guidance Committee, and will be made no longer than one week after the oral defense.

3.1.8b Requirements for Advancement to Ph.D. Program for Students in the Clinical Program

The CIG faculty meet at the end of the spring semester to review the progress of all second-year students. The Master's thesis guidance committee makes a recommendation to the faculty as to whether a student should be admitted to the doctoral program. 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 (see Student Evaluations below for more information on evaluating competency). Final determination of competency/readiness is made by a majority vote of the CIG faculty.

3.1.8c Requirements for Advancement to Ph.D. Program for Students in the Cognitive Program

Evaluation of the student at the end of academic Year 1 is based on satisfactory completion of the proposed activities as well as performance in courses, and participation in CCN group activities. The student will receive written feedback on his or her performance towards the end of the spring semester, following the annual CCN faculty review of all graduate students in the program. This review normally takes place in late April and a letter is sent to the student shortly thereafter.

In accordance with College of Social Science guidelines, if at the end of academic Year 1 the student has a GPA under 3.0 or has accumulated grades below 3.0 in more than two courses of three or more credits each (including N grades in the P-N grading system), the CCN program will recommend dismissal from the graduate program (see the Graduate Handbook for more information.)

The Guidance Committee evaluates the student's performance on the second-year project and the required 30 credit hours of coursework. Twenty-two to 24 credit hours will come from formal coursework (see above) and 6-8 hours from PSY 890s. Evaluation of the second-year project will be reflected in a single grade given for the 6-8 credits of PSY 890s. Ideally, the second year project is publishable work. However, any additional experiments necessary to attain closure do not have to be part of the second-year project. The project is evaluated on the basis of successful execution and defense of the proposal, and, more generally, the student at this point is evaluated by the entire CCN faculty according to his or her potential for becoming an independent researcher.

For any student who fails to complete and defend the second year project without receiving an extension of the deadline, a grade of 0.0 will be assigned for the PSY 890s and the CCN faculty will recommend to the department chairperson that the student be dismissed from the graduate program without being awarded a Master's degree. In addition, for any student with a GPA under 3.0 or with grades below 3.0 in more than two courses of three or more credits each, the CCN faculty will recommend to the department that the student be dismissed from the graduate program without being awarded a Master's degree.

3.1.8e Requirements for Advancement to Ph.D. Program for Students in the Organizational Program

If your M.A. thesis proposal has not been successfully defended by the end of the second semester (May 15) of your second year, you will be informed that the I/O faculty will not recommend you for advancement to the Ph.D. program. You will be considered a terminal

M.A. student. If this happens to you, you may petition for reconsideration for entry to the Ph.D. program at the completion of your M.A. thesis, assuming there are legitimate extenuating circumstances. Reconsiderations, however, are not expected to be common.

4. If your thesis has not been successfully defended (i.e., final oral defense) by the end of the second semester (May 15) of your third year, you will be informed that you will not be funded by the I/O program and faculty, pending completion of the thesis. If you are subsequently admitted to the Ph.D. program, you may be funded again if graduate support is available and other requirements have been met.

3.1.8f Requirements for Advancement to Ph.D. Program for Students in the Social Program

Within a week of your successful thesis defense, the S/P faculty will vote on whether to admit you to the PhD program. If your thesis has not been successfully defended (i.e., final oral defense) by the end of the second semester (April 15) of your second year, you will be informed that the S/P faculty will not recommend you for advancement to the Ph.D. program. You will be considered a terminal M.A. student. If this happens to you, you may petition for reconsideration for entry to the Ph.D. program at the completion of your M.A. thesis, assuming there are legitimate extenuating circumstances. Reconsiderations, however, are expected to be uncommon and readmission depends on a majority vote by the S/P faculty (the student's advisor will only vote in case of a tie). If your thesis has not been successfully defended (i.e., final oral defense) by the end of the second semester (April 15) of your third year, you will no longer be funded by the S/P program and faculty, pending completion of the thesis.

A student who seeks to earn a Ph.D. degree in the social/personality program must be accepted formally as a candidate for that degree by the Social-Personality Area. After students have successfully completed their Master's thesis, the faculty will vote within 1 week on whether they will be admitted into the Ph.D. program. This vote must take place before you can take your Comprehensive Examination.

Successful completion of the requirements for the master's degree constitutes formal application for admission to the doctoral program. Typically, students complete the master's requirements at the end of the spring term of their second year. In these instances, the interest group usually decides about admission to candidacy at the regular spring term evaluation meeting.

A quorum of the faculty of the S/P must be present at the meeting during which the student's application is considered. Members of the student's committee (thesis committees for applicants who have earned their master's degree in the social or personality programs, and doctoral committee for provisional candidates) will be responsible for presenting at the student's admission hearing all evidence that they believe is relevant to the student's application. An applicant will be admitted to full candidacy in the doctoral program if such action is approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members of the Social-Personality Area who are in attendance at the meeting. The chairperson(s) of the student's committee(s) will not vote nor be counted as a member in attendance. The vote on the student's application will be made by secret ballot. An applicant will be informed in writing by the chairperson of

the Social/Personality Area of the group's decision. If the admission vote cannot take place through an in-person meeting, it may be conducted using survey software provided that the votes remain anonymous.

3.1.9 Time limits

There are two types of time limits, imposed by (1) University policy and (2) specific Graduate Program requirements. The University time limits are broader (all requirements must be completed within 6 years of taking the first course on your Master's Plan of Study) than the Department's Graduate Program specific requirements. Note that the time requirements to be making adequate progress are described in the individual Graduate Program requirements. Not making adequate progress in your Graduate Program has implications for funding and for continuation in the program beyond the master's degree.

3.1.9 Academic Standards for Master's Program Completion

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 grades in the P-N 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 is below 3.0 or when you have two class grades below 3.0.

3.2 Ph.D. Program

You are considered to be in the **Ph.D. program** when you have met the requirements outlined in Section 2.1.9.

3.2.1 Ph.D. Program Course Requirements

There are few specific course requirements for the Ph.D. Most of them will be determined by you and your Dissertation Guidance committee and will be described under the section of your Doctoral Plan of Study.

There are just **two general Departmental requirements (in addition to your Graduate Program requirements, which are detailed below)**:

- 1) You must complete PSY 815 (or equivalent). This is a departmental requirement (this is covered under the master's program).
- 2) All doctoral students must register for and successfully complete a minimum of 24 credits and **no more than 36 credits** of doctoral dissertation research (course number 999). You receive credit for those 999s when the Ph.D. is awarded. This is a University requirement.

Students should carefully consider the number of research credits to take while being funded on an assistantship so as to reach the minimum and to not exceed the maximum. Your advisor can help you plan this out.

Full time status for doctoral students is defined as a minimum of 1 credit for those students who have successfully completed all comprehensive examinations and are actively engaged in dissertation research.

This section refers to a number of forms that need to be completed. Click [here](#) to access all Ph.D. Program relevant forms.

3.2b Ph.D. Program Description and Timeline for students in the Clinical Program

Ph.D. course requirements for the Clinical Program are described above in the Section 3.1.3b (Master's and Doctoral Courses). Clinical students should be sure to read/review the information on these required courses very carefully, as there are Clinical Program requirements, requirements from the APA, and Michigan licensing requirements.

3.2.1d Ph.D. Program Course Requirements for Students in the Ecological/Community Program

Area of Specialization and Breadth

Ph.D. students are required to become competent in an area outside of Ecological-Community Psychology and to become a multi-disciplinary scholar.

This requirement has two components. The first involves a minor or a cognate. Each student must take either a minor or a cognate. A minor involves taking 12 semester credits in some other area of psychology outside of Ecological-Community (e.g., Industrial/Organizational, Social/Personality, etc.). A cognate involves taking 12 semester credits in a department other than Psychology or taking 12 credits organized around a theme (e.g., measurement, youth issues) in more than one department. The Applied Developmental Science sequence offers one example of such an interdisciplinary cognate.

The second component involves breadth. If the student elects a minor in Psychology, they are required to take six credits outside of Psychology. If they elect a cognate, they are required to take at least six additional credits within Psychology, not more than three of which may be in Ecological-Community.

Students must also meet departmental course requirements or other requirements agreed to by the student his or her committee. The student may also make a case to their committee to waive any of the above requirements.

3.2.1e Ph.D. Program Requirements for Students in the Organizational Program

You are then required to take 6 other courses in industrial and organizational psychology to obtain the Ph.D. Courses are offered to reflect the following areas: motivation, learning and performance; individual differences and assessment; developing people; systems and levels; cultural context, and work attitudes and wellbeing. While course choice should reflect individual career plans, covering all of these areas will provide a more well-rounded background. Note that a course that fulfills the I/O requirement cannot fulfill any other requirement such as the general psychology requirement. Although you are required to take 6 of these courses to obtain the Ph.D, we encourage you to take as many of these courses as possible. Also, students are encouraged to design self-directed independent study, in consultation with faculty, when courses do not cover a specific interest.

Breadth and/or Area of Expertise. You are required to take three 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.

Students expecting to be licensed as psychologists should consider courses required for state licensing. National licensing guidelines followed by most states have been written; details are available at www.siop.org.

International experiences. Students are encouraged to approach the study of organizational psychology from a global perspective. In addition to seeking coursework that provides an international perspective on psychology topics, students may choose to spend a term at a doctoral program in organizational psychology outside the U.S. Faculty should be consulted well in advance of any study abroad, to ensure that the program will offer transferable credits and quality research supervision.

Professional Skills and Field Experience. There are no standard requirements in this area. Depending upon your background, interests, and career goals, a variety of courses and/or practical experiences designed to facilitate the development of practical skills may be relevant, such as leading management development groups, interviewing employees, administering tests, collecting data, and conducting a job analysis. You and your guidance committee must determine the extent to which such work is appropriate in your case. At regular intervals, a Professional Skills Development course will be offered that will provide focused skill development through guided experiences.

Because organizational psychology is concerned with the behavior of individuals as members of formal organizations, you are expected to obtain as much exposure to and experiences in field research settings as possible. Again, there are no standard requirements in this area but you and your guidance committee are expected to determine the extent to which such work is desirable and feasible for you. For example, either your M.A. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation could be conducted in a field setting. You should consider how such experiences might fulfill licensing requirements.

3.2.1 f Ph.D. Program Requirements for Students in the Social Program

Recommendations regarding minor specialization. Ph.D. candidates in the social/personality program may complete a minor specialization. Often times this minor can serve to supplement their education in areas that are relevant to their specific research interests (e.g., cognition, statistics). They may take their minor in a field other than social or personality psychology within the Psychology Department or in other departments, with the approval of their doctoral guidance committee. When formal requirements for a minor have been established in other interest groups or other departments, Ph.D. candidates in social/personality psychology who take a minor specialization in another program in the Department of psychology or in another department will be expected to meet the formal requirements specified by the faculty offering the minor, including course and examination requirements.

Students should also plan to take the maximum number of research credits paid for while being funded on an assistantship so they don't end up having to pay tuition for 999 credits to reach the 24 credit minimum. However, keep track of this so that you do not exceed the limit of 36 PSY 999 credits. Full time status for doctoral students is defined as a minimum of 1 credit for those students who: 1) Have successfully completed all comprehensive examinations and are actively engaged in dissertation research; or 2) Are doing department-approved off-campus fieldwork related to preparation of their dissertation.

3.2.2 Doctoral Student Program Planning and Final Degree Certification

GradPlan is the web-interactive system for doctoral students to create and store their Ph.D. 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 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.

3.2.3 Doctoral Guidance Committee and Doctoral Dissertation Committee

When you begin your Doctoral program, you will need to create a **Doctoral Guidance Committee**. The Doctoral Guidance Committee must consist of four MSU faculty members, at least three of whom are regular faculty members of the Psychology Department (in the tenure track or tenured). The chairperson of the committee must be a member of the student's Graduate Program. No more than one of the four faculty may be Emeritus, or from outside the Psychology Department. If you are pursuing an individualized, interdisciplinary plan of study that spans two of the department's programs, your Doctoral Guidance Committee must contain at least one current faculty member from each of the two

programs, and the chair must come from one of them. The Doctoral Guidance Committee members work with you to develop your Plan of Study.

Once you have reached the stage of working on your dissertation, you can select committee members to take advantage of different faculty members' expertise. At that point, you will amend your Doctoral Guidance Committee membership to reflect those changes to the 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. Before that time, should you need to change the membership of your committee, you must file an amendment to your Plan of Study. The Doctoral Plan of Study may be amended through GradPlan.

Regulations concerning **who may serve on Doctoral Dissertation Committees** are the same as those for the Doctoral Guidance / Plan of Study Committee: 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 Graduate Program to which you were admitted (or one of the two if you are pursuing an individual, interdisciplinary plan of study). Also, the Graduate Director of Psychology has the discretion to approve or not approve a committee or to add a committee member to any Doctoral Committee.

3.2.3b Doctoral Guidance Committee for students in the Clinical Program

Based on the student's doctoral plan of study and career goals, the student forms his/her Doctoral Guidance Committee. The committee must consist of at least two CIG faculty members (one as Chairperson) and typically includes faculty member(s) from other areas/departments who have expertise related to the cognate area and dissertation topic. Once again, the Doctoral Guidance Committee should be formed as soon as possible after completion of the Master's thesis, and no later than the fall semester of Year 3.

The Doctoral Guidance Committee has three main functions. It reviews and approves the student's doctoral program of study, it reviews and approves the student's Individualized Clinical Training Plan (ICTP), and it conducts the Comprehensive Examination (see details on the exam below). The committee performs these tasks during a committee meeting with the student when the written doctoral plan of study is reviewed. As with theses and dissertations, the student should send the doctoral plan of study to the committee no later than 2 weeks prior to the committee meeting date. During the committee meeting, the Guidance Committee will review the doctoral plan of study, looking for direct connections between the career plans and the other elements of the training plan. Typically, this plan is reviewed at the same meeting at which the proposal for the Comprehensive Paper Proposal is reviewed (see below).

3.2.3d Doctoral Guidance Committee and Timeline requirements for students in the Ecological/Community program

For students admitted to the program with a Master's degree, they will also be assigned a faculty member as temporary advisor. During the second semester following the completion of the Master's (for students admitted with a Bachelor's degree) or in the second semester following program entry (for the student admitted with a Master's degree), the student will work closely with their chair to prepare a Doctoral Plan of Study. It will then be presented to their Doctoral Guidance Committee for approval.

For students admitted with a Bachelor's degree, it is recognized that the Doctoral Guidance Committee cannot be formed until the Master's level work (courses and thesis) are completed. However, given that Master's level course work is often completed by early in the second year and the thesis is typically not completed by then, students will begin taking courses which will ultimately be on their Doctoral Plan of Study before the Doctoral Guidance Committee is formally assembled. In this common situation, students are encouraged to consult closely with their chair in planning their course work throughout their graduate careers.

The Doctoral Guidance Committee will consist of at least four faculty members (at least three from the Department of Psychology). Membership on the committee may be identical or different from the Master's Guidance Committee. The chair of this committee must be a member of the Ecological-Community Interest Group. The committee may have a faculty member representing the student's other area of interest (e.g. minor or cognate). Again, committee membership and Plan of Study must be filed with the Graduate Office (room 202). The Doctoral Guidance Committee oversees the administration of the comprehensive exam. The Doctoral Plan of Study should include any of the required courses that were not completed for the Master's degree. The Doctoral Guidance Committee may waive or enhance the course requirements noted below.

3.2.3e Doctoral Guidance Committee and Timeline requirements for students in the Organizational program

You and your guidance committee will jointly develop a doctoral program of study, consisting of courses, seminars, research and professional experiences that will facilitate the development of your competence in areas outlined earlier in this document. Failure to provide a completed plan of study by one year after your admission to the doctoral program will result in denial of registration in any research level courses (PSY 999). We expect you to complete your Ph.D. degree **within five years of being admitted into the program** so that you can pursue your career goals. Failure to complete a dissertation in five years from the time you entered graduate school with a bachelor's degree (or three years if you entered with a master's degree) will most likely result in loss of further financial support through the program.

It is expected you and your guidance committee will develop a program of study which best fits your unique background, skills, and interests. Courses placed on your master's plan of study cannot be placed on your Doctoral plan of study. Doctoral students are encouraged to obtain appropriate employment and/or internship experience.

3.2.4 Write your Plan of Study

Your **Doctoral Plan of Study** requires:

- The courses you will take that you did not already place on your Master's plan of study
- Your dissertation subject
- Your committee members
- Plans for your Comprehensive Examinations

After working with your committee chair, fill out and submit your Plan of Study (using GradPlan the web-interactive system for doctoral students). It will then be routed electronically to the graduate office and all members of your Doctoral Guidance Committee for approvals. It is not official until it has received both departmental and college 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.

This Plan of Study must satisfy the requirements of your graduate program. If you wish to pursue an individualized, interdisciplinary plan of study that spans two of the department's programs, your committee may recommend a unique set of requirements for your courses and comprehensive exam that can be approved by the Graduate Programs Director in consultation with the chairs of the two graduate programs.

3.2.4b Plan of Study for students in the Clinical Program

Upon admission into the doctoral program, the student develops a doctoral plan of study and identifies a "cognate". The cognate is an area of expertise within clinical science that is chosen by the student based on his/her career goals. The cognate ensures that CIG students not only show breadth of training in clinical psychology, but also develop scholarly depth in an area that is relevant to their own research and clinical interests. The student gains expertise/training in the cognate area by taking a course(s) in the chosen cognate as well as focusing on the cognate topic in the Comprehensive Examination Paper (see below) and dissertation research. Examples of recent cognates include quantitative methods in behavioral and molecular genetics, dissemination of evidence-based treatment/practice, and the theory and practice of child assessment in the context of trauma. Notably, some students have chosen to complete a certificate program for their cognate, including the Quantitative Methods and Evaluation Science Program Certification, the Interdepartmental Graduate Specialization in Infancy and Early Childhood, and the Interdepartmental Graduate Specialization in Cognitive Science.

In addition to identifying a cognate, the student must develop a written doctoral plan of study that includes: 1) a brief description of the cognate; b) a brief description of career goals, c) a brief description of the Comprehensive Paper topic (see more details on this paper below); d) a summary of the anticipated dissertation topic at that time, e) the courses to be completed, f) a copy of the Individualized Clinical Training Plan (ICTP; see Practicum section for more details); and (g) a timeline for completion of doctoral plan activities and program requirements. The cognate, comprehensive paper, dissertation, courses, ICTP, and (eventually) internship site should all be chosen so that they form a coherent training program for the specific career path the student wants to take. Each of

these aspects of the training should build some competency or skill that will be necessary for the student to be successful in their career. The doctoral plan of study should be developed as soon as possible after completion of the Master's thesis, and no later than the fall semester of the third year.

3.2.5 Comprehensive Examinations

Each Graduate Program specifies the requirements for the Comprehensive Examination. Thus, the format, structure, and content are determined almost entirely by your Graduate Program and your Guidance Committee; see below for details for each program.

The College of Social Science strictly enforces a number of regulations concerning Comprehensive Exams.

- The names of the examiners should be typed on the **MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Record of Comprehensive Examinations** form, and each examiner should sign under his or her typed name.
- The student must be enrolled for at least one credit the semester in which the exams are passed.
- The Record of Comprehensive Exam form should be submitted to the Graduate Program Administrator after all committee members have signed.
- The approved written comprehensive exam must be emailed to the Department's Graduate Program Administrator.

3.2.5.a Comprehensive Exam Requirements for Students in the Behavioral Neuroscience Program

To fulfill the comprehensive exam requirement, the student will prepare components of course material appropriate for an upper-level undergraduate honors course in Behavioral Neuroscience. It is expected that the student may eventually use these materials to assist in their preparation and teaching of such a course. The course materials must cover 8 different topics, with 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. Taken together, the 8 topics should serve to provide an undergraduate student with the fundamentals of Behavioral Neuroscience.

For students who entered the program with a Bachelor's degree, by **October 1st of the student's 3rd year in the program**, the student will present a list of the 8 topics they have decided to cover and present them in a logical, pedagogically sound outline (no longer than 2 pages, double-spaced) to the Doctoral Guidance Committee.

For students who entered the program with a Master's degree, the student will present this outline by **January 15th of their 2nd year in the program.**

The Doctoral Guidance Committee is responsible for ensuring that a sufficient breadth of material from the field of Behavioral Neuroscience is covered by the 8 topics the student selected. (For example, the student's course cannot consist of more than one facet of hormone action, or more than one aspect of learning, etc.).

The student will convene a meeting with their Doctoral Guidance Committee **within 2 weeks of submitting their outline (by October 15th of the 3rd year for those who entered with a Bachelor's Degree, by January 30th of the 2nd year for those who entered with a Master's Degree)**. The purpose of this meeting is to provide an opportunity for the student 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 the student's level of preparation for and performance on the written summaries and oral defense of them.

After the Doctoral Guidance Committee and candidate have met as a group to agree on the 8 topics to be covered and discuss expectations, the candidate will have **14 weeks** to prepare a lecture summary for each of the eight topics. Each summary should be ~5 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 be those with a 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 the candidate must identify at least 24 different scientific papers across subfields of Behavioral Neuroscience.

For each of the 8 topics, the candidate 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 two topics. The student should feel free to meet with their Doctoral Guidance Committee members while preparing commentaries, to discuss any difficulties the student is having mastering the literatures on the chosen topics and to help ensure the student is going in an appropriate direction with their 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 the candidate would assign to their undergraduate "students".

These eight summaries constitute the written portion of the comprehensive examination. These summaries must be provided the Doctoral Guidance Committee **within 14 weeks** after the candidate's group meeting with their committee (**for students not starting this component of their comprehensive exams before October 15, this would be by January 30 of the candidate's third year in the graduate program or by May 15 of their second year for students who entered with a Master's degree in Psychology or a closely related field**).

Summaries will be reviewed and discussed by the Guidance Committee, and a student must receive a passing grade on all eight summaries to continue with the examination process. If a student does not receive a passing grade on all eight summaries, they will be notified within one week after the summaries were first submitted. The student 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 eight summaries, candidates will submit to a 2-3 hour oral examination by their Doctoral Guidance Committee about the proposed course materials. Each Doctoral Guidance Committee member will, in turn, choose from the eight topics to discuss with the candidate, asking for a brief summary of the important themes in the field, asking detailed questions about the readings, etc., until the Doctoral Guidance Committee is satisfied the candidate has incorporated a sound understanding of the basic state of research in that topic. The candidate should be very familiar with each of the assigned papers. When the candidate has demonstrated this depth of knowledge for at least 7 of the topics (as decided by the Doctoral Guidance Committee), the candidate will have passed the comprehensive examination.

Should the candidate not achieve this level of mastery, but shows mastery of 4-6 of the eight topics, he/she will receive a temporary “non-pass” and will have the opportunity to retake the oral examination within one month.

If the candidate shows mastery of fewer than four topics, they will fail the comprehensive exam and will not have the opportunity to retake it.

If a remediating candidate does not revise the written portion within one week after notification of failure, does not retake the oral examination within one month of the failed oral defense date, or does not pass the comprehensive exam on the second try, he/she will be dismissed from the Behavioral Neuroscience Graduate Program.

Requests for extensions of these deadlines must be submitted by the graduate student in writing via email to the chair of the Behavioral Neuroscience Graduate Program at least two weeks before the deadline under consideration. Requests made after the original deadline has passed cannot be approved, and the student will by default fail the comprehensive exam; if this constitutes the candidate’s first failure of the comprehensive exam, the opportunity for remediation will be approved or denied at the discretion of the BNS faculty. If the student has already failed some component of the comprehensive exam and is currently in a remediation period when the relevant deadline has passed (and no request for extension has been granted), they will fail the comprehensive exam without possibility of remediation or rescheduling.

3.2.5.b Comprehensive Exam Requirements for Students in the Clinical Program

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 his/her 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 the student's breadth of understanding of the field of psychology as whole as well as his/her depth of understanding in the cognate area; and c) ensure that the student has a firm grasp of the conceptual and theoretical basis for his/her 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 the student's training goals and must be judged by the Doctoral Guidance Committee to have scholarly merit. Importantly, the Comprehensive Paper is expected to be the student's own work. The student's 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, the student must work independently on the writing of the paper without further input or consultation from anyone.

Comprehensive Paper Proposal

Before beginning the Comprehensive Paper, the student submits a Comprehensive Paper Proposal to his/her 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 maximum 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 the student proceeds 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 the student's own work. The student's 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, the student 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 student 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). Students are expected to recognize and abide by the spirit and intent of the examination, which is an independent scholarly review paper that reflects their own thinking and writing.

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

- Bem, D. J. (1995). Writing a review article for *Psychological Bulletin*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 118, 172-177.
 - 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 the student. 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 the student to discuss this feedback. The written feedback must be presented to the student 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.

3.2.5.c Comprehensive Exam Requirements for Students in the Cognitive Program

The comprehensive exam consists of two parts each tailored to the needs and interests of the student. The Core Knowledge Exam is designed to expose students to foundational literature and must be passed before one takes the more specialized Review Paper portion of the comprehensive exam. Failure to pass both components of the comprehensive exam by the end of the third year after admittance to the Ph.D. program is grounds for dismissal from the program.

Core Knowledge Exam:

Purpose and composition. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that the student has core knowledge of major areas of cognition and cognitive neuroscience. The student must pass a written exam testing three topic areas. The student chooses his/her 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. A student must sit for the exam within the first two times that it is offered after the student's admittance to the Ph.D. program. The student must inform his/her 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, the student will receive two questions for each topic area they have selected. The student will answer one question for each topic area. The exam period will begin at 9am and end at 4pm, allowing students six hours of writing time (two hours per topic area) and an hour for lunch and breaks. During this time, the student will type their answers at a computer and may use the papers and their notes. If the student chooses not to take breaks, they should turn their 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, the student will receive a pass or fail grade and a written summary evaluation of his or her 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 a student fails one or more topic areas, they must sit for the exam the next time it is offered, taking as many topic areas as he or she failed during the prior sitting. During the second and third sittings the student will have two hours of writing time per exam topic area. A student can choose to retake failed topic areas or new topic areas, and must inform his or her adviser of the topic areas at least two months before each exam. Failing all three topic areas on their 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 the student is able to independently identify an area of study, study and synthesize relevant material from the literature, and orally defend his or her work.

Composition. In consultation with the advisor, the student defines a research area/approach for the comprehensive exam. The research area should be directly relevant to the student's research interests and must be approved by the student's Doctoral Guidance Committee. Within 4 months of the committee's approval of the research area, the student 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 the student's 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 the student passes or fails this part of the comprehensive exam.

The oral defense should consist of a presentation from the student of the key ideas discussed in the exam, followed by a question and answer period. At least half of the meeting time should be devoted to questions from the committee.

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.

3.2.5.d Comprehensive Exam Requirements for Students in the Ecological/Community Program

Goals. Comprehensives in Ecological/Community Psychology have three aims. First, comprehensives provide an opportunity for the student to integrate knowledge and skills **and/or** develop and expand a particular skill or competency congruent with his/her professional aims. The comprehensives are designed to be individually tailored in format to allow for maximum fit between the mode of the comprehensives and the style, needs, and goals of the student. Second, comprehensives provide the opportunity for the student to be evaluated on his/her readiness to complete the doctoral degree. Students will be evaluated

on the degree to which they are competent to perform as independent scholars. Third, it is the aim of the comprehensive exam to move students closer to readiness to propose a dissertation. In short, the comprehensives aim to provide students with additional work in both the breadth and depth of the field. The comprehensives are designed to insure that all students know Community Psychology in general **and** how it applies to their specific sub-field of interest. This requires a balance between the particular topic/format of the comprehensive exam and general field of Community Psychology. The philosophy of the Community Psychology Faculty is to have students complete the comprehensives successfully. While it is specifically **not** the intent to use the comprehensives to remove students from the program, students must pass comprehensives in order to move on to the doctoral dissertation.

Areas to be covered. Comprehensive exams can be accomplished through a variety of 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. These areas are not mutually exclusive, but represent broadly defined domains. While specific areas may receive differential attention based on individual student needs and educational goals, the evaluation standards for all students and all options are the same. In other words, all students will be held accountable for demonstrating the same knowledge, though the format of the comprehensives may vary.

- **Background Information**

- *History and Systems.* This area is necessarily very broad 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, philosophies 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. Depending on a student's particular interests, this area could also include specific theories pertinent to that particular problem. Examples of this domain include such major theoretical positions as ecological models, empowerment theory, organizational theory, etc.

- **Contemporary Work**

- *Social Change Strategies.* This area addresses the major intervention paradigms and approaches used in the field. The comprehensives need 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, advocacy, etc.
- *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, etc.

- *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 experimental designs, quasi experimental designs, case study designs, and qualitative methods. 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, etc.) 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 implication 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.

Timing. Students are expected to take their comprehensives after the completion of the Master's thesis and must complete comprehensives exams before submission of the doctoral dissertation proposal. All students are encouraged to complete the comprehensives option of their choice within 24 months of the completion of the Master's degree. For those students who come to the program with a Master's degree from another institution, they are strongly encouraged to complete the comprehensives option of their choice within 24 months of program entry. The comprehensives options have the following time frames:

- course design – materials submitted within 90 days of proposal being approved,
- policy white paper – submitted within 90 days of proposal being approved,
- review paper – submitted within 90 days of proposal being approved,
- written test – taken within 90 days of proposal being approved.

The Comprehensive Proposal. Each of the options described below will be carried out according to a general format consisting of an agreement between the student and their Doctoral Guidance Committee. Each option calls for the student 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 the student will be held responsible. A proposal for design of a course will include all of 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. The proposal should also include a detailed time line for completion including: 1) a deadline for completion of comprehensive not to exceed three months from the time of acceptance of the proposal, 2) provisions for faculty review of drafts, and 3) contingencies in the case of a failed comprehensive that specify issues of timing and form of any retake option.
- Second, the proposal will detail how each of the areas mentioned above will be covered in the particular option selected. In other words, the proposal will specify how History and Systems, Major Theoretical Positions, etc. will be covered.
- A meeting between the student and the doctoral guidance committee will occur before the comprehensive begins. This meeting will result in a written agreement between the student and the committee as to what will be expected for the comprehensive.

Grading System. Each option will be graded using the following system. It is the expectation that students 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.

The student will pass the comprehensives if he/she receives at least 75% "pass" ratings. The student will fail the comprehensive if he/she receives more than 25% "fail" ratings. If he/she does not receive 75% pass ratings and not more than 25% fail ratings, he/she may do revisions. For example, if the student selected the review paper option, he/she 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 the student selected the written test, he/she 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, the student may elect to rewrite only the parts of the comprehensives necessary to attain 75%. If successful, the student would then pass the comprehensives.

At the completion of the comprehensives, the student may request a second meeting with his/her 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, the student will have the right to a second attempt at the exam. If, after a second attempt, the student does not pass, they will be terminated from the graduate program. All cases of failing grades will be filed with the department's graduate office by the faculty.

Options for Comprehensive

- *Written Test*
 - Format. Each faculty member on the student's doctoral guidance committee will submit to the student's 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 the student's comprehensives proposal.

The student has two options for taking the test. In the **first option**, on an agreed upon date, the student will receive eight questions (two from each of four committee members). During the next 48 hours, the student would prepare answers to four of the eight questions (one of each of the two submitted by each committee member chosen by the student) 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, the student would receive four questions (two from each of two committee members). During the next 24 hours, he/she 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 the student's 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.* Students will prepare a comprehensive review of an area of particular professional and scientific interest. The goal of the review paper is to allow the

student a format for developing and reinforcing writing skills and to increase his/her 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 particular interest to the student. 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, the student 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.* The student will prepare a paper in an area of particular professional and scientific interest translating a 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, the student 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 review. The body of the White Paper (excluding tables, references, and appendices) may not exceed 25 single spaced pages (one inch margins, 12 CPI).
- *Design an Undergraduate Course.* The student will prepare a course in Psychology, typically Psychology 270 - Introduction to Community Psychology. The course must cover the domains of the comprehensives specified by the guidelines. The proposal will comply with departmental requirements as to content. In general, the proposal requires a course description, a course syllabus, and an outline of all class sessions. The final product will consist of complete course materials, including a syllabus, lectures, handouts, homework assignments, tests, quizzes, exercises, evaluation procedures, etc. for the course.
- *Other options.* The student may propose other options for the comprehensives to their guidance committee consistent with these general guidelines. These could include but are not limited to research grant applications, training curriculum, etc.

Study Guides and Scholarly Independence

The Chair of the Comprehensive Exam Committee will provide students with a standard set of materials to aid in their preparation of their comprehensives proposal (e.g., example syllabi and lectures; example grant comprehensive proposals). Students are allowed to use these examples to help them learn how to structure their comprehensive proposal materials. For example, they can use the materials to help them learn how to develop a syllabus/course and design a lecture. They are also welcome to borrow techniques and strategies from these examples. For example, if designing a class for their comprehensives, they could borrow some teaching strategies used by other students or faculty, such as using in-class assignments to promote an active learning environment.

However, given that the Comprehensives are designed to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their independence as a scholar, it is imperative that the proposal and final comprehensive materials represent the student's independent work. Any material that is directly copied from another source will not be accepted. For example, it

would be considered plagiarism for a student 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.

3.2.5.e Comprehensive Exam Requirements for Students in the Organizational Program

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, involving 3 steps. It is expected that you complete all elements of this demonstration **by the 3rd semester after your admission to the doctoral program.**

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

1. Throughout your time at MSU, you should be creating a portfolio document of how you are obtaining breadth and depth in the field of organizational psychology. This documentation is integral to the annual review process (end of each spring semester), and can serve to guide you as to areas to develop. The format of documentation is a matrix that can be accessed here and in general consists of documenting demonstrated competency in key areas of organizational psychology via evidence such as completed coursework, publications on a topic, applied project leadership, independent study, and the like. You also will have an electronic repository where you will store all significant work products (e.g., class papers, papers for publication, power points of presentations, technical reports) as these serve as specific documentation of growth and competence. These materials will be reviewed along with the matrix as part of the annual review process each spring. While these materials will be accessible only to faculty, we encourage the sharing of all work products with peers in the interest of fostering a learning climate.
2. In the semester after completing the MA thesis, you will take a comprehensive exam that provides another validation of your program of study. The exam 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 in the morning and methodological questions in the afternoon. 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, 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, MARGINAL, 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.

3. In addition to documenting breadth in the field, individuals must indicate their particular depth focus. **No later than two weeks prior to the closed book exam**, submit a 2 to 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 your closed book exam, you will meet with your chosen committee to discuss your proposal and any modifications that they suggest. **Within one month of passing your closed book exam**, you will submit your integrative paper. The expectation is that individuals 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, MARGINAL, 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.

3.2.5.f Comprehensive Exam Requirements for Students in the Social Program

The comprehensive exam for our program has as its goal to ensure that graduate students earning a PhD will have a broad perspective on the field of social/personality psychology. The examination is designed to assess mastery – in terms of breadth and depth – of the topics and phenomena that comprise the domain of social and personality psychology. In this context, mastery refers to a level of competence that the members of a student's guidance committee should reasonably expect from a soon-to-be Ph.D.

It is required that the student pass this examination before being allowed to submit the draft of a dissertation proposal to her or his dissertation committee. Before the comprehensive exam can be taken, students must file their PhD Plan of Study. The comprehensive examination is viewed as one component in a program of study and, as such, is never considered in isolation from the many other aspects of the student's graduate training experiences.

The examination should serve at least two, equally important functions: • Evaluative, in that it should permit guidance committee members to assess the degree to which the student has mastered the basic content of personality or social psychology; • Developmental, in that it is intended to encourage the student (a) to recognize connections between material learned in different courses and at different times in her or his education, and (b) to become exposed to subject matter that was not covered sufficiently in formal course work.

The written, closed-book exam is administered on two days, for four hours each day. Students coming into the program with a BA or BS, who successfully defend their thesis in the spring semester of their second year (and are admitted to the PhD program) will complete the exam in the September of their third year in the graduate program (their 5th semester). Students who are not admitted to the PhD program at the end of their second year (spring semester) will take their comprehensive exam in the September after they become PhD candidates (students completing admitted to the PhD program in the summer of their second year will take their comprehensive exam the September of their fourth year).

Exam questions are based on a reading list compiled by the faculty which will be provided to the student. See Comprehensive Exam Guidelines and Reading List for the reading list and detailed information regarding the exam.

Students who fail the exam will be required to take it again the following September. Students will be allowed to take the exam a total of 2 times. Failure to pass the exam after 2 tries will result in withdrawal of the student from the PhD program

Students entering with a Master's degree have the option to take the comprehensive exam in the summer after either the first or second year.

3.2.6 Time Limits for Comprehensive Exams

The University requirement is that all **Comprehensive Exams must be passed WITHIN FIVE YEARS** from the time when a student begins the first class at MSU that appears on his or her Doctoral Plan of Study. Your Graduate Program likely has even stricter requirements for a student to be considered to be making adequate progress. Requests for time extensions to the University requirement must be made by the chair of the student's committee and endorsed by the Graduate Programs Director. 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 for a Ph.D. candidate, **the student is required to retake the comprehensive examinations by that date**. If the student believes there is justification for not requiring a retake of the exams, he or she 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.

3.2.6.a Time limits for Comprehensive Exams for Students in the Behavioral Neuroscience Program

For students who entered the program with a Bachelor's degree, by **October 1st of the student's 3rd year in the program**, the student will present a list of the 8 topics they have decided to cover and present them in a logical, pedagogically sound outline (no longer than 2 pages, double-spaced) to the Doctoral Guidance Committee.

For students who entered the program with a Master's degree, the student will present this outline by **January 15th of their 2nd year in the program.**

The student will convene a meeting with their Doctoral Guidance Committee **within 2 weeks of submitting their outline (by October 15th of the 3rd year for those who entered with a Bachelor's Degree, by January 30th of the 2nd year for those who entered with a Master's Degree).**

After the Doctoral Guidance Committee and candidate have met as a group to agree on the 8 topics to be covered and discuss expectations, the candidate will have **14 weeks** to prepare a lecture summary for each of the eight topics

These eight summaries constitute the written portion of the comprehensive examination. These summaries must be provided the Doctoral Guidance Committee **within 14 weeks** after the candidate's group meeting with their committee (**for students not starting this component of their comprehensive exams before October 15, this would be by January 30 of the candidate's third year in the graduate program or by May 15 of their second year for students who entered with a Master's degree in Psychology or a closely related field**)

Within two weeks after receiving a passing grade on all eight summaries, candidates will submit to a 2-3 hour oral examination by their Doctoral Guidance Committee about the proposed course materials.

For students who do not pass the comprehensive exam, if a remediating candidate does not revise the written portion within one week after notification of failure, does not retake the oral examination within one month of the failed oral defense date, or does not pass the comprehensive exam on the second try, he/she will be dismissed from the Behavioral Neuroscience Graduate Program.

Requests for extensions of these deadlines must be submitted by the graduate student in writing via email to the chair of the Behavioral Neuroscience Graduate Program at least two weeks before the deadline under consideration. Requests made after the original deadline has passed cannot be approved, and the student will by default fail the comprehensive exam; if this constitutes the candidate's first failure of the comprehensive exam, the opportunity for remediation will be approved or denied at the discretion of the BNS faculty. If the student has already failed some component of the comprehensive exam and is currently in a remediation period when the relevant deadline has passed (and no request for extension has been granted), they will fail the comprehensive exam without possibility of remediation or rescheduling.

3.2.6.b Time limits for Comprehensive Exams for Students in the Clinical Program

To maintain adequate progress and thus good standing in the program, **the first author publication and the Comprehensive Paper must be successfully passed by October 1st of the student's fifth year in the program.** If both parts of the exam are not passed by this date, the student will be required to defer internship for one year, and a new deadline for successful completion of both parts of the Comprehensive Examination will be set by the

Doctoral Guidance Committee; this date will be no later than October 1st of the student's sixth year in the program.

If the Comprehensive Examination is not successfully passed by this second date, the faculty will meet to decide whether the student will be allowed to remain in the doctoral program. Exceptions to this timeline will only be given in response to substantive evidence of extreme extenuating circumstances. All exceptions must receive prior approval (i.e., prior to the October 1st deadline) by the CIG faculty.

3.2.7 University Guidelines for Student Pursuing a Dual-Degree

Michigan State University offers doctoral students the exceptional opportunity to work in conjunction with faculty mentors to develop a dual major doctoral program. 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 the student's enrollment at Michigan State University.**

In order to receive a dual major, the following conditions must be met:

1. The intent to receive the degree in two areas must be outlined in the guidance committee report.
2. The Ph.D. Degree Plan must reflect the required standards for both departments.
3. The integrated course work must be satisfactory to both departments.
4. The comprehensive examination must be passed to the satisfaction of both departments.
5. A guidance committee including members from both departments must be satisfied that the dissertation represents a contribution meeting the usual standards in both areas.
6. There must be a single dissertation that represents an integration of the disciplinary areas.
7. Responsible Conduct of Research requirements will be as defined and approved by the guidance committee.

Because of the additional complexity of a dual degree plan and the need for coordination across different academic units at MSU, please work closely with your advisor, relevant program faculty, and the Graduate Program Director to explore whether this is an option for you and to work through the details of how you will meet these criteria.

3.2.7 The Dissertation Proposal

Your committee provides guidance on in the content of your proposal. Once your chair determines your proposal is ready for your committee a proposal defense meeting can be scheduled. Your Guidance Committee then makes the decision to approve your dissertation

proposal at your proposal defense meeting. Take a copy of the **Doctoral Level Approval of Dissertation Proposal form**, so it can be filled out at the meeting. This form, **along with an electronic file of the accepted dissertation proposal** should be filed with the Graduate Programs Administrator soon after your proposal has been accepted.

3.2.8 Write and Defend the Dissertation

Once your committee chair agrees that the dissertation is ready for defense, schedule the defense meeting. It is typical to give the dissertation document to committee members 3 weeks before the scheduled defense.

It is recommended that you write an additional abstract for your dissertation that is suitable for a public or lay audience. This does not take the place of the traditional abstract.

The process followed during the dissertation defense is up to the specific Graduate Program. After 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, interdisciplinary plan in which students are spanning two programs, 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.

The Department of Psychology encourages all dissertation committees and doctoral students to arrange for a public presentation of the dissertation as part of, or in addition to, the oral defense. The **Ph.D. Notification of Final Oral Examination** form should be filled out to allow the presentation to be advertised. Announcements and scheduling of rooms must be made three weeks prior to the oral defense. The public presentation is open to all faculty (i.e., those that are not a member of the dissertation committee) and to members of the public. The second part of the oral defense, which includes the formal examination of the student and committee discussion, is not public.

To ensure fairness in the examination procedure and maintenance of academic standards, the Dean of the College of Social Sciences or the Chair of Psychology may appoint an outside non-voting member to the dissertation committee. The outside member of the committee will read and critique the dissertation, will participate in the oral part of the exam, and will submit a report to the Dean of the College of Social Science and/or the Chair of Psychology.

3.2.8.a Guidelines and Timeline for Dissertation Proposal and Defense for Students in the Behavioral Neuroscience Program

For students who entered with a bachelor's degree, they must submit a written dissertation thesis proposal no later than **September 1 of their 4th year**, and also schedule a date for their oral defense with their Dissertation Committee. For students who entered with a master's degree, this deadline is **December 15 of their 3rd year**.

Once approved, each student working toward a doctoral degree must conduct original research upon which a written dissertation is to be prepared. The research is to be under the guidance of a regular BNS faculty member and must be acceptable to the Dissertation Committee.

Each student must meet with their Dissertation Committee at least once a year during all academic years subsequent to the oral defense and initial approval of the dissertation proposal. The purpose of this annual meeting is to update the Dissertation Committee about your research progress and discuss any requests for changes to the dissertation research plan.

Upon completing the dissertation research, students are required to present their research in a public colloquium as part of the oral defense. The written dissertation must be defended orally and approved by the Dissertation Committee.

3.2.7b Guidelines and Timelines for the Dissertation Proposal for Students in the Clinical Program

The doctoral dissertation is intended to reflect independent empirical scholarship by the doctoral candidate that is the culmination of their training at MSU.

Doctoral Dissertation Committee

Doctoral students write the dissertation proposal and dissertation under the supervision of their advisor (i.e., the “Chair”) and their Doctoral Dissertation Committee. The Doctoral Dissertation Committee must include the Chair and three additional members. The Chair and two additional members of the committee must be in the Department of Psychology, and it is recommended that two of the members be CIG faculty members. This committee may have the same members as the Doctoral Guidance Committee, but this is not required, particularly if the dissertation requires particular expertise (e.g., specific statistical methods). If there are different members, then the student must submit a form for a change of committee membership (see the Psychology Department Graduate Handbook). We also encourage students to include at least one non-CIG faculty member on their committee to emphasize connections with psychological science more broadly. Please see the Departmental Graduate Handbook for more details about committee composition.

Dissertation Format and Defense

The format of the dissertation proposal and the final dissertation will be determined by the Dissertation Committee and the student. Sim

ilar to the Master’s thesis proposal, the dissertation proposal can be an NRSA, NSF, or equivalent grant application. In terms of the final dissertation, some dissertations are formatted as one or more journal articles, with several Appendices that show additional analyses/work that were not included in the journal article. However, aside from Graduate School and Departmental Requirements (see requisite handbooks for these), the format of the final dissertation should be decided upon by the student, the advisor, and the Dissertation Committee. The final dissertation must be orally defended in a public meeting

attended by the Doctoral Committee, and any interested parties. It is filed following procedures of the Graduate School and the Department Handbooks.

Timeline

It is ordinarily expected that the dissertation proposal will be written and submitted to the Dissertation Committee in the fall of the 4th year. We strongly encourage submission of the dissertation proposal to the dissertation committee by **March 15th of the 4th year of the program**, allowing ample time for data collection and defending the dissertation prior to leaving for internship. This is a recommended, but not required, guideline for timing.

The dissertation proposal must be formally approved (signed off) prior to application for internship. The deadline for this is determined in the summer prior to the fall of the 5th year and is posted on the CIG website. This deadline is typically toward the end of September/first of October. If the proposal is not completed by the end of fall semester in Year 5, the student may be considered to be making inadequate academic progress, unless an adequate rationale has been provided for a longer time period for completing it.

Credit Hours

Students MUST be signed up for at least 1 credit at MSU in the semester that they DEFEND their dissertation! This is a rule that has been instated by the MSU Graduate School, not the Psychology Department, and there are no exceptions to this rule. **In addition, students cannot maintain their status in our program if they go more than 1 calendar year without enrolling in credit hours at MSU.** If more than one year passes, the student must apply for re-admission to the program. Once again, this is an MSU regulation, not a Psychology Department regulation. Students who go more than one calendar year without enrolling in credits at MSU will need to re-apply for admission via the Graduate Office in the Psychology Department. This re-application is reportedly pro forma, but it requires extra steps on the part of the student, the CIG faculty, and the Psychology Graduate Office staff. Students are advised to avoid this situation whenever possible.

3.2.8.c Guidelines and Timeline for Dissertation Proposal and Defense for Students in the Cognitive Program

A maximum of **5 semesters after passing comprehensive exams or 4.5 years after arriving at MSU (whichever date is sooner)** each student must submit a written dissertation thesis proposal. This proposal is to be submitted to the student's Doctoral Dissertation Committee, and an oral defense must be conducted during the same semester.

Each student working toward a doctoral degree must conduct original research upon which a written dissertation is to be prepared. The research is to be under the guidance of a major professor and must be acceptable to the dissertation committee. The written dissertation must be defended orally and approved by the dissertation committee

All doctoral students must register for a total of 24 credits of doctoral dissertation research (PSY 999).

Upon completion of the dissertation research and written thesis, students are required to present their research in a public colloquium as part of the oral defense. . Typically, this oral defense will be scheduled as one of the Cognitive Forum talks for that term. As a result, students should contact the organizer of the Cognitive Forum speaker series before the term in which they plan to defend, to schedule the oral defense.

3.2.8.d Guidelines and Timeline for Dissertation Proposal and Defense for Students in the Ecological/Community Program

The goal of the doctoral dissertation is for the student to independently carry out community research. To form a dissertation committee, the student develops a dissertation proposal with the assistance of the faculty member chosen as chair. Membership on this committee may be identical to or different from the doctoral guidance committee. The process for proposing, completing, and defending the doctoral dissertation is identical to that described for the Master's thesis. The proposal outlines the dissertation problem and details the method. The proposal is submitted to the other potential committee members. The doctoral dissertation committee must consist of at least four faculty, three of whom are regular members of the Psychology department. The chair must be a member of Ecological-Community Interest Group. Once a committee is formed they meet to discuss with the student the final form of the dissertation. The dissertation must study the problem in its naturalistic setting. After students have completed the Ph.D. dissertation project and have written the dissertation to the satisfaction of their committee chair, the committee administers an oral examination over the dissertation material. In the case of both the dissertation proposal defense and final defense, the student will “pass” if all or all but one of the committee members assign a grade of “pass”. All cases of failing grades will be filed with the department’s graduate office by the faculty.

3.2.8.e Guidelines and Timeline for Dissertation Proposal and Defense for Students in the Organizational Program

Ph.D. Thesis and Thesis Committee

You are expected to form a doctoral dissertation committee **no later than one year after admission to the doctoral program**. To form a dissertation committee, students develop a dissertation proposal with assistance of your chairperson, or major professor. Your proposal details the dissertation problem and the method you propose for studying it. This proposal is generally submitted to other faculty members, at least three of whom must agree to serve on the dissertation committee. Membership on the dissertation and doctoral guidance committees may be identical, overlapping, or completely independent.

You meet with your dissertation committee to defend your proposal and if approved, the proposal is signed by all members of the committee and placed in your file. You will not be allowed to have a formal dissertation proposal meeting prior to the completion of comprehensive exams.

After completing a draft of the Ph.D. dissertation, the dissertation committee administers an oral examination based on the dissertation. The Department of Psychology requires that you either (a) extend an invitation to all members of the department to attend the oral examination or (b) present a colloquium to the department on your dissertation. It is expected that students will normally complete their Ph.D. dissertation work by the fourth semester in residence after admission to the doctoral program, excluding summers. Given earlier progress in completing a masters and comprehensive exams, it may take more or less than four semesters to complete the Ph.D. dissertation.

Summary

Dissertation Proposal. The dissertation is typically the most extensive and independent project that students complete during their graduate training. Students often derive their dissertation topics from their comprehensive examination readings, but this is not required. The dissertation begins with a proposal that they must present to the dissertation committee. This proposal meeting is generally a “working meeting” during which committee members collaborate with the student to anticipate problems and to improve the quality of the dissertation. If the proposal is approved, your committee will complete the Doctoral Level Approval of Dissertation Proposal form.

Dissertation Research. After the proposal has been successfully presented and committee members have agreed upon the project, the student can begin the data collection process; i.e., secure approval from the university human subjects committee, train and supervise assistants, schedule research sessions, and so on. It is not uncommon for a dissertation project to require a full year to complete.

Dissertation Defense. After a suitable draft of the dissertation has been written and has the advisor’s approval, copies should be distributed to all committee members at least two weeks prior to the actual dissertation presentation. At least three weeks before the defense, you must submit the Dean’s Representative form to the Graduate Associate Dean of Social Science. After successful completion of the dissertation, the PhD Record of Dissertation and Oral Examination form must be completed. The completed and formatted dissertation must be submitted electronically to the Graduate School (see Psychology Department Handbook).

3.2.9 Get your Ph.D. and Graduate

The completed dissertation and all completed and signed paperwork must be received by the deadline noted by the Graduate School in order to graduate in a particular semester. At the end of your oral examination, the following forms must be completed and returned to the Graduate Program Administrator.

1. "**Record of Dissertation and Oral Examination Requirements for Doctoral Degree Candidates**". 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. When all approvals are completed, this form should be submitted to the Programs Administrator

2. "**Ph.D. Placement Report**". This is your statement on job or educational plans after receiving your degree.

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS OF DISSERTATIONS:

MSU **only accepts** electronic theses and dissertations submitted via ProQuest. The instructions for electronic submissions are available from [Theses and Dissertation Submissions page](#).

Be aware that a submission via ProQuest does not mean that the document has been ACCEPTED. 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 Graduate School now permits the submission of supplementary materials to ProQuest, in addition to the main body of a thesis or 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 need the written approval of the thesis/dissertation committee chair.

Submit an electronic copy of your dissertation to the Graduate Program Programs Administrator.

3.2.10 Time Limits for Doctoral Program

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

Application for extensions of the 8-year period of time toward degree must be submitted by the Department's Graduate Programs Director for approval by the Dean of the College and the Dean of the Graduate School. Upon approval of the extension, doctoral comprehensive examinations must be passed again. Each Graduate Program set its own standards to be considered to be making adequate progress.

3.2.11 Deadlines and Time Limits for Program Requirements

3.2.11.a. For Students in the Behavioral Neuroscience Program

Any requests for extensions of these deadlines must be submitted by the graduate student in writing or email to the current chair of the Behavioral Neuroscience Graduate Program at least two weeks before the deadline under consideration. Requests made after the original deadline has passed will not be approved. Students must provide justification for a deadline extension request and extensions will be granted only if there have been unusual, extenuating circumstances that cause the student and their advisor to believe that the deadline cannot be reasonably met. Justification for requesting an extension of a deadline involving a required face-to-face meeting (e.g., oral defenses) can include scheduling

conflicts among members of the Doctoral Guidance Committee that result in an inability to convene the group on time. After receiving an extension request, the chair of the BNS Graduate Program will consult with the other BNS faculty and respond to the student with the decision in writing within one week after the extension request was made.

The deadlines stated above for students entering with a Master's degree are intended for those holding a Master's degree in Psychology or a closely related field. Students entering with a Master's degree in other fields may or may not be more advanced within the field of Behavioral Neuroscience than students entering with a Bachelor's degree. The deadlines, course of study, and other program requirements for students entering with a Master's degree in fields other than Psychology will be decided on a case-by-case basis during discussions among the student, his/her BNS faculty advisor, and the remainder of the BNS faculty.

3.3b Description of Practicum Requirements and Policy on Externship Experiences and Internship Requirement for Students in the Clinical Program

Practicum

Students begin clinical work in the spring semester of their first year and continue practicum training throughout their Master's and doctoral program. Students do the bulk of their clinical training in the MSU Psychology Clinic, which is run by the Department of Psychology. The MSU Psychological Clinic has two equally important missions.

The first is to provide state-of-the art clinical training to MSU Clinical Psychology graduate students, as well as any other trainees or students enrolled in practicum. The MSU Clinical Psychology Program believes in providing its graduate students opportunities to work with clients from diverse backgrounds (e.g., ethnic/racial/economic/religious/sexual) across the lifespan (child/adult). Clinicians utilize evidence-based treatments to provide services to clients with a range of specific disorders and problems. Individual, family, and group interventions are taught. Students also receive exposure to different theoretical orientations including predominately cognitive behavioral, behavioral, interpersonal, and psychodynamic. The MSU Psychological Clinic and Graduate Program ascribe to the clinical science model and focus on utilizing research and data to choose and track treatments. All clients are administered assessment instruments that allow the clinician and supervisor to track treatment outcomes. Adult and child baseline and outcome assessments are standardized across cases. Clients are re-assessed every month, at a minimum. Clinicians are encouraged to supplement the baseline and follow-along assessments with idiographic measures.

Equal in importance to our training mission is the MSU Psychological Clinic's dedication to provide quality, low-cost psychological services to the mid-Michigan community. The Clinic is a community clinic and one of the only sliding-fee scale clinics available in the area.

Sequence of Training

Official practicum credits begin in the fall semester of the second year. However, in the spring of the first year, students are introduced to clinical work and the MSU Psychological

Clinic via an orientation led by the Clinic Director and the completion of two assessment cases (one in the spring and one in the summer), supervised by the Clinic Director. This experience is intended to provide on-going learning following the fall and spring diagnostic and assessment courses.

Students are expected to be involved in clinical training following their first year in the program throughout their residence at MSU. The first two years of practicum are expected to be conducted in the MSU Psychological Clinic. The second two years of practicum (or more, if the student is in residence beyond the 5th year of the program) are intended to be specialized and consistent with the student's clinical competency and career goals. One of these advanced years may be an externship approved by the Clinic Director and DCTs. Students work with their advisor and Doctoral Guidance Committee to develop an Individualized Clinical Training Plan (ICTP; see more information below) that will guide their practicum/externship experiences for the remaining years at MSU (typically 3rd and 4th year of practicum, i.e., 4th and 5th years of the program).

Required Number of Hours and Training Experiences

Students are required to accrue a minimum of 600 hours of face-to-face clinical work across all of their MSU practicum and externships. However, students who have successfully placed at internships typically have at least 800 face-to-face hours. **The 600-hour minimum must be met by October 31st of the student's 4th year of practicum (5th year in the program).** In addition, **the student must accrue 200 hours across the 3rd and 4th years of practicum (4th and 5th years in the program).** This later requirement is in place to ensure that students continue to actively engage in clinical training in the final years of the program.

All hours accrued by participating in practicum (including externships) can be listed on the APPI form that students submit as part of their annual evaluation in our program (see Student Evaluations below) and internship applications. Hours in the Clinic (and number of assessments – see below) are monitored and audited by the Clinic Director. Students are required to make up hours missed, and the Clinic Director makes the decision about how to make up the hours (i.e., via individual or group treatment or assessment).

In order to ensure that all students meet the minimum hourly requirements, students in their first year of practicum (2nd year in the program) are expected to carry three psychotherapy clients at a time (totaling 10 attended sessions per month) and to conduct three assessments. Two of these assessments are conducted in the spring/summer prior to beginning the 2nd year of the program, and a final one is conducted in the spring of their 2nd year in the program. Advanced students, those in their 3rd year and beyond, are expected to carry four clients at a time (totaling 12 attended sessions per month) and complete a total of 6 additional assessments during their remaining years. In other words, students are expected to graduate from the program with a minimum of 9 comprehensive assessments and some chose to complete more if they are planning on an assessment focused internship. Finally, starting in the 2nd year of practicum (3rd year in the program), students are expected to accrue 2 credits of group psychotherapy. Groups are assigned from ½ credit to 2 credits, depending on their length and time commitment. Students thus may accrue all of their group experience in one year or over three years, depending upon which groups they are assigned. Students may also complete credits for their group therapy requirements while on an externship. Notably, additional group, assessment and/or

psychotherapy hours may be recommended to meet internship expectations, depending upon the type of internship to which the student expects to apply.

The Clinic is open all year; thus, clinical work is required all year long. Students can take up to 4 weeks vacation from the clinic, as needed.

Training Activities

Universal Training for all Students

All students should gain experience with child and adult cases in psychotherapy and assessment to ensure exposure across the lifespan. In addition, cognitive, personality and diagnostic assessments are required of all students. Group psychotherapy experiences typically include groups in our own clinic (e.g., social skills groups for children with ASD), local mental health organizations (e.g., a domestic violence shelter, a Head Start school), and/or externship groups.

Individualized Clinical Training Plans (ICTPs)

In addition to these standard training experiences for all students, each student will develop an ICTP to guide their training experiences during their 3rd and 4th years of practicum (i.e., 4th and 5th years of the program). The ICTP is developed in collaboration with the advisor and Doctoral Guidance Committee and outlines clinical competency goals and training activities for the last two years of advanced practicum training experiences (including externships) that are in line with the student's career goals and clinical science focus. The plan must involve clinical work for the last two years of practicum, but the nature of that clinical training (e.g., externship, additional assessments in the MSU Psychological Clinic, etc.) is individualized by the student. **The ICTP must be approved by the advisor, the Guidance Committee, and the Clinic Director by December of the student's 2nd year of practicum (3rd year in the program).** Modifications following approval of a student's plan, if necessary, require signatures of the Doctoral Guidance Committee Members and the Clinic Director. The standard ICTP form can be obtained from the Clinic Director.

Externships

An externship is defined as a clinical experience outside of the MSU Psychological Clinic, this may include community agencies, organizations, medical centers, or other opportunities at MSU. Examples of recent externships completed by our students include the Ann Arbor VA, and the University of Michigan Eating Disorders Clinic. An externship is not required, although many students wish to supplement their practicum training in the MSU Psychological Clinic with an externship experience. Importantly, students *may not* engage in any externship until they have successfully completed their second year of practicum in the MSU Psychological Clinic.

Externship activities should be planned as part of the ICTP process and must be described in the ICTP. The student is advised that not all proposed externships will meet the approval of the Clinic Director and DCTs. Sometimes concerns about the quality of the supervision, availability of hours, liability issues, etc. may lead to a rejection of the externship portion of the ICTP. In these cases, all parties will work together to try to identify alternative clinical sites/training activities to meet the student's clinical competency needs and career goals.

Students MUST sign up for practicum credit while on their externship. As noted above, externship hours can be counted as practicum hours on the APPI form and on internship applications.

Students proposing an externship must also be sure to complete all necessary paperwork at MSU and at the externship site. Some of the MSU paperwork includes an externship evaluation form (obtained from the Clinic Director) that the student must complete for each externship experience. This evaluation form provides valuable feedback to the Clinic Director, the DCT, and the clinical faculty about the externship experience for future students.

Other Training Experiences

Peer supervision experiences may be available to advanced students via working with a beginning student on an assessment case and participating in group supervision for a treatment team. Clinic Coordinators obtain extensive experience with phone interviews for potential clients. Many CIG labs offer lab-based experiences that may count as clinical hours and include supervision. In these cases, the faculty in the lab often serve as supervisors. Finally, the CIG sometimes offers program-wide clinical trainings open to the whole group.

Supervision and Treatment/Assessment Teams

While in the MSU Psychological Clinic, students are assigned supervisors for their psychotherapy cases, their assessment cases, and their psychotherapy groups. In addition, many students participate in Treatment Teams that include substantial group supervision and didactic experiences.

Psychotherapy Supervision

Each year, students are assigned a primary supervisor for their psychotherapy cases with whom they meet weekly for 1-hour, individual clinical supervision. Supervision sessions typically involve an evaluation/discussion of the past week's session(s) focusing on topics such as therapeutic process/relationship issues, treatment techniques, and application of science to practice. Psychotherapy supervisors also review and edit all of the students' psychotherapy diagnostic assessment reports to ensure that case conceptualizations, diagnoses, and treatment plans are science-based and appropriate for the presenting problem and individual characteristics of each client. Clinical supervisors review students' videotaped sessions and give direct feedback in supervision on therapy techniques and process. This will occur with more frequency in the first year, but all students will be observed via video, in line with APA's standards.

Students are usually assigned a different psychotherapy supervisor for each year in the program. This ensures that the student receives training in diverse treatment orientations, modalities, and developmental periods. Typically, the supervisory transition occurs in May of each year, such that the supervisory year runs from May to April of each year. Students submit preferences for supervisors in the spring term prior to the transition. Students should discuss their supervisory preferences with their advisors to help ensure that supervisory experiences are in line with their competency and career goals.

Assessment Supervision

Students also meet with assessment supervisors who are assigned based on the type of assessment in which they have expertise (e.g., personality, child cognitive, etc.). Assessment supervision entails guidance on selection of assessment instruments, review of scoring procedures, and test interpretation and report preparation. As with the psychotherapy supervision, this supervision focuses heavily on the development of empirically supported hypotheses and conclusions about each case. Meetings with assessment supervisors are scheduled on an as needed basis.

Group Psychotherapy Supervision

Students are assigned a supervisor for their group psychotherapy to discuss each group session, plan for future sessions, and evaluate treatment progress. Supervisors are assigned depending on the location of the group. Off-site groups will often utilize an off-site supervisor, whereas groups run out of the MSU Psychological Clinic have CIG faculty or adjuncts as supervisors.

Treatment/Assessment Teams

The MSU Psychological Clinic has four in-house, evidence-based clinical teams aimed at integrating science and practice via group supervision, didactics, and treatment-specific data collections. These teams include: a) a clinical team focused on behavioral therapy/assessment of autism spectrum disorder cases; b) an interpersonal-psychodynamic treatment team with children and adults suffering from a range of psychological disorders; c) a cognitive-behavioral team focusing on a range of childhood disorders; and d) a learning assessment team focusing on learning disorders in young adults. Students are placed on a team by indicating interest on their practicum preference forms (completed each year the student is in practicum). All students will be on at least one team during their time in the Clinic, and usually students have the opportunity to be on more than one team.

Other Didactics and Practicum Credit Hours

At the start of the official practicum in the fall of the student's 2nd year in the program, all beginning practicum students participate in an intensive pre-practicum seminar focused on clinical interviewing, diagnostic assessment, and multicultural competence. In addition, each summer that they are at MSU, students also participate in the two-hour, bi-weekly, summer CSFs that serve as a Clinic Director-guided group supervision. Finally, and as noted above, students who are on treatment/assessment teams participate in directed readings and group discussions about team-related clinical and research issues – these typically do not meet over the summer.

Students must register for 1 credit of practicum (PSY 994) per semester for each fall/spring semester in which the student is completing a practicum in the MSU Psychological Clinic or an externship. Importantly, no practicum credits are required in the summer, even when the student is completing practicum during the summer months.

Detailed Outline of Training Activities by Year

Pre-Practicum (1st Year in Program)

- MSU Psychological Clinic Orientation in spring semester
- Two comprehensive assessments completed in the MSU Psychological Clinic in spring semester and summer

First Practicum Year (2nd Year in Program)

- In MSU Psychological Clinic from September-May
- Pre-practicum course in fall
- Psychotherapy cases
 - 10 hours (minimum) of therapy per month (carry ~3 cases, or whatever is necessary to meet the requirement)
 - 1-hour, individual face-to-face supervision
 - Might be a member of a treatment/assessment team requiring additional didactics and supervision
- Assessment
 - One assessment in spring term and serve as a member of the Learning Assessment Team, serving predominantly RCPD population
 - Assessment supervision (on an as needed basis)

Second Practicum Year (3rd Year in Program)

- In MSU Psychological Clinic from May-May
- Pre-practicum course in fall
- Psychotherapy cases
 - 12 hours (minimum) of therapy per month (carry ~4-5 cases, or whatever is necessary to meet the requirement)
 - 1-hour, individual face-to-face supervision
 - Might be a member of a treatment/assessment team requiring additional didactics and supervision
 - Intention is to offer breadth of training this year
- Assessment
 - 3-4 comprehensive assessments or the equivalent (must total 9 assessments by program completion)
 - Assessment supervision (on an as needed basis)
- Group Psychotherapy
 - Work towards the 2 credits in group psychotherapy

Third Practicum Year and Beyond (4th Year in Program and Beyond)

- Continue to engage in clinical training experiences, as outlined in the ICTP. This may include psychotherapy cases, assessment, and/or group therapy in the MSU Psychological Clinic or on externship.
 - Students should ensure they are meeting the following MINIMUM requirements for clinical training in our program:
 - Accrue a minimum of 600 face-to-face hours by October 31st of Year 4 of Practicum (Year 5 of the program). (*Note: students who successfully match for internship are often closer to 800 hours*)
 - Accrue a MINIMUM of 200 hours across the 4th and 5th years combined – this means that all students will have more than 600 hours when they leave our program, as 600 must be accrued by October 31st, and students are required to continue practicum through their 5th year.
 - Complete 9 total assessments in the MSU Psychological Clinic
 - Complete 2 group credits in the MSU Psychological Clinic and/or through externships

Pre-doctoral Internship

All students must complete an American Psychological Association (APA) approved, predoctoral clinical internship. This is typically an off-campus, 2000-hour internship placement that meets both APA internship requirements and satisfies the student's Doctoral Guidance Committee requirement that the internship training complements their clinical science training. Internships are an integral component of the doctoral training experience that completes the competencies with regard to clinical skills necessary for the Ph.D. in clinical psychology.

As noted above, students are required to have an approved dissertation proposal and a passed Comprehensive Examination to apply for internship. CIG faculty and the DCT will not submit letters of recommendation unless both of those requirements are met. The list of internship sites must also be reviewed and approved by the Doctoral Guidance Committee prior to the application deadline. Finally, students should ensure that they meet all requirements for each internship site (e.g., prior registration for the Selective Service for VA hospitals) prior to developing the internship list site and applying for programs.

At the end of the internship, the student must complete the Internship Completion form, signed by the Internship Training Director. This form is required for graduation and must be filed in their student record in the Department of Psychology. Importantly, the DCT meets with all students applying to internship during the summer and fall before applications are due to review these procedures and assist in the application process.

3.4 English Language Proficiency Requirement

All international applicants and applicants whose first language is not English must be able to be proficient in English as a condition for regular admission to Michigan State University. Such applicants will be required to demonstrate their proficiency by meeting certain minimum standards.

The English competency tests (TOEFL, IELTS, PTE A, etc.) are designed to give graduate program admissions committees some information to judge potential for success.

A reasonable level of English competency (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) are important skills for student success in the nationally- competitive MSU graduate education environment.

The policy of requiring English language test scores, and the minimum University scores for each kind of test (TOEFL, IELTS, PTE A, etc.) acceptable to MSU are established by the University Committee on Graduate Studies. The policy and scores are in the Academic Programs catalog and available

here: <http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.asp?Section=111#s335>.

The MSU English Language Center provides the necessary expertise for interpretation of the scores and is the Grad School's partner for this activity.

There is a process for **automatic** waivers and for **non-automatic** waivers of the requirement of test scores for applicants "whose first language is not English".

AUTOMATIC waivers by the Office of Admissions:

- Bachelor's degree earned in the U.S. (or other English-speaking country). If a copy of the (old) English language competency scores is available, please send to Admissions. The BA or BS program should be a regular 4-year degree the majority of credits earned in the U.S. (or other English-speaking country), not 100% online, not an "experiential" degree that is based on credit for life experiences and/or not earned at a branch campus in a non-English-speaking country.
- Bachelor's degree earned at MSU, the majority of credits earned while on our campus.
- Master's degree earned at an AAU institution (see <https://www.aau.edu/who-we-are/our-members>) on a U.S. campus. Helpful if English language competency scores are included (even if old) for the student's admission into the master's program

NON-AUTOMATIC waivers process:

PRIOR to submitting an RAF, please request the waiver and wait for a response.

1. A letter of request (can be an email) from Department Chair or School/Program Director justifying why the English competency tests score should be waived.

By way of example, reasonable justifications might include (but not limited to) one or more of these:

- Full-time work experience in the U.S. for 2+ years (in an English-speaking environment)
 - Letter of support or comment from the MSU English Language Center (ELC)
 - Non-AAU institution earned Master's degree earned in the U.S. or other English-speaking country.
 - Admission of a sponsored student who is funded to study English prior to academic coursework and/or who will take an English competency exam once s/he arrives on campus. These students are provisionally admitted, but still need a score prior or a waiver.
 - International applicants for 100% ONLINE graduate programs.
2. Letter (email) from the Chair or Director should have the additional approval (i.e. signature or email sign-off) from the collegiate (lead) Graduate Associate Dean.
 3. Letter (email) should then be sent to the Dean of the Graduate School, Graduate School, Chittenden Hall; 466 W. Circle Dr.; East Lansing MI 48824 OR approvals@grd.msu.edu

The Graduate School will make a decision after reviewing the material (and/or consulting with the ELC).

If approved, the Graduate School will send the request and approval (for regular admission) to Admissions. If approved for provisional admission, the department, college and Admissions will be notified.

If not approved, a response will be sent to the requesting unit with a copy to the appropriate college dean's office.

3.5 University Residency Policies and Issues Related to Tuition

In-state tuition rates depend upon your residency status. A year of residence is made up of two consecutive semesters during which you complete credits at the level of full-time status of graduate work in each semester.

The full university policy on residency is detailed here:

<https://reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/notices/Residency.aspx>

Tuition rates will typically not be an issue for you, as the 4 years of guaranteed funding (via assistantships and the like) cover the cost of your tuition, up to a maximum of 15 credits. However, if you exceed that 15 credit limit, you will be responsible for the tuition costs. Moreover, if you register for credits when you are not covered by an assistantship that pays tuition, you will be charged for those credits.

3.6 Dual Enrollment for Undergraduates

The Psychology Department and its six graduate programs do not offer the option for undergraduates to seek admission to the programs for dual enrollment in undergraduate/graduate degree programs in Psychology.

4 Selection of Thesis/Dissertation Advisor

4.1 Overview

Your advisor is a significant person in your life as a graduate student. Be sure you meet on a regular basis. Your advisor is your best source for information about your scholarship, and career development. Your advisor also likely knows about sources of funding you might be able to tap into, conferences that you should attend, experiences you should gain, and the journals you should target for publishing your work.

Establishing a strong collaborative relationship with your advisor is one of the essential element that helps to support your progress through the Ph.D. program, as well as your scholarly and professional development. Developing a relationship that is based on respect, professionalism, and intellectual support, and which is guided by sensitivity to the needs of students and the diversity of backgrounds among and across student and mentors is a process for which both the faculty and the Department in general play an important role. In addition to establishing and monitoring policies such as those outlined in this handbook, the Department and the faculty strive to keep open lines of communication about these policies with student. Faculty mentors should meet regularly with their students, provide constructive feedback about their academic work, and facilitate their development as scientists, scholars, and practitioners.

Graduate students also have a role to play in the cultivation of productive mentor-mentee relationships. Staying informed about and adhering to University and Departmental procedures, following University and program requirements, and being forthcoming with your advisor and your guidance committee(s) about your areas of progress and of struggle during your time in the program are important elements to shaping these relationships in positive ways.

It is in the interests of both the student and their faculty advisor to identify any challenges that arise in their relationship, to address them with one another constructively, and to seek out guidance from others who can help to provide guidance should issues persist. The Graduate Program Director or other faculty members within the Department can be useful in this capacity.

You and your advisor may choose to develop an individualized development plan such as those are modeled and described here: <http://caff.e.grd.msu.edu/About>

4.1.b Guidelines for Students in the Clinical Program

Frequent communication between students and faculty is vital. Once-a-year contact between a student and his/her faculty advisor is a minimum requirement, yet not sufficient for adequate progress to occur. Regular scheduled meetings between students and faculty advisors are encouraged in order for students to stay on track in the program. Students are encouraged to stay in touch with the faculty advisor and committee members on a regular basis. The student's faculty advisor needs to know when the student's graduate work (i.e., coursework, research, practicum, and assistantships) is proceeding well and also when it is not. Personal problems or life circumstances sometimes interfere with a student's ability to complete degree requirements in a timely fashion. Faculty members can, if informed, provide necessary support and problem solving in order to minimize the delays in degree completion and to prioritize the objectives.

4.1.f Guidelines for Students in the Social Program

Students will select a primary research advisor either before beginning graduate school, or in the first few weeks.

There are instances when a student or research advisor decides to discontinue this relationship. In this event, the student is expected to select another research advisor immediately.

The functions of the research advisor are:

1. The advisor has the responsibility of advising the student on matters related to a satisfactory program of study.
2. The advisor makes recommendations about specific courses, where necessary or desirable.
3. The research advisor, along with members of the student's master's thesis committee (see below), has the responsibility to report the student's progress through the program to the S/P faculty during its regular evaluation of students.

During the course of a student's program, each student will select three faculty committees: a Master's Guidance Committee, Doctoral Guidance Committee, and a Dissertation Committee. These committees oversee the student's progress through the program. Their membership may be identical, overlapping, or completely independent. Membership on any of the committees is at the invitation of the student, but it is the right of a prospective member to decline. Membership on the committees is flexible; thus a member may resign at any time, either at the member's own request or at the request of the student. Of course, when a resignation occurs, for whatever reason, it is the responsibility of the student to replace that member with a qualified person.

4.2 Dealing with the Unexpected

If your advisor/committee chair leaves the University before you are finished with your degree, you should discuss your options with the faculty in your Graduate Program. In some cases it may make sense to change advisors. In other cases, you may be able to arrange to finish your degree with your current advisor in a long-distance relationship. Please contact the Graduate Programs Director to help you work through any problems departure of your advisor may cause.

If your advisor is unable to continue in that capacity, your options depend on where you are in the process. If you are close to the beginning of your program, it probably makes sense to find another advisor. If you are close to finishing, you should contact the Graduate Programs Director to explore possible arrangements.

If you are unable to continue to work with your advisor because of personal difficulties in the relationship, contact the Graduate Program Director. The Graduate Program Director will advise you of the options available to you and assist you as you navigate the issues in this relationship and develop a plan for addressing the issues in the relationship or identifying a different advisor.

5 Formation of the Guidance Committee

5.1 Overview

Your committee is an extension of the advisor, in many cases. You should see your committee as a resource. The members are there to help guide you in your graduate career, along with your advisor. Put a lot of thought into choosing the faculty on your committee(s). They should be knowledgeable in key aspects of your research, accessible, and strong scholars. Your program may have its own deadlines about when you must select the members of this committee (see below for additional details).

5.2 Selection of the Guidance Committees

For the Master's Guidance Committee, the committee requirement is for a minimum of three members including your Chair. The restrictions on committee membership include:

- The Chair of your Guidance Committee must be a Psychology Department faculty member within your Graduate Program
- 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 maintain a courtesy appointment) or a regular faculty member from outside the Psychology Department.

You can have an additional (4th) committee member who can be an adjunct faculty member. Your committee membership is reviewed and must be approved by the department's Graduate Program Director.

It is occasionally appropriate for a student to want a fixed-term (non-tenure-stream) faculty member from MSU or a regular faculty member from another University to serve on their committee. In this case, you need to seek approval from the Graduate Programs Director.

If you are developing an individualized, interdisciplinary plan of study that spans two of the department's graduate programs, then you must have one faculty member from each of these programs on your committee. The chair of this committee must come from one of the two programs.

When you begin your Doctoral program, you will need to create a **Doctoral Guidance Committee**.

The **Doctoral Guidance Committee** must consist of four MSU faculty members, at least three of whom are regular faculty members of the Psychology Department (in the tenure track or tenured). The chairperson of the committee must be a member of the student's Graduate Program. No more than one of the four faculty may be Emeritus, or from outside the Psychology Department. If you are pursuing an individualized, interdisciplinary plan of study that spans two of the department's programs, your Doctoral Guidance Committee must contain at least one current faculty member from each of the two programs, and the chair must come from one of them. The Doctoral Guidance Committee members work with you to develop your Plan of Study.

Once you have reached the stage of working on your dissertation, you can select committee members to take advantage of different faculty members' expertise. At that point, you will amend your Doctoral Guidance Committee membership to reflect those changes to the 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. Before that time, should you need to change the membership of your committee, you must file an amendment to your Plan of Study. The Doctoral Plan of Study may be amended through GradPlan.

Regulations concerning **who may serve on Doctoral Dissertation Committees** are the same as those for the Doctoral Guidance / Plan of Study Committee: 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 Graduate Program to which you were admitted (or one of the two if you are pursuing an individual, interdisciplinary plan of study).

Also, the Graduate Director of Psychology has the discretion to approve or not approve a committee or to add a committee member to any Doctoral Committee.

5.2.a Timelines for Doctoral Guidance Committee formation for students in the Behavioral Neuroscience Program

For students who entered the program with a Bachelor's Degree, the Doctoral Guidance Committee must be formed **by September 1 of the 3rd year in the program**.

For students who entered the program with a Master's degree in Psychology or a closely related field, the Doctoral Guidance Committee should be formed by **the beginning of the Spring Semester of the 2nd year in the program.**

5.2.b Additional Elements of The Doctoral Guidance Committee for Students in the Clinical Program

Upon admission into the doctoral program, the student develops a doctoral plan of study and identifies a "cognate". The cognate is an area of expertise within clinical science that is chosen by the student based on his/her career goals. The cognate ensures that CIG students not only show breadth of training in clinical psychology, but also develop scholarly depth in an area that is relevant to their own research and clinical interests. The student gains expertise/training in the cognate area by taking a course(s) in the chosen cognate as well as focusing on the cognate topic in the Comprehensive Examination Paper (see below) and dissertation research. Examples of recent cognates include quantitative methods in behavioral and molecular genetics, dissemination of evidence-based treatment/practice, and the theory and practice of child assessment in the context of trauma.

Notably, some students have chosen to complete a certificate program for their cognate, including the Quantitative Methods and Evaluation Science Program Certification, the Interdepartmental Graduate Specialization in Infancy and Early Childhood, and the Interdepartmental Graduate Specialization in Cognitive Science.

In addition to identifying a cognate, the student must develop a written doctoral plan of study that includes: 1) a brief description of the cognate; b) a brief description of career goals, c) a brief description of the Comprehensive Paper topic (see more details on this paper below); d) a summary of the anticipated dissertation topic at that time, e) the courses to be completed, f) a copy of the Individualized Clinical Training Plan (ICTP; see Practicum section for more details); and (g) a timeline for completion of doctoral plan activities and program requirements. The cognate, comprehensive paper, dissertation, courses, ICTP, and (eventually) internship site should all be chosen so that they form a coherent training program for the specific career path the student wants to take. Each of these aspects of the training should build some competency or skill that will be necessary for the student to be successful in their career. The doctoral plan of study should be developed as soon as possible after completion of the Master's thesis, and **no later than the fall semester of the third year.**

Doctoral Guidance Committee

Based on the student's doctoral plan of study and career goals, the student forms his/her Doctoral Guidance Committee. The committee must consist of at least two CIG faculty members (one as Chairperson) and typically includes faculty member(s) from other areas/departments who have expertise related to the cognate area and dissertation topic. Once again, the Doctoral Guidance Committee should be formed as soon as possible after completion of the Master's thesis, and **no later than the fall semester of Year 3.**

The Doctoral Guidance Committee has three main functions. It reviews and approves the student's doctoral program of study, it reviews and approves the student's ICTP, and it conducts the Comprehensive Examination (see details on the exam below). The committee performs these tasks during a committee meeting with the student when the written doctoral plan of study is reviewed. As with theses and dissertations, the student should send the doctoral plan of study to the committee **no later than 2 weeks prior to the committee meeting date**. During the committee meeting, the Guidance Committee will review the doctoral plan of study, looking for direct connections between the career plans and the other elements of the training plan. Typically, this plan is reviewed at the same meeting at which the proposal for the Comprehensive Paper Proposal is reviewed (see below).

The doctoral guidance committee must consist of **at least two clinical science faculty members** and frequently includes faculty from other areas/departments who have expertise related to the cognate area (for recent examples of outside faculty who have served on these committees, [click here](#)). The individualized doctoral training plan includes, at a minimum, a course in the chosen cognate and a focus on the cognate topic in the comprehensive examination (see below) and dissertation research. Notably, some students have chosen to complete a certificate program for their cognate, including the Quantitative Methods and Evaluation Science Program Certification, the Interdepartmental Graduate Specialization in Infancy and Early Childhood, or the Interdepartmental Graduate Specialization in Cognitive Science.

Doctoral Dissertation Committee

It is required that three members of the dissertation committee must be in the Department of Psychology, and it is recommended that two members be clinical science faculty members. This committee may have the same members as the doctoral guidance committee, but this is not required, particularly if the student needs particular expertise (e.g. specific statistical methods). We also encourage students to include at least one non-clinical faculty on their committee to emphasize connections with psychological science more broadly. If there is no committee member outside of Psychology, the Dean of the College of Social Science will appoint a faculty member to serve as her representative. The final dissertation is orally defended in a public meeting attended by the dissertation committee and interested parties. The doctoral guidance committee and doctoral dissertation committee may or may not be the same faculty members. If there are different members, then the student must submit a form for a change of committee membership.

5.2.d Additional Elements of The Doctoral Guidance Committee for Students in the Ecological/Community Program

To form a dissertation committee, the student develops a dissertation proposal with the assistance of the faculty member chosen as chair. Membership on this committee may be identical to or different from the doctoral guidance committee. The process for proposing, completing, and defending the doctoral dissertation is identical to that described for the Master's thesis. The proposal outlines the dissertation problem and details the method. The proposal is submitted to the other potential committee members. The doctoral dissertation

committee must consist of at least four faculty, three of whom are regular members of the Psychology Department. The chair must be a member of Ecological-Community Interest Group. Once a committee is formed they meet to discuss with the student the final form of the dissertation.

5.2.e Additional Elements of Guidance Committees for Students in the Organizational Program

During the first weeks of graduate school, you select (or are assigned to) a 890 project with a faculty member who serves as your research advisor. Under the direction of this research advisor in PSY 890, you should undertake an increasingly significant role in others' research, with the eventual goal of initiating your own projects. Participation in research projects(s) is required throughout your graduate program.

When you begin your M.A. thesis research, you should enroll in PSY 899 (thesis credits). As soon as you are prepared to begin your thesis work, you should form a master's thesis committee. This committee consists of at least three faculty members, some of whom may be the same people who are on your M.A. guidance committee. The chair of this committee must be an I/O faculty member.

During the first semester following your admission to the doctoral program, you should form a four member doctoral guidance committee. Your Doctoral Guidance Committee must consist of four MSU faculty, at least three of whom are regular (non-adjunct or Emeritus) members of the psychology department. The chairperson of the committee must come from the I/O Interest Group. No more than one of the four faculty may be Adjunct, Emeritus, or from outside the Psychology Department. You and your guidance committee will jointly develop a doctoral program of study, consisting of courses, seminars, research and professional experiences that will facilitate the development of your competence in areas outlined earlier in this document. Failure to provide a completed plan of study by one year after your admission to the doctoral program will result in denial of registration in any research level courses (PSY 999).

5.2.f Additional Elements of Guidance Committees for Students in the Social Program

Functions of the doctoral committee. **Within five weeks following admission to the doctoral program** as a provisional or full candidate, the student will form a doctoral committee. This committee shall consist of at least four faculty members, at least three of whom, including the chairperson, shall be regular members of the psychology department. Often, two members of the committee are SP faculty members.

The functions of this committee shall be:

- To consult with the student concerning the program of study at the doctoral level that would maximize his or her development as a professional social and/or personality psychologist.

- To approve a program of study appropriate to the student's interests and consistent with doctoral standards of the department and the college. Included in this program should be those core courses (i.e., PSY 834, PSY 835, PSY 836, PSY 837, PSY 838, PSY 840) that were not included in the student's master's program of study.
- To consult with the student concerning those areas in which there may be deficiencies and to recommend additional course work or other educational experiences to remedy such deficiencies (see recommendations concerning a minor, below).
- It is recognized that changes in the composition of the doctoral committee and/or changes in the program of study may at times be desirable. Such changes may be accomplished at any time by submitting The Amendment of a Doctoral Plan of Study Form. The Dissertation Committee supervises the dissertation and signs off on the proposal and final product. It may be identical to the Doctoral Guidance Committee. However, some students prefer to change their committee makeup to take advantage of different faculty members' expertise.

If the Dissertation Committee is different, you must submit a form to Amend your Doctoral Plan of Study, because the university does not recognize the Dissertation Committee (it is an internal distinction). This committee shall consist of at least four faculty members, at least three of whom, including the chairperson, shall be regular members of the psychology department. Often, two members of the committee are SP faculty members. The fourth member should be someone from outside the department, who takes the place of the Dean's Representative.

6 Thesis/Dissertation Defense and Final Oral Examination

Once your committee chair agrees that the dissertation is ready for defense, schedule the defense meeting. It is typical to give the dissertation document to committee members 3 weeks before the scheduled defense.

The process followed during the dissertation defense is up to the specific Graduate Program. After 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, interdisciplinary plan in which students are spanning two programs, 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.

The Department of Psychology encourages all dissertation committees and doctoral students to arrange for a public presentation of the dissertation as part of, or in addition to, the oral defense. The **Ph.D. Notification of Final Oral Examination** form should be filled out to allow the presentation to be advertised. Announcements and scheduling of rooms must be made three weeks prior to the oral defense.

7 Departmental Policies: Academic Performance

7.1 College Standards

The College of Social Science has a policy about academic standards to which we subscribe. 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 your 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.

7.2 Annual Evaluations

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](#)), graduate students have a right to receive periodic evaluations that assess their 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 Graduate Program Chair) regarding progress toward degree. Students should review and sign a copy of this evaluation letter, which will be filed with the Graduate Office.

Students are required to submit an updated cv each year at the time of the annual review process. The cv is submitted to the Department for inclusion in the student's file.

In addition, you should always feel free to ask your advisor and your committee members how they think you're doing. This sort of informal feedback can often be extremely useful. If you have any concerns, you should have a candid conversation with your advisor and any other faculty members you trust.

If a determination is made that a graduate student's progress or performance is unsatisfactory, he/she will be notified in writing and a copy of that notice will be placed in the student's academic file. If a determination is made that a graduate student's status in the program is in jeopardy, he/she will be notified in writing and provided with specific steps that must be taken within a specific timeframe to improve one's standing. If the graduate student does not meet these requirements to the satisfaction of the Graduate Program faculty, he/she 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.

If a graduate student disagrees with any part of the letter, or any action taken by his/her Graduate Program, the student may submit a written response to the Psychology Department Graduate Office and this response will be filed along with the evaluation letter. A graduate student may also request a meeting with the Department's Graduate Programs Director to discuss any concerns about the evaluation letter or process. Students who believe they have been wrongly suspended, terminated or placed on probation can also request that the Graduate Programs Director 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. [Click here to read](#)

more about the Psychology Department's [Graduate Student Grievance Committee Hearing Procedures](#).

7.2b Evaluation/Review Procedures for Students in the Clinical Program

We expect that all students admitted into our program will complete their degrees, and the vast majority do so. The path to getting a Master's and doctoral degree involves a lot of hard work, but we hope our students find the work intellectually exciting and rewarding. Master's and doctoral degrees require extensive interaction and collaboration between faculty and students. The faculty members in the CIG are expected to work closely as mentors and advisors so that students can graduate in a timely fashion and enter into a fulfilling professional career.

Evaluating Progress and Core Competencies

Students must meet minimum standards of competency in their courses, clinical work, and research which are assessed via instructor, clinical supervisor, externship supervisor, and faculty evaluations. Evaluations of "Meets Expectations" indicates that the competency is at the minimal level expected for a student at that level of development in the program. Higher ratings indicate that the competency is at or above the level for a student at that level of development in the program. In addition to these CIG expectations, all students must also meet the University requirements of maintaining a GPA of at least a 3.0 for classes on the Master's and doctoral plan of study. Students also may not have more than two graduate courses with grades below a 3.0. A third grade below a 3.0 will result in dismissal from the Graduate School and Clinical Psychology program.

At the end of the fall semester each year, the CIG faculty meet to discuss any emerging issues arising with students who may need more support in meeting program requirements. This is meant to be an informal discussion/check-in to ensure timely implementation of extra support for any student that needs additional help.

The formal evaluation of each student takes place in the spring of each year. At that time, any student who has not yet gone on internship prepares a written Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) that summarizes his/her progress to date as well as plans for the coming year. The faculty advisor reviews the SEF as well as the instructor and clinical supervisor evaluations for that year and student progress on research, lab work, and other program requirements (e.g., comprehensive examination, course grades). The advisor then discusses all of these evaluations/progress with the full CIG faculty during a faculty meeting at the end of spring term. Based on the discussion amongst the full CIG faculty, the faculty advisor completes an Overall Evaluation Form that focuses on strengths, weaknesses, and student plans for the coming year. This evaluation form is co-signed by the advisor and the DCT, on behalf of the clinical faculty. The advisor then meets with the student to discuss the co-signed evaluation form and faculty feedback.

Students who need additional help meeting expectations regarding coursework, practicum, research, or other course requirements will have a performance improvement plan (PIP), or where there are significant concerns, a remediation plan. These include

students who have course, practicum, and/or advisor evaluations of “Below Expectations” on core competencies, and/or those who received a course grade(s) below 3.0 or are not meeting minimum expectations for the MA thesis, the Comprehensive Examination, or the dissertation. In these cases, the CIG faculty discuss whether a PIP (or in more significant cases, a remediation plan) would be helpful to the student in meeting his/her program requirements. This determination is done on an individual basis.

A PIP is typically used as an early intervention strategy when a student is beginning to exhibit struggles in a relatively defined area of core competency. The purpose of the PIP is to remedy issues before they become problematic for the student in completing program requirements. There is no set format for a PIP, but it is a written document that succinctly describes the core competencies to be addressed and the concrete steps that can be taken for progress in that domain. Timelines for completion of these steps are also described. The PIP is developed by the advisor in collaboration with the student, and the DCT reviews the PIP and co-signs with the advisor and the student.

A remediation plan is typically put into place when there are several core competencies rated as “Below Expectations” or there are more serious issues with meeting expectations in a core competency area. As with the PIPs, the advisor and student collaborate on the development of the remediation plan to ensure that the student understands the concerns about progress and is also an active participant in developing the remediation plans and signs of adequate progress/remediation. The remediation plan is co-signed by the student, advisor, and the DCT, and it describes the issues to be addressed and the faculty concerns, the plans for addressing the problems, and the benchmarks for progress and adequate remediation. In addition to the remediation plan, a Remediation Committee is also developed that includes the advisor, the DCT, and another CIG faculty member. The purpose of the committee is to oversee the remediation activities, evaluate progress, and decide whether the student has passed all requirements for remediation. The committee also periodically updates the full CIG faculty on the student’s progress.

The remediation period typically lasts one year (although a different time frame can be agreed upon). Throughout the year, the student and the Remediation Committee stay in contact via email and meetings. The Remediation Committee also meets on its own, without the student, at least once to evaluate the student’s progress on the remediation plan. The committee then evaluates whether they feel that the student has passed the remediation activities. If the remediation activities are not passed, then the committee decides which of the following actions is most appropriate: 1) the remediation period is extended for an additional period of time (a rare occurrence); or 2) the student is dismissed from the program. The committee forwards their recommendation to the full CIG faculty for their discussion and final vote during the next CIG faculty meeting.

Once a decision is made, the DCT writes a formal decision letter to inform the student of the decision. This decision letter includes an evaluation by the faculty about the extent to which the student was successful in remediating the areas of concern and how this led to the decision by the CIG faculty. The remediation plan and decision letter are documented in the student’s file.

7.2d Evaluation/Review Procedures for Students in the Ecological/Community Program

It is important to the Ecological-Community Psychology faculty that students have a clear understanding at all times about how well they are progressing through the Program. To that end, we strongly encourage students to maintain frequent contact with their advisor, employer and instructors, and to proactively seek advice about how they are doing and what knowledge, skills and experiences they still need to attain. In addition, annual meetings are held to provide written feedback about how well students are progressing.

Annual Meetings

Annual meetings to discuss students' progress in the program as well as their future plans are scheduled at least once a year. Meetings are comprised of the student and two regular faculty members within the graduate program, and every effort will be made to include the chairperson of the student's research committee in these meetings. Areas discussed in these meetings include: career goals, intervention in the community, research skills; course work; financial support; and other educational experiences. An annual review summary will then be written by the faculty members present in the meeting (and the student's advisor if that person was not in the meeting). Students will have an opportunity to review this statement before it is submitted into their official department file. See section 3.2 of the Psychology Department Graduate Student Handbook for more details about annual evaluations.

If a determination is made at any point in the year that a graduate student's progress or performance is unsatisfactory, they will be notified in writing and a copy of that notice will be placed in the student's academic file. If a determination is made that a graduate student's status in the program is in jeopardy, they will be notified in writing and provided with specific steps that must be taken within a specific timeframe to improve their standing. If the graduate student does not meet these requirements to the satisfaction of the majority of the Graduate Program faculty, they will 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.

In the case of a student violating academic or professional integrity (see Section 5.1 of the Psychology Department Graduate Student Handbook), dismissal from the program may be immediate if agreed upon by the majority of the Graduate Program faculty.

7.2e Evaluation/Review Procedures for Students in the Organizational Program

Student Evaluation

The program has a number of formal and informal mechanisms for providing feedback to you with respect to progress through the program. An obvious example is formal grades at the completion of each course. Also, as you work on research, continuing contacts with your research advisor and committee provide a good deal of informal feedback.

In the doctoral program, three major evaluations are made. First, after the completion of the master's thesis, the student's master's thesis committee votes on admitting the student to doctoral candidacy. The full I/O faculty must support admission to the Ph.D. program. Second, once in the doctoral program, the student must complete a comprehensive exam. Finally, a dissertation must be completed and approved. The evaluation in each case is made by the appropriate committee (i.e., full faculty, comprehensive exam,, or dissertation committee, respectively).

In addition, in the spring semester of each academic year, the members of the I/O Interest Group faculty meet to consider each student's progress. Progress is assessed by ascertaining the degree to which you are meeting the commitments made to your guidance committee in your plan of study, satisfactory course work, performance on teaching/research assignments, progress on your own thesis or research efforts, and performance in other consulting, internship, or fieldwork. An effort is made to collect relevant information from students and faculty. In this regard, you should take responsibility to communicate your achievements.

The intent of these annual evaluations is to make a joint faculty-student assessment of your progress and future educational needs and goals.

You are responsible for keeping the Department of Psychology informed of progress through your graduate training. This includes submitting and updating if necessary your masters and Ph.D. plans of study. In addition, there are forms regarding master's proposal and defense, and forms regarding your Ph.D. proposal and defense that must be completed and submitted to the department. .

Appropriate recording forms are available on the Department's web site at <https://psychology.msu.edu/students/grad/currentstudent/list-of-handbooks>.

7.2f Evaluation/Review Procedures for Students in the Social Program

Evaluation of students in the program takes several forms. All students receive grades each semester that reflect the quality of their formal course performance. In addition, there is a formal evaluation of every student either once or twice each academic year (see below).

All MA level students (not yet admitted to PhD program) will be reviewed in Fall and Spring.

All PhD level students will be reviewed annually in the Spring.

What to submit. For those submitting materials in the Fall, include: 1) your list of activities in the past semester and plans for next semester, and 2) your vita.

For those submitting materials in the Spring, include: 1) your list of activities in the past semester and plans for next semester, 2) your vita, and 3) your research statement.

When to submit: In both Fall and Spring, your materials are due on **the last day of classes**.

You can find the last day of classes for each semester at:
<https://www.reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Calendar/Academic.asp>.

Who to submit materials to: Please send your materials to all of the social-personality faculty on or before the due date at socialfaculty@psy.msu.edu.

When faculty will meet: Faculty will meet to discuss students during Finals Week of the relevant semester. Soon afterwards, students receive a letter of evaluation from the S/P faculty, summarizing this review of their progress in the program.

7.3 Leaves of absence

Students may request a leave of absence. The request must come after consultation with your advisor. You and your advisor should prepare a memo to the Graduate Programs Director 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 Graduate Programs Director approves your leave, the he/she 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.

Note that if you are not registered for two semesters in a row, then you must complete an application for readmission. (This is just a form; it is not the full application that you filled out for admission, and there is no fee.) 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 Department's Graduate Programs Administrator.

7.4 Your Departmental Files

The 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. For example, this file will include your Master's Plan of Study Form, the forms at the end of your Master's program, your Doctoral Plan of Study, your Comprehensive Exam Report, the form approving your Dissertation Proposal and the Dissertation and Oral Examination Form. Any form that you submit to the Graduate office will be placed in your Academic File. Copies of your annual evaluation letters 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, simply make a request to the Graduate Programs Administrator.

The second file is your **Personnel File** which contains the records of your employment. Appointment forms and evaluations of your performance are stored in your Personnel File. You also have the right to review this file. To do so, make a request to the Graduate Office Administrator. According to the GEU contract this request must be in writing, and you are limited to three viewings a year.

7.5 Deferred Grades in Courses

A deferred (DF) grade is given for graduate students who are passing a course, but for reasons acceptable to the course instructor, cannot complete the course during the regularly scheduled course period.

Students who receive a DF grade marker must complete the course work and instructors must report the final grade within **6 months (190 calendar days) after the last class day of the particular term of instruction**. Students may request a 6-month extension of this deadline from the instructor, which instructors may grant by accessing the form on the Registrar's web site (Administrative Action/"Extension of Conditional Grade").

If a student fails to complete the course work by the announced deadline, the DF grade marker will automatically be changed to DF/U-Unfinished. To receive credit in the course, the student must reenroll in the course.

This policy does not apply to thesis or dissertation courses.

A DF/U does not affect a student's overall GPA. Therefore, it does not impact your compliance with Graduate School and departmental GPA requirements. However, you cannot fulfill course requirements if you have a DF/U grade for a course that is **required** by your program.

8 Departmental Policies: Integrity and Safety in Research and Scholarship

The related enterprises of scholarship and research are built upon honesty and integrity. Without these, we could not progress or even survive as a field of inquiry. When you become a graduate student in Psychology, you make an implicit promise to your classmates, your faculty, and your profession to conduct yourself in a scrupulously honest and upright way. If you fail to keep this promise, the consequences to yourself and everyone you work with are very serious. The same standards apply to faculty conducting research.

8.1 Responsible Conduct of Research

Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research is essential in the preparation of future scholars and professionals. An understanding of the issues concerning the conduct of

research in an increasingly complex world has become critical in successfully navigating the research landscape.

To help prepare Michigan State University graduate students for their future scholarly work, a plan for providing the foundation of responsible conduct has been developed in coordination with the Graduate School, the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies Office, and college associate deans for graduate education. The plan is predicated on the principles that a basic understanding of issues is necessary through didactic training and a periodic reinforcement of the principles through discussion. It is the belief that this plan will provide a foundation for all graduate students as well as others pursuing a career in research and will offer the basic information to meet most, if not all, federal agency granting requirements.

The RCR requirements for all graduate students is presented below.

RCR guidelines

Department of Psychology

If you entered the program in 2016 or prior, you may follow the guidelines outlined in the August 2018 Graduate Programs Handbook or you may choose to follow the new policies outlined below. Language from the handbook as follows:

In line with departmental and university policy, you are expected to engage in formal training related to research ethics. The requirement is at least 5 hours of formal training in one's first year and 3 hours each year after that until program completion. Each individual should consult with his/her advisor to plan training for the year.

For all other students (entering Fall 2017 and later), here are the RCR requirements to fulfill both The Graduate School and Department of Psychology requirements:

**note: these are listed by year in the program; if you have not fulfilled requirements for prior years, you are obligated to complete those prior to completing your degree and ideally as soon as possible.*

Before you complete your degree, you must satisfy the following:

1. Completed 7 CITI modules (described below)
2. A minimum of 6 total hours of discussion-based training (i.e., not online modules)
3. 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+.

Please note: MSU includes completion of RCR requirements and evidence of IRB approval for theses and dissertations as requirements for degree completion (MA, Ph.D).

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 (in <http://Train.ORA.msu.edu>) • Human Research Protection/ IRB Certification (in <http://Train.ORA.msu.edu>) • 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 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 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 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 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 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 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.

For students graduating with a terminal MA:

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.

Discussion-based training occurring in years 1-2

Although the Graduate School does not require discussion-based training in years 1-2 for Ph.D. 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 for any such discussion-based training that is conducted *in the Department* (i.e., in coursework or professional development seminars) 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, in counting forward these hours, students may only apply a maximum of 2 hours of this year 1-2 discussion-based training into any of the 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 insures 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 the google form provided by the Associate Chair. It should be updated as activities are completed and updated no later than April 15 of each academic year so that the Graduate Secretary 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 insure continuity and consistency in decision-making.

In line with departmental and university policy, you are expected to engage in formal training related to research ethics. The requirement is at least 5 hours of formal training in one's first year and 3 hours each year after that until program completion. Each individual should consult with his/her advisor to plan training for the year.

However, for students in the Clinical Program, you are **required** to take the 3-credit Ethics course (PSY 925) during your second year in the program (see Master's and Doctoral Course Requirements above).

While there are a variety of options for completion of this requirement, we would encourage first year students to complete the Epigeum online course for the Social and Behavioral Sciences (available through the Graduate School website) to fulfill 5 hours of training. Second year students can fulfill their 3 hours of training by participating in certain courses offered by their program.

Other means of completing training in subsequent years may include additional optional Epigeum supplemental activities, ethics coverage in courses, RCR workshops offered by the Graduate School, reading articles and books related to ethics in your subdiscipline, etc. Other readings and activities may be substituted with approval from your advisor. Students are responsible for documenting fulfillment of ethics training requirements.

Find the Graduate School resources on research integrity here:

<https://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity>

These hours completed as part of RCR need to be documented yearly through

<https://www.egr.msu.edu/secureresearchcourses/>.

You can find registration links and a syllabus for a series offered by the Graduate School on RCR here: <https://grad.msu.edu/rcr>

These are eight 1.5 hour workshops, tracked through the SABA system, that help to fulfill your RCR training requirements.

1.2 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. These are the points we can all agree on. Failure to follow these guidelines leads to dire consequences for those involved. However, academic integrity refers to much more. Academic integrity is more than just a set of rules - it is a way of life, a state of mind. It means that we must always think about the consequences of our choices, for ourselves, our Department, and our University. Academic dishonesty is not simply a personal failure. It is a failure of the mentoring system and a failure of the evaluation system.

As a field, Psychology has a Code of Ethics that we are governed by. Please familiarize yourself with this code.

The University also has a statement on *Integrity of Scholarship and Grades* in **MSU Spartan Life**. These are important starting points for your continual exploration of this topic. It is appropriate for you to have ongoing discussions with your advisor about integrity 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.

If you have questions about ethical concerns, start by initiating conversation with your advisor. If this is not possible, there are other resources in the Department and in the University to help you resolve these issues. The Chair and Graduate Programs Director of 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.

Ethical Violations. We expect you (and the faculty) to adhere to the high ethical principles of our profession and University as you conduct your research, scholarship, and professional activities. If you violate these principles, you will face sanctions proportional to the gravity of your infraction. Disciplinary action for ethical violations can include dismissal

from your graduate 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.

For students in the Clinical program, your behavior is expected to comply with the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. Failure to do so is considered a serious problem and will result in consequences ranging from the requirement to engage in remedial coursework and/or psychotherapeutic treatment/evaluation to dismissal from the clinical program.

If you are accused of inappropriate behavior, the University has established a structure and process for reviewing and adjudicating alleged violations. Depending on the nature of the concern, the first step in this process may be informal and begin with the two parties trying to resolve the problem in an appropriate way.

If this fails, you should go to the Graduate Director of the Department and enlist his/her help in resolving the problem. Click here to read more about the Psychology Department's [Graduate Student Grievance Committee Hearing Procedures](#).

To read more about the University's judicial structure see *Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University*, Sections 2.4.7 and 4.5.4. Additional description can also be found in Article 5 of the *Graduate Student's Rights and Responsibilities*.

Note: These same procedures can be used to resolve conflicts between faculty and graduate students that do not involve issues of academic integrity. The [Office of the Ombudsman](#) is also available to you to help you resolve conflicts with faculty or University administrators.

8.3 Authorship

8.3.1 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 publically 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.

1. 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 (www.icmje.org) but are not limited to Biomedical Journals.

2. 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 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.

3. 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. A sample agreement that allows for formal recognition and agreement on authorship can be found as an appendix to this policy. 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.

4. 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 him/herself accountable.

5. 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

8.3.2 American Psychological Association's Guidelines on Authorship

The American Psychological Association's Publication Manual can be purchased from the APA directly, from Amazon and other online booksellers, and from most university bookstores. Be careful to make sure the information refers to the most recent edition of the Manual.

According to the APA Publication Guide, 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 Guide also recommends that collaborators discuss early on who the authors will be, and in what order they will be listed. Do not make someone an author without consulting him or her; authorship is a responsibility as well as a right, and so people should assent to such a role.

8.4 Research Rules

All research with human beings must be reviewed and approved by the Social Science/Behavioral/Education Institutional Review Board (SIRB) at Michigan State University. This applies to all Master's and Doctoral research projects, as well as other research you may be involved with. For complete details about the application procedure, please see the website for [SIRB](#).

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.

If your research involves the use of any radioactive, biological, or chemical material that can be hazardous, you must comply with the University regulations governing this area. Please consult with the [web page](#) for the Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) for more details.

You are required to provide documentation of IRB approval (or exemption) of your MA and Ph.D research to the Psychology Department Graduate Office. This can be done by providing a copy of the IRB approval letter.

8.5 MSU Policies on Institutional Data

Please read here for information on MSU policies related to the responsible use, storage, and dissemination of MSU institutional data.

<https://tech.msu.edu/about/guidelines-policies/msu-institutional-data-policy>

8.6 Research Misconduct

MSU has procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in research activities that apply to your work as a graduate student in the Psychology Department.

They are detailed in full here:

https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/faculty-academic-staff/faculty-handbook/misconduct_procedures.html

Engaging in research misconduct is not tolerated by the Psychology Department and may be cause for dismissal from your program, depending upon the nature of the misconduct.

Any allegations thereof will be examined by the program faculty, Graduate Program 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.

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 in beyond, as fellow scholars and scientists have the responsibility to set and enforce norms regarding responsible conduct of research and scholarship.

9 Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution

9.1 MSU Psychology Department Guidelines for the Use of Online Social Networking Sites

The Michigan State University 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. Students should follow these guidelines whether participating in social networks personally or professionally, or whether they are using personal technology or technological resources owned or operated by Michigan State University.

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 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. 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. 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:

<https://cabs.msu.edu/web/msu-social-media-guidelines.html>

9.2 MSU Guidelines Regarding Domestic Violence and Sexual Misconduct and Training

All graduate students are **required to complete an annual online training program** administered by the MSU Title IX office. This training 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.

Program Access:

At the beginning of each academic year, students will receive an email, sent to their MSU email account, with instructions to complete the training program. The training program is provided by MSU's vendor, Student Success. Students will use MSU's secure single sign-on to access the course, but your password and other sensitive information will not be provided to the vendor.

Graduate students who have received a notice to complete the training, but can no longer find the training notice, can access the course by navigating to [MSU's Student Success site](#). Please note, individuals who have not received a training notice will not be able to access the course.

Program Overview:

Online training programs for graduate students include information on the following topics:

- Providing information to identify sex discrimination and sexual harassment, including relationship violence and sexual misconduct
- Raising awareness of the impact of these issues on the campus community and encouraging community members to engage in efforts to end these types of violence
- Advising members of the MSU community about their rights and reporting responsibilities under the *Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy*
- Communicating behavioral expectations for all members of the MSU community as outlined in the policy
- Connecting community members with support and resources

Accommodations:

Individuals who believe they may have an overwhelming or intense emotional reaction to the content of the online training programs should contact the Office of Institutional Equity at (517) 353-3922 or titleix@msu.edu to request accommodation. For reasonable accommodation requests, please contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at (517) 884-7273 (RCPD).

More Information:

For information on MSU's in-person educational programs for undergraduate students, visit our [Learn More](#) page. For more information about student RVSM training, download this [Frequently Asked Questions \[PDF\]](#) document.

9.3 Policies for Addressing Student Conflicts and Grievances

Each right of an individual places a reciprocal duty upon others: the duty to permit the individual to exercise the right. The student, as a member of the academic community, has both rights and duties. Within that community, the student's most essential right is the right to learn. The University has a duty to provide for the student those privileges, opportunities, and protections which best promote the learning process in all its aspects. The student also has duties to other members of the academic community, the most important of which is to refrain from interference with those rights of others which are equally essential to the purposes and processes of the University. (GSRR Article 1.2)

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.)

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 the 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 visa 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 his or her 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.)

This policy was approved by the Psychology Department Faculty in October, 2015.

10 Work-Related Policies

Graduate assistant is a generic term referring to a graduate student who is supported on a graduate assistantship. Graduate assistants are in one of three categories as they relate to policy in this section: research assistants, teaching assistants represented by the Graduate Employees Union (GEU), and teaching assistants not represented by the GEU.

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).

Graduate assistants are appointed on a quarter–time, half–time, or three–quarter time basis. There are two appointment periods during the fall and spring: August 16—December 31 and January 1—May 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.

Summer appointments cover the period from approximately May 16—August 15.

To the extent that current policies and procedures contain provisions about wages, benefits, or other terms and conditions of employment, they are for teaching assistants included in the collective bargaining agreement between Michigan State University and the Graduate Employees Union.

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).

Minimum enrollment for doctoral students who have successfully completed all comprehensive exams is 1 credit.

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.

Any deviation from the maximum enrollment requirements listed above must have the approval of the dean of the college *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 student's department or school 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 or unit director and the Dean of the Graduate School.

For TAs, you can find the details of the most recent GEU/MSU contract governing your position here:

<https://www.hr.msu.edu/contracts/documents/GEU2015-2019.pdf>

Stipend levels are subject to yearly change.

For the latest information, please consult the Human Resources Web site at <https://www.hr.msu.edu/employment/graduate-assistants/stipend-ranges.html>.

Checks are distributed on a biweekly basis. Graduate assistants at any of the three levels may be appointed on a quarter–time, half–time, or three–quarter–time basis with an appropriate adjustment in the stipend. Additional benefits, even though the graduate student does not enroll for 10 credits or more, include the following:

1. Tuition waiver in the amount of 9 credits for fall semester, 9 credits for spring semester, and five credits for summer session. The tuition waiver will be provided during the period of the assistantship, to a maximum of 23 credits per year. For Ph.D. 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 <https://www.hr.msu.edu/ua/hiring/graduate-assistants/no-fringe/>.
2. 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 Michigan State University. If the student does not have a graduate assistantship form completed before registering for summer session, he or she 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.
3. 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), he/she will be assessed tuition for all credits carried, and those who are not Michigan (in-state) residents will be assessed out-of-state tuition.

10.1 Teaching Assistantships

10.1.1 Assignment and Evaluation Procedures

Teaching assignments are administered by the Graduate Program Director, 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, that make good use of graduate student skills, and that provide training experiences for graduate students to improve your preparedness for positions that involve designing and teaching your own course(s).

TAs are evaluated every semester, using a standardized rating form that is completed by the instructor of the course for which you served as a TA. The form queries about your performance in a number of important domains and provides an opportunity for the instructor to give qualitative feedback on your strengths and areas in need of improvement. Any areas of concern that are identified in this evaluation process will be reviewed by the Graduate Program Director and may include discussions between the instructor, the graduate teaching assistant, and potentially members of the student's guidance committee. If there are serious deficiencies in performance, the Graduate Program Director will develop a plan with the student for remediation. Serious deficiencies and particularly failures to remediate previously identified deficiencies in fulfilling TA responsibilities will impact your ability to be considered for funding via a teaching assistantship. This information will also be communicated to your faculty advisor and guidance committee for incorporation into your yearly academic performance evaluation.

10.1.2 Levels of TA positions

TA stipend amounts vary by the level of TA position; pay increases as you advance to higher levels.

Level 1 requires that each of the following 3 criteria be met:

- admitted MSU graduate student
- bachelor's degree
- less than two semester's experience as a graduate assistant or full-support fellow

Level 2 is required when each of the following 3 criteria is met:

- admitted MSU graduate student

- master's degree (a JD or LLB is equivalent to masters in determining level); OR 30 or more grad semester credits or equivalent; OR at least two semester's experience as a graduate assistant or full-support fellow
- level 3 required criteria have not been met

Level 3 is required for Teaching (T) when each of the following 3 criteria is met:

- admitted MSU graduate student
- a master's degree or equivalent
- The graduate assistant experience must be in the employing unit or in a department considered relevant by the chairperson or employing unit. The minimum number of semesters shall be 6 in the Psychology Department.

Level 3 is required for Research (R) or Teaching (TE) assistants when each of the following 3 criteria are met:

- admitted MSU graduate student
- successful completion of doctoral comprehensive exams, as defined by the department in which the student is enrolled
- 6 semesters as a graduate Research/Teaching (R/TE) assistant at MSU, or equivalent. The definition of equivalence is left to the discretion of the chairperson of the appointing unit, but it is expected that only experience in research-oriented assignments count toward the 6 semesters of experience as an RA

(Level 3 is not acceptable for Research (R) or Teaching (TE) unless all 3 criteria listed above are met.)

10.1.3 Teaching resources: D2L

You may TA for a course using the D2L platform to support instruction. The University has a number of resources to help you become proficient in D2L.

They are available here:

<https://lib.msu.edu/dls/d2ltraining/>

10.1.4 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 with teaching assistantships involving recitations, discussions, or laboratory sections will be given the Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit (SPEAK) test by the English Language Center upon arrival on campus. Students may submit a current (within two years) Test of Spoken English (TSE) in lieu of the SPEAK test.

Students who do not pass the initial SPEAK test or TSE may not assume teaching responsibilities until they complete English 097, an oral skills course for international

teaching assistants, and pass the International Teaching Assistant oral interview or pass a subsequent SPEAK or TSE test.

The Chairperson of Psychology may request an opportunity for a special review by the International Teaching Assistant Oral Review Board if the student does not pass the initial screening. The Board determines whether the student may be cleared for teaching duties.

If the student fails to pass the *minimum all–University standard* of English proficiency for regular admission status, he or she may not be assigned to do any classroom teaching, including laboratory instruction and recitation or discussion sections, without approval of the English Language Center.

10.2 Research Assistantships

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.

10.2.1 Assignment and Evaluation Procedures

RAs are evaluated every semester, using a standardized rating form that is completed by the faculty supervisor for whom you served as a RA. The form queries about your performance in a number of important domains and provides an opportunity for the supervisor to give qualitative feedback on your strengths and areas in need of improvement. Any areas of concern that are identified in this evaluation process will be reviewed by the Graduate Program Director and may include discussions between the faculty member, the graduate research assistant, and potentially members of the student's guidance committee. If there are serious deficiencies in performance, the Graduate Program Director will develop a plan with the student for remediation. Serious deficiencies and particularly failures to remediate previously identified deficiencies in fulfilling RA responsibilities will impact your ability to be considered for funding via a research assistantship. This information will also be communicated to your faculty advisor and guidance committee for incorporation into your yearly academic performance evaluation.

10.2.2 Levels of RA positions

Level 1 requires that each of the following 3 criteria be met:

- admitted MSU graduate student
- bachelor's degree
- less than two semester's experience as a graduate assistant or full-support fellow

Level 2 is required when each of the following 3 criteria is met:

- admitted MSU graduate student
- master's degree (a JD or LLB is equivalent to masters in determining level); OR 30 or more grad semester credits or equivalent; OR at least two semester's experience as a graduate assistant or full-support fellow
- level 3 required criteria have not been met

Level 3 is required for Teaching (T) when each of the following 3 criteria is met:

- admitted MSU graduate student
- a master's degree or equivalent
- The graduate assistant experience must be in the employing unit or in a department considered relevant by the chairperson or employing unit. The minimum number of semesters shall be 6 in the Psychology Department.

Level 3 is required for Research (R) or Teaching (TE) assistants when each of the following 3 criteria are met:

- admitted MSU graduate student
- successful completion of doctoral comprehensive exams, as defined by the department in which the student is enrolled
- 6 semesters as a graduate Research/Teaching (R/TE) assistant at MSU, or equivalent. The definition of equivalence is left to the discretion of the chairperson of the appointing unit, but it is expected that only experience in research-oriented assignments count toward the 6 semesters of experience as an RA

(Level 3 is not acceptable for Research (R) or Teaching (TE) unless all 3 criteria listed above are met.)

10.3 Vacation Policies

If you have planned trips for the purposes of attending professional meetings or trainings, or personal vacations, it is your responsibility to communicate with your supervisor (the person for whom you are serving as a TA or RA) as soon as possible if those plans will impact your ability to perform TA or RA duties.

10.4 Leave Policies and Grief Absence Policy

10.4.1 Medical Leave for illness, injury, or pregnancy

A graduate assistant unable to fulfill the duties of his or her appointment because of illness or injury shall notify the administrator of his or her major unit as soon as circumstances permit. Similarly, a graduate assistant unable to fulfill the duties of her appointment because of pregnancy shall notify the administrator of her major unit as soon as circumstances permit.

During the illness, injury, or pregnancy the major unit shall adjust (reduce, waive, or reschedule) the graduate assistant's duties as those duties and the assistant's physical circumstances reasonably dictate. If total absence from duties becomes necessary, the major unit shall maintain the stipend of the appointment, provided the graduate assistant is still enrolled, for a period of two months, or to the end of the appointment period or of the semester, whichever should occur first.

The graduate assistant shall have the right to return to the assistantship, within the original terms of the appointment, at such time as he or she is able to reassume the duties of the position.

A graduate assistant planning to take a leave under this policy shall notify the administrator of his or her major unit as soon as circumstances permit.

A graduate assistant who adopts a child shall be entitled to adoption leave of up to two (2) months, the first week of which will be paid by the major unit and the balance of which will be unpaid, to commence on or before the date of adoption as determined by the graduate assistant.

A graduate assistant who becomes a parent by birth and is not otherwise covered by the pregnancy leave policy, shall be entitled to parental leave of up to two (2) months, the first week of which will be paid by the major unit and the balance of which will be unpaid to commence on or before the date of birth as determined by the graduate assistant. Additional unpaid leave may be arranged on an ad hoc basis, as mutually agreed with the major unit.

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 the graduate assistant's 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.

10.4.2 Medical withdrawals

If you need an extended medical withdrawal, you must contact the College of Social Science Office of Student Affairs and Services by calling (517) 355-6675 or in person at 201 Berkey Hall. You may wish to consult with the Graduate Program Director before initiating this process.

10.4.3 Grief Absence Policy

For master's (Plan A), master's (Plan B) with research responsibilities, and doctoral students, it is the responsibility of the student to:

- a) In a timely manner, notify their advisor and faculty of courses in which they are enrolled of the need for a grief absence; notification should occur no later than 1 week from the student's initial knowledge of the situation;
- b) Provide appropriate verification of the grief absence as specified by the advisor/major professor and faculty; and
- c) Complete all missed work as determined in consultation with the advisor/major professor and faculty.

It is the responsibility of the advisor to:

- a) Determine with the student the expected period of absence, with the understanding that some bereavement processes may be more extensive than others, depending upon individual circumstances;
- b) Review verification of the authenticity of a grief absence request upon the student's return; and
- c) Make reasonable accommodations so that the student is not penalized due to a verified grief absence.

If employed as a RA or TA, the graduate student must also notify their employer/supervisor. Both the employer/supervisor and student will swiftly communicate to determine how the student's responsibilities will be covered during their absence.

Graduate TAs should refer to the bereavement policy in GEU CBU Article 18.

10.5 Working hours and related policies

Student employment is of a part-time nature. Student pay rates and personnel policies are based on this premise.

- U.S. citizens and permanent residents cannot work over 29 hours per week on ALL jobs combined to include Graduate Assistantships during the fall and spring semesters.
- If U.S. citizens & 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.
- ALL students may work up to 40 hours per week starting finals week, the periods between semesters, the first week of fall classes and during summer semester.
- No person may be simultaneously employed on the Labor, Salary, and Student Payrolls.

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 insure 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.

10.6 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 plan provides the following coverage:

- a. Fall appointment only: coverage from August 15 to February 14 of the following year.
- b. Fall and Spring appointments—coverage from August 15 to August 14 of the following year.
- c. Spring appointment only—coverage from January 1 to August 14.
- d. Summer appointment only—coverage from approximately May 12 to August 14.

Enrolled students may also insure their eligible spouse and/or dependent children (residing with the insured).

For questions regarding coverage, enrollment or premium payment, contact BCN directly at 1-800- 859-8452. 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. The Human Resources Office is located at 1407 S. Harrison Road, Suite 140A (Nisbet Building), East Lansing, MI 48823 and on the web at <https://www.hr.msu.edu/benefits/graduate-assistants/index.html>; or visit BCN at www.bcbsm.com/msu.

10.6.1 Resources

Find more information about health insurance plans here:

<https://hr.msu.edu/benefits/graduate-assistants/health/index.html>

<https://hr.msu.edu/benefits/graduate-assistants/index.html>

10.6.2 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.

11 Departmental and University Resources

11.1 Funds for travel

Some funds are typically available each year to support student research and travel to present this research at conferences.

A student presenting either a talk or a poster at a conference can request travel expenses from their advisor and from the department.

You can also apply to the Department for a Graduate Office Fellowship. The Department tries to make these funds available for each student annually (typically around \$600). To apply for these funds, submit a request to the Psychology Graduate Programs Administrator 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. If you have support for travel from other sources, please do not apply for these awards as well.

The Council of Graduate Students (COGS) has limited funds available to defray travel expenses. Click [here](#) for more information.

In addition, once during your graduate career at MSU, you may apply for a travel grant from the MSU Graduate School (typically around \$400.00). In order to access these funds the Department must also contribute. Contributions from your faculty advisor will make your request more competitive. You can access the [form](#) from the **Graduate School's website**.

11.2 Funds for research

The Department sometimes has funds available for students to support their thesis and dissertation research. The amount available may vary year to year, but up to \$500 per request is possible (once per year per student). To apply for this money, you need to submit a brief budget to Graduate Programs Administrator.

In addition to whatever funds you obtain from your advisor and the Department, the Graduate School offers **Graduate Student Research Enhancement Awards**. Like their travel support, this award is only made once during your graduate career. These funds are provided to support activities that enhance graduate students' research projects, and categories covered include travel to participate in workshops, data collection, short courses, and extramural laboratory rotations. Under special circumstances, funding requests to purchase supplies and materials relevant to student's research will also be considered. The award may not be used to purchase equipment. The awards are intended to match / supplement funds provided by advisors and departments. Therefore, you should begin this process by requesting some funds from your advisor. You can then request funds from the department and finish by submitting the form requesting the bulk of funds from the Graduate School. There is no deadline for submitting requests, and decisions will be made within 3 weeks of the Graduate School receiving the application. Students must be registered the semester that the funds are awarded. More information on this award (including the application form) as well as other awards and fellowships available from the Graduate School can be located [here](#).

11.3 Internal Funding Opportunities

In addition to the Graduate School Travel Grant and Departmental funds to support research and travel, there are a number of other resources that you might consider:

A. Dissertation Completion award: you must be enrolled in one credit that 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 in the position to defend dissertation that semester to be eligible. See the link [here](#).

B. MSU Emergency Fund: Up to **\$2,000** to support a range of things including medical bills. No specific deadline; decisions are made within three days. See the link [here](#).

C. Graduate Student Research Enhancement Award: up to **\$1000** to travel to a workshop or assist in data collection; not typically used to purchase supplies. One time request with no deadline; decisions made in three weeks. See the link [here](#).

D. COGS Conference Grant: **\$300** to attend an academic conference. It is very easy to get. One time request with decisions made in each semester. See the link [here](#).

E. Future Academic Scholars in Teaching Fellowship Program: **\$2,000** from the graduate school. A full-year program with bi-weekly meetings to learn cutting-edge teaching methods. You must conduct a research project related to teaching. Deadlines to submit an application are at the end of the academic year. See the link [here](#).

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

G. The Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) Scholar Award: **\$2,500**. Given by a student organization that aims to promote diversity in higher education. Selection Criteria: Demonstrated commitment to AGEP goals, and participation in the MSU AGEP Learning Community and Community activities. See the link [here](#).

H. Psychology Department Teaching Assistant Award: **\$200** fellowship given each year to a student who demonstrates excellent performance in their work as a teaching assistant. Students are nominated by faculty members.

I. Joseph L. White Outstanding Student Multicultural Research Award: **\$500** award and certificate presented to a graduate student at the annual Multicultural Psychology Distinguished lecture for outstanding research on multicultural issues defined broadly. Student applications are usually due near the beginning of the spring semester.
<http://psychology.psy.msu.edu/cmpr/OutstandingStudentMulticulturalResearchAward.aspx>

J. Graduate Student Multicultural Research Grant: **\$300** award and certificate presented to a graduate student for proposed innovative and promising research in the area of multicultural psychology defined broadly. Student applications are usually due mid-October and awarded in mid-November.
<http://psychology.psy.msu.edu/cmpr/ResearchGrant.aspx>

K. See <http://staff.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/3gradinf.htm> and <http://grad.msu.edu/funding/> for a more comprehensive list of both internal and external funding opportunities.

L. The Bob and Bets Caldwell Award. **\$4000 award.** The purpose of the 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 criteria 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. Nominations are made by graduate student peers.

11.4 External Funding Opportunities

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 Graduate Office 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 TA 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 and worth at least \$25,000 (direct costs) makes the students eligible for in-state tuition rate. 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 US institution/agency/foundation. Funds obtained through non-competitive processes (e.g., need-based fellowships) or from international sources do not qualify the students for in-state tuition rates. For more information contact The Graduate Programs Administrator.

The National Science Foundation offers Graduate Fellowships. **This part** of the NSF website contains all 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./Ph.D. Fellowships.**

The **Graduate School's website** contains important information about funding opportunities.

11.5 Professional Development Resources

11.5.1 Online Teaching Workshops

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 visit <https://grad.msu.edu/tap>.

11.5.2 The Graduate School

The Graduate School offers a number of career and professional development resources for students across all phases of the doctoral program. These include workshops on teaching that you may find valuable if you plan on teaching a course over the summer semester. For more information, go to <https://grad.msu.edu/teaching>.

11.6 Personal and Well-being Resources

The Psychology Department is committed to supporting the holistic development of each graduate student. Below are a number of resources available at MSU. Please also feel free to contact the Graduate Program Director if you need any additional resources or referrals.

The Counseling Center provides confidential individual and group counseling to all registered students. Click [here](#) for more information.

Staying fit and exercising can decrease stress and increase well-being. MSU's Recreational Sports and Fitness Services offers students, faculty and staff the opportunity to participate in many Intramural Sports and activities on a competitive and recreational level. All skill levels are welcome and there are three different facilities on campus. Click [here](#) for more information.

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

The Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities is available to help ensure full access and support to students with disabilities. Click [here](#) for more information.

11.7 Traveling Abroad

If you travel abroad to conduct any of your research please:

1) Check with the MSU Travel Clinic! They will let you know of any health risks or immunizations. The Travel Clinic also provides information about safety issues around the world. <http://travelclinic.msu.edu>

2) Apply for assistance with travel funding via the Graduate School. If the Graduate School provides funding, they will also provide a MEDEX emergency card.

11.8 Important University guidelines and policies

Find the complete document on Graduate Students' rights and responsibilities here:
<https://grad.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/gsrr/GSRR.pdf>.

Find the University policy on relationship violence and sexual misconduct here:
https://www.hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/university-wide/RVSM_policy.html

Find the University anti-discrimination policy here:
<https://oie.msu.edu/policies/adp.html>

Find information about classroom safety in the event of an active shooter situation here:
<http://comartsci.msu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/resources/safety-guidelines-for-active-shooter1.pdf>