

The background of the cover is a photograph of a brick building with Gothic architectural features, including a prominent stone archway and a window with intricate tracery. A tree with white blossoms is in the foreground on the left, and a dark sign with a circular logo is mounted on the brick wall to the right of the archway.

Experimental Psychology Graduate Programs

Graduate Student Handbook

**Department of Psychology
College of Arts & Sciences
University of Tennessee**

Fall 2023

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INTRODUCTION

Experimental Psychology Program Director's Welcome

On behalf of the Department of Psychology and the Experimental Psychology Program, we wish to welcome you to graduate study at the University of Tennessee – Knoxville. We are pleased, excited, and honored that you chose our graduate program. The goal of our program is to help students become creative, independent, and productive scientists. We hope that you will appreciate that graduate education involves an open and collegial relationship between faculty and students who share responsibility for the learning process.

Our Experimental Program is centered on three core research areas: Neuroscience and Behavior (N&B), Cognitive and Developmental Science (CDS), and Social. Our N&B researchers aim to understand the evolutionary processes underlying behavior, the adaptive functions served by behavior, how behavior develops within the context of biological systems, and the mechanisms by which the nervous system regulates behavior. Our CDS researchers focus on understanding the early ontogeny of action, perception, cognition, and language, and the processes of differentiation, organization, and hierarchical integration of successive phases of behavioral complexity. Faculty members of the Social psychology area manage ongoing research programs geared toward improving our understanding of a wide range of psychological issues, from basic processes that govern how we perceive, make sense of, and relate to the world to solve pressing social problems.

This *Handbook* provides a detailed guide of the Experimental Program's, Psychology Department's, and University's requirements for obtaining a doctoral or a master's degree. You should review the *Handbook* throughout the course of your study. However, please note that you are also responsible for knowing and complying with all the policies set forth in the current version of the *UT Graduate Catalog*.

While graduate education is a highly rewarding experience, it also represents unique challenges, and we strongly encourage each of you to seek guidance from your mentors, directors and department head. Once again, we welcome each of you to UT and we wish you the best during your graduate education.

If you have any questions about the program, the department, the university, or the surrounding community and environment, my door is usually open.

Perhaps more important, Connie Ogle's door is *always* open. I have some institutional knowledge about this place, but Connie has been in the Department since 1984 and knows absolutely everything. If you have any questions about what you need to do or when and how you need to do it, stop by her office.



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Graduate School Introduction

To serve the mission and vision of the Graduate School and preserve the integrity of Graduate Programs at the University of Tennessee – Knoxville, we provide information related to the process of graduate education in each department to all our graduate students. Based on Best Practices offered by the Council of Graduate Schools, it is important that we disseminate detailed information specific to the graduate degrees offered in our program and department. The Department Graduate Handbook does not deviate from established Graduate School Policies <http://catalog.utk.edu/index.php> noted in the Graduate Catalog, but rather provides the specific ways in which those policies are carried out.

Mission Statements

PhD Program: Our program is designed to allow students to select from a variety of specializations oriented toward careers in research, teaching, and application of psychology in academic, institutional, or industrial settings. The program is flexible, individualized, and emphasizes a professional apprenticeship model of training. Indeed, a strength of our program is its emphasis on a professional mentor relationship between faculty and students. Our mission is to develop our graduate students into independent scientists.

Masters Program: The MA program is designed to prepare students for entry into a PhD program. It may be appropriate for students who did not have an undergraduate psychology major or for students who wish to have a stronger background in coursework and research before applying to a doctoral program.

Purpose of the Handbook

This document is intended to provide a more detailed description of the Ph.D. and MA Programs in Experimental Psychology than is available in the Graduate Catalog or in the brochure you received with your application. It is our hope that this handbook will assist you in planning a rewarding educational experience while at the University of Tennessee. However, it is only a guide; before making important decisions, please consult your Advisor, your Committee Chair, or the Director of Experimental Psychology. Students will note that many of the degree requirements (e.g., SAC forms, Doctoral Committee appointment, etc.) are marked or indexed by the completion of certain forms. Each form may be obtained from Connie Ogle, the Graduate Programs Coordinator, in 312C. Completed forms should be returned to Connie for obtaining Department Head signature, filing, copying, and/or forwarding to The Graduate School.

Awareness of Regulations

Graduate students are expected to be aware of, and satisfy, all regulations governing their work and study at the university. Students should be directed to the Graduate Catalog (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/academics/graduate-catalog/>), to *Hilltopics* (<https://hilltopics.utk.edu/>), and to the publications on the Appeals Procedure (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/understanding-your-rights-and-obligations/>) and the Graduate Assistant Handbook (<https://diversity.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/VCDE-GRA-Handbook-FINAL.docx>) available on the Graduate School website (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/>)

Program Structure

The Experimental Program actually consists of three areas: Neuroscience and Behavior (N&B), Cognitive and Developmental Science (CDS), and Social. In fact, the areas differ in the content of faculty research, but share in common the same duties and responsibilities. The Experimental Program follows a democratic decision-making structure in which decisions are determined by faculty vote. The Director of the Experimental Program represents the Experimental Faculty within Departmental and larger University meetings.

General Duties and Responsibilities of Faculty and Graduate Students

The Experimental faculty members are fully committed to the science of Psychology and to mentoring their students to become independent scientists. Our duties as faculty involve research, teaching, and providing service to our respective fields, Department, and University. Graduate students are expected to embrace their role as developing scientists. Students are expected to complete their degree requirements in a timely fashion. Just as importantly, students are strongly encouraged to become fully engaged in their chosen field of study through (a) collaborative and, eventually, independent research, (b) actively reading their field's primary peer-reviewed journals, (c) submitting manuscripts to those journals, (d) becoming members of their field's major society/ies, and (e) presenting their research at the annual meetings of those societies.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applications to our programs will be completed online. Applicants will access the Graduate School website at <http://graduateadmissions.utk.edu/> and complete the application to the Graduate School. At this same site, our Departmental materials will be available, and applicants will upload various items to that application site. Applicants to the Experimental Program should indicate their area of interest: N&B, CDS, or Social. The degree program is either Ph.D. Experimental or MA Experimental, and there are no special admission categories. We encourage applicants who hold either undergraduate or Master's degrees to apply to our Doctoral program, and it should be noted that these degrees do not have to be in the field of psychology. You should look over faculty members' biographical sketches on our website and decide which faculty member's research interests most closely match your own. This is an extremely important aspect of the application process, so be sure to look closely at our faculty profiles and list the faculty in the program with which you'd like to work. The Graduate School requires additional documents from international applicants (i.e., TOELF/IELTS, financial documentation).

For information regarding application to our Programs, please contact our Graduate Programs Coordinator, Ms. Connie Ogle by email at cjogle@utk.edu or by telephone at 865-974-3328.

The Department is fully committed to the goal of increasing the number of ethnic and minority psychologists. To accomplish this goal, we use multiple admission criteria. If you would like more information about UTK, the Psychology graduate programs, or specific research areas, please contact the Chairperson for Affirmative Action, Department of Psychology, UTK, Knoxville, TN 37996-0900. At your own option, you may identify yourself as having minority status on the first page of this application.

UTK is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services.

UTK EEO/TITLE IX/SECTION 504 STATEMENT

The University of Tennessee does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status in provision of educational programs and services or employment opportunities and benefits. This policy extends both to employment by and admission to the University.

The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex or disability in the education programs and activities pursuant to the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

Inquiries and charges of violation concerning Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA or the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) or any of the other above referenced policies should be directed to the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED), 1840 Melrose Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37996 (Ph: 865-974-2498; V/TTY available). Requests for accommodation of a disability should be directed to the ADA Coordinator at the OED office <https://oed.utk.edu/ada/>

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Several types of financial assistance are available to graduate students in our department.

Graduate Assistantships

The Department makes every effort to fund all doctoral students in good standing. We also hope to fund master's students whenever possible.

A graduate assistantship includes receipt of a stipend, plus waiver of tuition and maintenance fees for the entire year including Summer semester. Only the stipend amount is received by the student directly. Stipends are awarded in twelve equal checks distributed monthly from August to July in the academic year in which the student holds the assistantship.

Ordinarily, a student is expected to render service to the Department at the average rate of 20 hr/wk week (50% time) for a period of nine months beginning about the middle of August (when the academic year begins) and ending about the middle of May (when the academic year ends). The average rate should not exceed 20 hr/wk.

Assistantships take one of three forms:

1. *Graduate Research Assistant (GRA)* – students supported by a faculty grant and appointed at the discretion of the faculty PI of the grant in conjunction with the Program Director and Department Head. The stipend amounts of these assistantships may differ from those of the Department, and the waiver of tuition and fees is not always available. Other important facts to remember about grant-supported research assistantships include: (a) they are available dependent upon the presence of faculty grants during any given period of time; (b) the time commitment, duties, and other particulars may differ from those awarded by the Department; (c) they are often restricted by the terms of the grant or contract.
2. *Graduate Teaching Assistants (TA)* – teaching assistants assistant course instructors with such responsibilities as the preparing, proctoring, and grading exams, holding office hours, giving an occasional lecture, etc.
3. *Graduate Teaching Associates (GTA)* – teaching associates are typically advanced graduate students who serve as the primary instructor of an undergraduate course. They are given primary responsibility for all aspects of the course, including the assignment of final grades. GTAs teach these courses under the supervision of a faculty member. Ordinarily, assignment as a Graduate Teaching Associate does not occur until after the completion of College Teaching in Psychology (PSYC 528) and upon the recommendation of the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

The specific assignment is made based on the needs of the Department, availability of funds for assistantships, and the competence of the student as evaluated by the faculty. Recommendations for Graduate Research Assistants, Graduate Teaching Assistants, and Graduate Teaching Associates are made by Program Directors in consultation with the Department Head. Assignments may be revised each semester.

For students who enter without funding, every effort is made to secure funding as early as possible. However, funding is not available past the fourth year of enrollment except under extraordinary circumstances and at the discretion of the Department. Thus, students who begin the program on funding might ordinarily expect four years of assistantship support, whereas a student who is not funded until his or her second year would ordinarily expect only three years of funding, and so on. Also, time spent on probationary status in the Department may, at the discretion of the faculty, count against the period of eligibility for funding.

From time to time, institutes and centers at UT offer research and administrative assistantships to graduate students. Typically, the information about these assistantships is conveyed to faculty members who contact or recommend graduate students personally. The assistantships are competitive and students from several departments are likely to apply. The hours and stipends vary, and are often determined by experience, schedules, deadlines, etc.

Fellowships

Some Fellowships are offered by The Graduate School with no requirement that the student render service to the University or the Department in return. These Fellowships include a tuition and maintenance fee waiver, and Fellowship awards are disbursed in two payments to the students UTK account (one in Fall and one in Spring). For Fellowships providing tuition waivers, the Department does not normally provide an assistantship.

Other Fellowships require the Department to provide at least a 25% assistantship. These Fellowships are, again, disbursed twice a year. The 25% Departmental assistantship requires students to provide service to the Department for 10 hours each week, and includes a tuition waiver and a monthly stipend, paid each month, from August through July. Funding these Fellowship recipients at a 25% assistantship allows the Department to support as large a proportion of the graduate student body as possible. Students who begin the program on a University Fellowship with no Departmental funding are ordinarily placed on a Departmental assistantship at the end of the Fellowship period.

Regular fellowships are offered without regard to financial need, solely on the basis of academic excellence as determined by grade-point average, scores on the GRE, and three letters of recommendation. There are usually about 25 to 40 such fellowships awarded in the entire University each year. Fellowships are also available for members of recognized minority groups who are residents of the state of Tennessee. Application for both types of fellowship is available beginning each November by contacting the Office of Graduate Admissions and Records, 218 Student Services Building. A listing and description of Fellowships made available through the Graduate School can be found online: <https://gradschool.utk.edu/costs-and-funding/graduate-fellowships/>

Loans

Graduate students can also apply for loans administered by the Financial Aid Office. Additional information about the loans can be found online: <http://finaid.utk.edu/aid/loans>.

Employment

Although the Psychology Department has no official policy regarding external employment, such employment is strongly discouraged in that it detracts from time and energy that would be better spent reading, writing, and thinking.

Travel Support

Depending upon the availability of resources, students can apply for travel funding from the Department to supplement travel to professional conferences. For application instructions, see Sharon Sparks in APB 312F. Additionally, students can apply for travel funding via the University's Graduate Student Travel Fund, which is administered by the Graduate Student Senate. <https://gss.utk.edu/gss-travel-awards/>

REGISTRATION

General Requirements

1. The Graduate School requires students to be in full-time residence (i.e., registered for at least 9 credit hours for at least two consecutive terms).
2. Enrollment is only required during the Fall and Spring semesters. Maximum enrollment varies over the course of the year.
 - a. *Fall and spring semesters*: Psychology students can enroll in at least 9 but not more than 15 credit hours. (The Advisor may allow registration of up to 18 hours during a semester if the student has achieved a cumulative grade point average of 3.6 or better in at least 9 hours of graduate work with no outstanding incompletes.)
 - b. *Full summer term*: Students can register for up to 12 hours.
 - c. *Five-week summer session*: Students can register for up to 6 hours.
 - d. *Mini-term*: Students can register for up to 6 hours.

Registration in Research Hours

In addition to enrolling in organized courses, students enroll in three types of research hours. Except in unusual circumstances, students should enroll in at least 3 research hours each semester.

1. *Research Practicum (PSYC 509)*: As detailed below, students enroll in three credit hours of PSYC 509 during each of their first two to three semesters. Thereafter they continue to enroll in PSYC 509 [Grading options: S, SI, NC] until they begin enrolling in either PSYC 500 or PSYC 600. [Grading options: P, NP]
2. *Master's Research (PSYC 500)*: Some PhD students choose to earn a Master's degree along the way to earning the PhD. In order to earn the Master's, students are required to enroll in six or more credit hours of PSYC 500 and three or more hours during the semester in which they earn the Master's. [Grading options: Letter grades]
3. *Doctoral Research and Dissertation (PSYC 600)*: PhD students begin enrolling in PSYC 600 the semester after they have formed their Doctoral Committee.¹ Once students have started enrolling in PSYC 600, they must continue enrolling in it for at least three hours per semester (including Summer semesters) until they have graduated.² In addition, they must enroll in at least 24 hours of PSYC 600 regardless of how long it takes to actually complete the degree. [Grading options: P, NP]

Students cannot simultaneously enroll in PSYC 509, 500, and/or 600.

There are other types of research hours, but it is unlikely that you will ever enroll in them. One exception is if you have met the maximum number of PSYC 509 credits (18 hours) but aren't yet eligible to enroll in PSYC 600 credits. These include:

4. *Readings/Special Issues (PSYC 508)* [Grading options: Letter grade]
5. *Independent, Off-campus, or Foreign Study (PSYC 593)* [Grading options: S, SI, NC]

¹ Students may also enroll in PSYC 600 if they have already unofficially formed their Doctoral Committee and are only waiting for formal approval from the Psychology Faculty at the next regularly scheduled Faculty meeting.

² Exceptions can be granted for leaves of absences. Petitions for leaves of absence must be approved by the Department Head and the Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Graduate School.

ADVISING

Advisors

A strength of the Experimental Program is its emphasis on a professional mentor relationship between faculty and students. The Advisor-Student relationship encompasses both formal and informal training in the professional life of a psychologist. Each student is assigned an Advisor upon their acceptance to the program and this person typically remains their advisor throughout the students' graduate career. If a student's research interests change or the Advisor-Student relationship is not satisfactory, students may wish to find a new advisor. If a student's Advisor-Student relationship dissolves for whatever reason, they must find another faculty member who is willing to serve as their Advisor as soon as possible.

Student Advisory Committee (SAC)

During students' initial years in the program, the Student Advisory Committee (SAC) directs course selection, research training, and teaching experience. In addition, this Committee ensures exposure to other important aspects of faculty life, such as grant writing, manuscript evaluation, and job-search skills. The Advisor serves as the chair of the SAC; the Advisor and student select two additional faculty members. At least two members of the Committee must be members of the Department of Psychology and at least one must be a member of the Experimental Program faculty. After the committee has been formed, the student must submit a signed Student Advisory Committee Appointment Form to Connie.³

An initial Student Advisory Committee meeting is to be held no later than the middle of the student's second semester, but preferably during the first semester. Prior to the meetings, students should fill out the "Educational History Form – PhD" that can be obtained from Connie Ogle and provide a copy to their Advisor. This meeting will give students an opportunity to discuss their background, interests, and goals, with their prospective committee. The student is not expected to have decided on a research topic before this meeting, and changes in committee membership may occur as research plans crystallize. During this discussion, the committee will suggest coursework and research experiences deemed helpful to the student; the committee will distinguish between recommended and required coursework. Within two weeks of the meeting, the chair of the committee will send a summary of the decisions to the student, the committee members, and the Program Director. A completed copy of the SAC Evaluation Form should also be filed with Connie.

In subsequent years, the SAC should meet annually. After each annual meeting, the student should submit an updated Educational History Form and SAC Evaluation Form to Connie.

The primary functions of the Student Advisory Committee are to advise the student on his/her program, to monitor the student's progress and provide feedback to the student, and to keep the Experimental Program faculty informed about the student's progress. The duties of the Student Advisory Committee include the following:

1. guidance in selecting courses. This includes a review of preparation and recommendations for additional work,
2. direction and evaluation of the Pre-dissertation research,
3. acquisition of relevant computer skills,
4. exposure to the manuscript review process, and
5. experience in proposal writing.

You can obtain the SAC form and Educational History Form – PhD from Connie

³ If the membership in the SAC changes, the students must submit a new form.

Doctoral Committee

During students' later years in the program, the Doctoral Committee replaces the SAC and oversees students' qualifying examination and dissertation research. It also assumes the duties listed above (especially 3-5).

Prior to forming their Doctoral Committee, students must have completed the following requirements (which are described in more detail below in the "Experimental Psychology Degree Requirements" section):

1. 9 hours of Research Practicum (PSYC 509)
2. 2 hours of PSYC 515
3. all core coursework
4. 6 hours of statistics and 3 hours of research methods (PSYC 580)
5. the pre-dissertation research project⁴

In addition to these standard requirements, the Student Advisory Committee may make additional requirements (e.g., further work in statistics or computer skills).

Once the SAC agrees that the student is ready to form a Doctoral Committee, the SAC will make this recommendation to the Experimental Program faculty. The Program Director will then forward the program faculty's recommendation to the Psychology Department Faculty for their approval at a regularly scheduled Faculty meeting during the Fall or Spring semester.⁵

After receiving approval from the full faculty, the student and the Advisor will identify committee members. The Doctoral Committee will consist of the student's Advisor (who will serve as its Chair) and at least three other faculty members, one of whom must be from outside the Department of Psychology. In addition, the Advisor and at least two other committee members must be "Chair Eligible" (i.e., approved by the Graduate Council to direct doctoral research).

The student will then complete the Doctoral Committee Appointment Form (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/academics/forms-central/>), which must be signed by each faculty member and given to Connie, the Graduate Programs Coordinator, for completion.

Master's Committee/Admission to Candidacy

During Fall of the second year, Master's Program students should submit the Master's Admission to Candidacy form (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/academics/forms-central/>). For our Master's students, this form both officially forms the Master's Committee, and admits the student to candidacy. The Master's Committee replaces the SAC and oversees students' qualifying examination and thesis research. This Committee is comprised of three faculty: the Chair and two others.

This form must include the following:

1. 23 hours of coursework. At least 14 of these hours must be letter graded (A-F)
2. 3 hours of Research Practicum (PSYC 509)
3. 6 hours of Psych 500 (Thesis hours).

If this paperwork is completed prior to the student having 26 hours of coursework or 6 hours of Thesis, these hours can be projected for a future semester.

Once courses are listed, students should obtain faculty signatures, then bring the form to Connie for processing.

⁴ It is also recommended that students complete College Teaching in Psychology (PSYC 528) as well. (Neglecting to do so will postpone student's funding increase and limit the department ability to fill all teaching positions; see "Financial Support" section.)

⁵ Regardless of prior academic training, all students who enter the Ph.D. Program must complete at least two semesters in the Program before forming a Doctoral Committee.

EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE Ph.D. AND MASTER'S PROGRAMS

Ph.D. PROGRAM

Coursework (select Graduate School Catalog at <https://catalog.utk.edu/index.php> or visit Psychology Major, Ph.D. https://catalog.utk.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=44&pooid=26630).

Students must complete a minimum of 72 graduate credit hours (500 level or above) beyond the bachelor's or a minimum of 48 graduate credit hours (500 level or above) beyond the Master's (exclusive of the 6 credit hours of thesis).

Students can consult with their Student Advisory Committees about (a) waiving requirements if they have completed similar graduate-level courses elsewhere, or (b) modifying course requirements by taking similar courses at UT. Any exceptions to program requirements must be approved in writing by the Director and a copy placed on file with the Graduate Programs Coordinator.

Students must obtain at least a grade of B or better in all courses. In addition, a cumulative minimum GPA of 3.0 must be maintained to be in good standing.

Note: Courses that students must take before they can form their Doctoral Committee are marked by: ***

1. *** **Two semester hours of Professional Issues in Psychology (PSYC 515)**. During the first year all students should enroll in PSYC 515 both Fall and Spring semesters. The goal of this course is to provide students with useful information about their graduate training and facilitate informal discussions between faculty and new students. The sessions will focus on IRB/IACUC, library, various aspects of ethics in science, how to be productive, and other aspects of academic and professional careers in psychology.
2. *** **Nine semester hours of Research Practicum (PSYC 509)**. This consists of three successive semesters (3 hours per semester) spent gaining experience in research laboratories. Advisors may encourage students to consider taking each semester of PSYC 509 in their first year in the laboratories of separate faculty members. (Note: for administrative reasons, the Program Director will be your official instructor of record for PSYC 509)
3. **Seminar on College Teaching in Psychology (PSYC 528)**, which is a one-unit course. Students should complete this course during their first year. (Neglecting to do so will postpone student's funding increase and limit the department ability to fill all teaching positions.)⁶
4. *** **Core Coursework: Nine semester hours in general psychology**.
 - a. Six graduate credit hours from at least 2 out of the 3 experimental core areas offerings below:
 - Neuroscience and Behavior Area
 - 527: Advances in Behavioral Neuroscience
 - 546: Evolutionary Psychology
 - 547: Conceptual Foundations of Evolution and Behavior
 - Cognitive and Developmental Science Area⁷
 - 474: Research and Theory in Child Development
 - 524: Brain and Behavioral Development
 - Social Area
 - 530: Psychology of Attitudes
 - 550: Social Psychology
 - b. Three additional graduate credit hours from any courses taught by experimental faculty members
5. **Nine semester hours of quantitative graduate coursework**.⁸
 - a. *** **Six credits hours of a two-semester statistics sequence**. The typical sequence is Analysis of Variance (PSYC 521) followed by Multiple Regression (PSYC 522). An alternative is Survey of Statistical Methods I & II (STAT 531 & 532) or Statistics for Research I & II (STAT 537 & 538) or equivalent (consult with the major professor and/or doctoral guidance committee). Students must take these courses during their first year.
 - b. *** **Three credit hours of Research Design (PSYC 580)** or equivalent (consult with the major professor and/or doctoral guidance committee).

⁶ PhD students are strongly encouraged to teach one section of an undergraduate course before graduation, either as part of their assistantship duties or in collaboration with a faculty member.

⁷ Students may also fulfill this requirement by taking a section of PSYC 510 or PSYC 601 that is taught by a CDS faculty member and is focused on topics in cognitive or developmental psychology.

⁸ Students may consider earning a minor in statistics through the university's Intercollegiate Graduate Statistics Program.

6. *** **Multicultural Psychology: Theory and Research (PSYC 577)**. Students are encouraged to take this course in their first year.
7. **Six additional credit hours from any 500- or 600-level courses** chosen in consultation with the major professor and/or doctoral guidance committee.⁹
8. **Two 600-level graduate seminars inside or outside of the Psychology Department** chosen in consultation with the major professor and/or doctoral guidance committee.⁹
9. **Three credit hours of graduate-level (i.e., 500- or 600-level) courses outside the Psychology Department.**⁹
10. **Twenty-four credit hours of Doctoral Research or Dissertation (PSYC 600)**

Pre-dissertation Research

All students must complete a research project involving the collection and analysis of original data or the original analysis of existing data. The project is to be reported in a form for submission toward publication. Ideally, the Pre-dissertation should serve as pilot work for upcoming dissertation research.

The Pre-dissertation requirement will be met when the manuscript is: (1) approved by the student's Advisor and (2) reviewed internally by another faculty member in the Psychology Department (chosen by the student and Advisor together). A completed Approval of Pre-dissertation Research Form, as well as one copy of the manuscript, must be placed on file with the Graduate Programs Coordinator. Students must complete the Pre-dissertation requirement before they can form their Doctoral Committee.

For students entering with a Master's degree from another university, the Master's thesis may be submitted as the Pre-dissertation research. However, it must be approved in the same manner as the Pre-dissertation project.

Students who have graduated from Master's program and transitioned to the PhD program automatically receive Pre-dissertation approval.

Comprehensive Examination

Soon after forming their Doctoral Committee, students should meet with the committee to determine the format and timing of their Comprehensive Exam. The purpose of the Comprehensive Exam is for students to demonstrate their expertise in areas relevant to completing their dissertation. The Comprehensive Exam can include any or all of the following:

1. A theoretical or integrative review paper. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the student's ability to provide a scholarly synthesis of a wide range of literature. Students will develop their topic and scope in cooperation with their Doctoral Committee. The model for this paper is a manuscript that could be submitted to a journal similar to *Psychological Review* or *Psychological Bulletin*. It may include meta-analyses or empirical data, but that is not to be the primary focus of the paper.
2. A series of written answers to questions developed by the Doctoral Committee. This exam may be closed-book or open-book and include such topics as:
 - a. manuscript review of selected article
 - b. development of course outline, selection of texts, and preparation/delivery of lecture
 - c. demonstration of theoretical knowledge, or methodological techniques (e.g., computer analyses, instrumentation)
3. An oral exam

A final copy of the Comprehensive Exam and a signed copy of the Comprehensive Examination Completion Form should be given to the Graduate Programs Coordinator to be placed in the student's file. The completion of this Exam, along with approval of the student's coursework, satisfies the requirements for the Admission to Candidacy.

⁹ Students may take a course that could fulfill two course requirements. Such courses possibly fulfilling double requirements are only allowed once. Students doing so are still expected to meet the total number of course work to graduate. If the student needs to make-up those hours, they can take an elective course or an independent study, but cannot use dissertation hours to make-up those course work hours.

Dissertation Research

The dissertation represents the culmination of your research training and must be an original major research project.

In addition to the PSYC 600 enrollment requirements laid out above, the steps for completing the dissertation include:

1. *Dissertation proposal meeting.* Students must hold a 2-hour committee meeting to discuss a written dissertation proposal. This proposal, often in the form of a grant application, must be provided to all Committee members a full week before the meeting. It should include a selected literature review of the research problem and a detailed presentation of the questions to be evaluated, the methods to be employed, and a discussion of data analysis and interpretation. A strong proposal will also be accompanied by pilot data. Proposals should also include a tentative timetable and budget, and address anticipated concerns or difficulties, practical or theoretical. A memo indicating that the Committee has approved the dissertation proposal should be given to the Program Director. It should also have a brief timeline for completion of the research. A Recommendation for Approval of Dissertation Proposal Form must be completed and placed on file with the Graduate Programs Coordinator.
2. *Admission to Candidacy.* Students must complete the Admissions to Candidacy Form (<http://gradschool.utk.edu/academics/forms-central/admission-to-candidacy-doctoral-degree/>) one full semester prior to their graduation. After committee members have signed the form, the student should submit it to Connie. Connie will secure the Department Head's signature and forward the form along to the Graduate School.
3. *Dissertation defense meeting.* Candidates must hold an oral defense that covers both the dissertation manuscript and the field of study more broadly. The defense is open to interested students and faculty, but the Committee may recess for private discussions at any time.

Scheduling the defense:¹⁰

- a. The oral defense can only be scheduled after the advisor has approved the written dissertation.
- b. Students must find a 2-hour block of time during which all Committee members can meet, then pass this information along to Connie so that she can schedule a room.
- c. Students need to submit a Schedule Defense of Dissertation form to the Graduate School at least one week (preferably two weeks) prior to the planned defense date. Send a copy to Connie, as well.
- d. The defense must fall before the Graduate School's deadline (posted at <http://gradschool.utk.edu/graduation/graduation-deadlines/>)

In preparation for the defense:

- a. *Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form:* Connie will email the student and Advisor a Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form. The student is responsible for bringing two hard copies of this form to the defense.
- b. *Pass-fail form:* The Graduate School will send a Pass-Fail form to the student, Advisor, Program Director, and Connie. Connie will print out two copies and hold them for the student to pick up to take to the defense.

After the defense, Committee members sign both copies of the Approval and Pass-Fail forms and the student returns them to Connie. (If the student passes the defense but the committee requests revisions to the dissertation, the Advisor will hold off on signing until the student has completed the revisions. Connie will hold onto the forms in the interim.) At the discretion of the Committee, students who fail an exam may be allowed to retake the exam.

¹⁰ Scheduling meetings in the summer is extremely difficult, so *students should not plan to defend in the summer without prior approval of the Committee.*

TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Sample timelines are laid out below. Note, these represent best-case scenarios. Different students will proceed through the program at different rates.

Students who enter the program without a Master's degree

Year 1

- Begin Pre-dissertation research
- Coursework (typically 2-3 organized courses per semester)
 - Two semesters of Professional Issues in Psychology (PSYC 515)
 - Two semesters of Research Practicum (PSYC 509)
 - College Teaching in Psychology (PSYC 528)
 - Multicultural Psychology (PSYC 577) *required to take in Year 1*
 - Research Methods (PSYC 580) *required to take in Year 1 or 2*
 - Begin core coursework
 - Two semesters of a statistics sequence (e.g., ANOVA [PSYC 521] & Regression [PSYC 522])
- Form and meet with SAC no later than March 1

Year 2

- Complete Pre-dissertation research.
 - Students who do not wish to earn the Master's should continue to enroll in PSYC 509.
 - Students who wish to earn the Master's should enroll in PSYC 500 after completing 9 hours of PSYC 509. As mentioned above, students are required to enroll in a total of six or more units of PSYC 500, at least three of which during the semester in which they earn the Master's.
- Continue core coursework (typically 1-2 organized courses per semester)
- Continue SAC meetings

Year 3

- Complete core coursework (typically 1-2 organized courses per semester)
- Petition faculty for approval to form Doctoral Committee
- Form Doctoral Committee and submit Doctoral Committee Form
- Begin planning Comprehensive Exam

Year 4

- Complete remaining coursework (typically no more than 1 organized course per semester)
- Complete Comprehensive Exam and submit Comprehensive Examination Completion Form
- Begin dissertation research proposal and submit completed Recommendation for Approval of Dissertation Proposal form
- Complete and submit Admission to Candidacy form (which must be submitted one full semester before commencement)
- Complete Recommended Arrangements for Final Exam and submit completed Final Exam form (which must be submitted at least one week before the defense date)

Students who enter the PhD program with a Master's degree

Students who enter with a Master's degree are encouraged to consult with their Advisor and SAC to identify graduate level courses from their previous program that are comparable to courses that can fulfill our course requirements¹¹. To do so, students should gather as much of the following documentation as they can: (1) syllabi, (2) exams, (3) term papers. With the SAC's approval, the student should complete the Department's Petition to Waive form. The Advisor will pass this form along with the student's document to the faculty member who teaches a comparable course at UT for their consideration. The instructor will then decide whether to approve the petition. If the instructor approves the petition, they will then pass it along to the Program Director for approval, who will pass it along to Connie to be filed. (If the instructor denies the petition, they should email the student and Advisor a brief explanation.)

Year 1

- Coursework (typically 2-3 organized courses per semester)
 - Two semesters of Professional Issues in Psychology (PSYC 515)
 - Two semesters of Research Practicum (PSYC 509)
 - College Teaching in Psychology (PSYC 528)
 - Multicultural Psychology (PSYC 577) *required to take in Year 1*
 - Begin core coursework
 - If necessary, two semesters of a statistics sequence (e.g., ANOVA [PSYC 521] & Regression [PSYC 522])
- Form and meet with SAC no later than March 1st

Year 2

- Complete core coursework (typically 1-2 organized courses per semester)
- Petition faculty for approval to form Doctoral Committee
- Form Doctoral Committee and submit Doctoral Committee Form
- Begin planning Comprehensive Exam

Year 3

- Complete remaining coursework (typically no more than 1 organized course per semester)
- Complete Comprehensive Exam and submit Comprehensive Examination Completion Form
- Begin dissertation research proposal and submit completed Recommendation for Approval of Dissertation Proposal form
- Complete and submit Admission to Candidacy form (which must be submitted one full semester before commencement)
- Complete Recommended Arrangements for Final Exam and submit completed Final Exam form (which must be submitted at least one week before defense date)

¹¹ Courses without a UT equivalent cannot be used to fulfill course requirements.

DOCTORAL STUDENTS' OPTION TO EARN THE MASTER'S DEGREE

Doctoral students have the option of earning a Master's degree as they pursue the PhD¹². This involves using the Pre-dissertation research to fulfill the requirements of the Department's Pre-dissertation research requirement and the Graduate School's honors thesis requirement.

Students who wish to earn the masters' degree must enroll in six or more credit hours of Master's Research (PSYC 500), including three or more credit hours during the semester in which they earn the Master's.

They must also complete the following steps:

1. *Form a Thesis Committee.* The committee will include the Advisor (who will serve as chair) and 2 or more other faculty members.
2. *Admission to Candidacy.* Students must complete the Admission to Candidacy Form (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/academics/forms-central/admission-to-candidacy-masters-or-specialist-degree/>) one full semester prior to their graduation. After committee members have signed the form, the student should submit it to Connie. Connie will secure the Department Head's signature and forward the form along to the Graduate School.
3. *Reformat Pre-dissertation Research manuscript.* The student must format the manuscript to fit with the Graduate School's requirements for theses and dissertations (see <https://gradschool.utk.edu/academics/graduation/theses-and-dissertations/preparing-your-work/templates/>).
4. *Thesis defense meeting.* The requirements laid out for the dissertation defense meeting (see p. 13) also apply to the thesis defense meeting. The only exception is that students schedule the defense entirely through Connie rather than through the Graduate School.

Note: A thesis proposal meeting is recommended.

¹² This does not apply to students who completed their Pre-dissertation research at another university

MA PROGRAM

Coursework (see also https://catalog.utk.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=44&pooid=26629)

The requirements for the Masters' degree program are similar to those of the PhD program. Given that students should aim to earn the MA within two years, they should:

1. hold their first SAC meeting during their first semester, and
2. be far enough along in their research as to enroll in Master's Thesis hours (PSYC 500) during the spring of their first year or fall of their second year.

The coursework also differs slightly. Coursework requirements are as follows:

Students must complete a minimum of 32 graduate credit hours (500 level or above) beyond the bachelor's

11. **Two semester hours of Professional Issues in Psychology (PSYC 515).** During the first year all students should enroll in PSYC 515 both Fall and Spring semesters. The goal of this course is to provide students with useful information about their graduate training and facilitate informal discussions between faculty and new students. The sessions will focus on IRB/IACUC, library, various aspects of ethics in science, how to be productive, and other aspects of academic and professional careers in psychology.
1. **Three credit hours of Research Practicum (PSYC 509).** This consists of one semester (3 hours) spent gaining experience in the advisors' research laboratory. (Note: for administrative reasons, the Program Director will be your official instructor of record for PSYC 509.)
2. **Multicultural Psychology: Theory and Research (PSYC 577).** Students are encouraged to take this course in their first year.
3. **Six graduate credit hours from at least 2 out of the 3 experimental core areas offerings below:**
 - Neuroscience and Behavior Area
 - 527: Advances in Behavioral Neuroscience
 - 546: Evolutionary Psychology
 - 547: Conceptual Foundations of Evolution and Behavior
 - Cognitive and Developmental Science Area¹³
 - 474: Research and Theory in Child Development
 - 524: Brain and Behavioral Development
 - Social Area
 - 530: Psychology of Attitudes
 - 550: Social Psychology
4. **Six hours of a two-semester statistics sequence.** The typical sequence is Analysis of Variance (PSYC 521) followed by Multiple Regression (PSYC 522). An alternative is Survey of Statistical Methods I & II (STAT 531 & 532). Students must take these courses during their first year.
5. **Research Methods (PSYC 580)** which is a 3-unit course.
6. **One 600-level course.**
7. **Six hours of Master's Research (PSYC 500).**

Master's Research

The master's research project represents the culmination of your research training and must be an original major research project.

In addition to enrolling in at least six hours of PSYC 500, students must go through the steps laid out above under Dissertation Research (p. 13). Note that students in the Master's program must have a thesis proposal meeting.

The Graduate School requires that Master's degree requirements be completed within five years of being admitted. The Graduate School may be petitioned for extensions of these limits upon the recommendation of the Departmental Faculty.

¹³ Students may also fulfill this requirement by taking a section of PSYC 510 or PSYC 601 that is taught by a CDS faculty member and is focused on topics in cognitive or developmental psychology.

TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING THE MASTERS PROGRAM

Sample timelines are laid out below. Note, these represent best-case scenarios. Different students will proceed through the program at different rates.

Year 1

- Coursework (typically 2-3 organized courses per semester)
 - Two semesters of Professional Issues in Psychology (PSYC 515)
 - One semesters of Research Practicum (PSYC 509)
 - Multicultural Psychology (PSYC 577) *required to take in Year 1*
 - Research Methods (PSYC 580) *required to take in Year 1*
 - Begin core coursework
 - Two semesters of a statistics sequence (e.g., ANOVA [PSYC 521] & Regression [PSYC 522])
- Form and meet with SAC no later than early December
- Begin conducting research (PSYC 500)

Year 2

- Fall
 - Continue coursework (typically 1-2 organized courses)
 - Form master's thesis committee and defend proposal
 - Submit Admission to Candidacy.
- Spring
 - Finish coursework (typically 1-2 organized courses)
 - Complete and defend thesis

STANDARDS, PROBLEMS, AND APPEALS

Time Limit

The Graduate School has a Time Limit for completion of the Doctoral Degree. All requirements must be completed within *eight years* from time of a student's first enrollment in a doctoral degree program.

Grading

The Graduate School of the University of Tennessee uses the following grading system:

A	=	Superior Performance
B+	=	Better than Satisfactory Performance
B	=	Satisfactory Performance
C+	=	Less than Satisfactory Performance
C	=	Performance well below the standard expected of graduate students
D	=	Clearly Unsatisfactory Performance (cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements)
F	=	Extremely Unsatisfactory Performance (cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements)
I	=	Student has performed satisfactorily, but, <u>due to unforeseen circumstances</u> , has been unable to finish requirements
S/NC	=	Credit hours, but no quality points, limited to a total of 25% of the total credit hours
P/NP	=	No Quality Points (for dissertation or thesis courses)
W	=	Withdrawal

Note: An Incomplete is *not* given to permit a student to raise a grade or for poor planning. When an Incomplete is given, there should be a *written* memo of understanding between the student and Instructor of the work to be done and the time in which it is to be done (normally within a few weeks). The Instructor should provide copies of this memo to the student's Advisor and the Program Director. Incompletes that are not replaced within an academic year automatically become replaced with Fs.

The Graduate School requires a GPA of 3.0 (an average grade of B or better) and the Program is concerned if students make any grade below B. *When a student earns a grade of C+ or less in a REQUIRED COURSE, his or her status in the program is reviewed.* Two such grades in required courses are grounds for dismissal from the program, although that action is not automatic because student dismissal requires faculty discussion and a vote by the full faculty. Admission to another departmental program requires a vote by that program's faculty.

Ethical Behavior

Whether or not they are APA members, all students in the Department of Psychology must follow ethical guidelines articulated by the American Psychological Association (APA) in teaching and research (see <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>). Scientific progress is maintained by collegial interactions based on mutual respect, fair play, open communication, and honesty in the analysis and reporting of data. Differences of opinion on the nature of data analysis, presentation, and interpretation are common in all areas of science, including psychology. However, plagiarism of ideas, fraudulent data, and deceptive scholarship are major breaches of the scientific endeavor that will not be tolerated. Ethical sensitivity in experimentation and data collection are required for all using living organisms in research, in field or captivity. Currently all research involving vertebrate animals must be approved by the appropriate human and nonhuman animal research committees. Availability of original data is becoming an issue in need of specific guidelines also. Many journals require that original data be maintained for many years and be available upon legitimate request. Unless other arrangements are specifically made in writing with research supervisors, original data sets must be deposited with research supervisors before leaving the University. We also encourage early discussions with all research collaborators (including peers and faculty other than the Advisor) on procedures for publication of any worthwhile results, including authorship. Grants, Science Alliance, and all who aided in the research should be appropriately acknowledged in publications.

Evaluation

Every April, Experimental faculty will review the progress of all students. These evaluations are based on research activity, course work, fulfillment of assistantship duties and on the recommendation of the Student Advisory Committee. It is essential that an annual meeting with the Student Advisory Committee take place prior to the student evaluation meeting. *Each year, students must submit updated CVs to the Program Director by March 1.*

These evaluations directly determine your status in the program. They are also a major factor in determining whether you will receive financial assistance in the following year. This information will be relayed to you in a letter from the Program Director, covering the comments made by particular faculty members when making their initial ratings, and summarizing the discussion at the evaluation meetings. You will be asked to sign the letter indicating your receipt, then return the letter to Connie for filing in your Departmental folder.

Remediation Plans, Academic Probation, and Termination

In most cases, students are making satisfactory progress and the annual evaluation serves primarily to highlight strengths, accomplishments, relative weaknesses, and to aid in educational planning. It is hoped that regular, thorough reviews will identify problem areas and allow these concerns to be remediated before they become major concerns. Advisors and the Program Director are available to meet with students to help remediate concerns. If these concerns are not remediated and/or the student fails to make progress in the Program, the Experimental Faculty may recommend the student be put in a probationary status. In such a case, requirements to return to good standing will be outlined, along with deadlines for their attainment. All recommendations for probation will be discussed at a full faculty meeting of the Psychology Department and voted upon. Students will receive written documentation signed by the Program Director and the Department Head, regarding the probationary status and the specific steps required for the student to return to good standing. If the student misses any deadlines, the Experimental faculty may vote to recommend that the student be terminated from the Program. Again, this recommendation would be presented to the full departmental Psychology Faculty and voted upon. Termination from the Program is a rare and extreme measure.

In addition, the Graduate School changes the status of any student who fails to register for graduate credits during a Fall or Spring semester to "inactive."¹⁴ After becoming inactive, students who wish to be reinstated must reapply for admission to the Graduate School and to the program.

Appeal Procedures

The student appeals process is essentially the same for appealing course grades, graduate committee decisions, and Psychology Faculty actions such as termination of support or from the Program. Course grade appeals should first be discussed with the course instructor. Graduate committee actions should first be discussed with the Advisor and, if necessary, the student's entire graduate committee. Experimental Psychology Program actions should first be discussed with the Director. The general process of appeal is outlined below:

1. The student must first attempt to resolve the problem with the responsible faculty member(s) as noted above.
2. If discussions between the student and faculty member(s) do not resolve the problem to the satisfaction of the student, the student should then bring the problem to the Experimental Psychology Program Director (if not already involved). The Director will attempt to resolve the problem through discussion with the student and the responsible faculty member, calling on advice from other members of the faculty as necessary and appropriate. This may include a meeting of the student's committee or the entire Experimental Psychology Faculty.
3. If the problem is still not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student will be referred to the Department Head. The Head will attempt to resolve the problem through discussion with the student and the responsible faculty member, with advice from other faculty. This may include a meeting of the student's committee, the Experimental faculty, or the entire Psychology faculty.

¹⁴ This does not apply to students who are on an official leave of absence.

4. If the problem is still not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student will be referred to the Dean of the Graduate School.

The Graduate Council Appeal Procedure can be obtained at the Graduate School or at <https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/understanding-your-rights-and-obligations/>. Normally, grievances should be handled first at the Department level through the student's Advisor, then the Experimental Program Director, or the Psychology Department Head. Further appeal may be made to the Dean of Arts and Sciences, followed by the Graduate Council through the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School, and ultimately to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Appeals may involve the interpretation of and adherence to university, college, and Department policies and procedures as they apply to graduate education and the issuance of grades based on specific allowable reasons stipulated in the Graduate Council Appeal Procedure.

Students with grievances related to race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, disability or veteran status should file a formal complaint with the Office of Equity and Diversity (<http://oed.utk.edu/complaints/>).