

Psychology Department  
Graduate Handbook  
2012-2013

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## Contents

I.	General Information . . . . .	Page 3
	A. Programs	
	B. Location	
	C. Orientation	
	D. Financial Support	
	1. Travel Awards	
	2. Dissertation Awards	
	3. Department Allocations	
	E. Time Limits	
II.	Departmental Requirements. . . . .	Page 4
	A. Overview	
	B. Statistics	
	C. Course Distribution	
	D. Students with a Master's Degree	
III.	Programs and Advisors. . . . .	Page 6
	A. Description	
	B. Evaluation of Performance	
	1. Letters of Evaluation	
	2. Grades	
	3. Fifth Year & Support	
	4. When Issues Arise	
	5. Termination	
	C. Grievance Procedures	
	D. Behavioral Neuroscience Program	
	1. General Requirements	
	2. Qualifying Exam	
	E. Clinical Program	
	1. General Requirements	
	2. Qualifying Exam	
	F. Cognitive Program	
	1. General Requirements	
	2. Qualifying Exam	
	G. Social Program	
	1. General Requirements	
	2. Qualifying Exam	
	H. Qualifying Exam Approval for All Areas	
IV.	The Master's Degree. . . . .	Page 17
V.	The Doctorate. . . . .	Page 17
	A. The Dissertation Committee	
	B. The Proposal	
	C. The Ph. D. Defense	
	D. Forms required for the Ph.D.	
	E. Format of Ph.D. Thesis	
VI.	Guidelines for Approving Research Proposals . . . . .	Page 20

## I. General Information

### A. Programs

The Department of Psychology offers full-time Ph.D. programs in Clinical Psychology, Social Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, and Behavioral Neuroscience. Each program has required courses and unique plans of study. This handbook describes each program briefly. All incoming students should obtain details about the current requirements from the program to which they were admitted.

### B. Location

The Department of Psychology is situated in Wolf Hall and McKinly Laboratory, with the Psychological Services Training Center located in Belmont Hall. The main office and secretarial staff are located in 108 Wolf. Both the Department Chair and Associate Chair for Research and Graduate Education have offices in Wolf Hall. Each student has a mailbox on the second floor of Wolf Hall, in room 201.

### C. Orientation

The Director of Graduate Education will meet with incoming students prior to the first class of the fall semester to outline the policies and requirements described in this Handbook. Students may also want to look at the University of Delaware: Graduate Catalog which can be found online at <http://udcatalog.udel.edu/general/grad.html>.

### D. Financial Support

The Department has the goal of supporting fully qualified students for the customary training period for each area. Support may be awarded after four years, given that the student meets the requirements described in section III. Support may come from a Teaching Assistantship (TA), a Research Assistantship (RA), or a Fellowship. The TA and RA each require a nominal average of 20 hours work a week for at least the periods of the fall and spring semesters. RA support is also available during the summer months. In most cases, a student awarded a Fellowship is excused from assistantship duties so that they may devote full time effort to research and scholarship. Fellowships can be awarded by the university (Graduate Fellow) or external granting organizations (e.g., NIH Predoctoral fellowships). A student may teach a course for pay after consulting with his or her advisor.

#### 1. Travel Awards

Graduate students may apply to the Department of Psychology for travel awards to professional meetings (travel of  $\geq 250$  miles – up to \$500; travel of  $< 250$  miles – up to \$300). Application guidelines may be found on the department intranet. At the same time, all students must apply for a Professional Development Award (up to \$500) from the Graduate

School. Application guidelines for the Professional Development Award may be found at <http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/forms/profdevaward2012.pdf>. Female students may apply for additional funds from the Office of Women's Affairs, and the application guidelines may be found at <http://www.udel.edu/OWA/studentTravel.shtml>. A further source of travel funding, for Clinical students, is the Evelyn M. Fiorito Travel Award. Application guidelines for this award may be found on the department intranet.

2. Dissertation Awards

Graduate students may apply for up to \$1,000 to support dissertation research.

3. Department Allotments

The department sets aside \$200 for each student, each year, for miscellaneous research costs.

E. Time Limits

From the initial day of matriculation, a student has 7 years to complete the Dissertation. The Graduate School of the University sets these limits. A request for an extension must be made in the form of a written appeal to the graduate committee. The Director of Graduate Education will negotiate with the Graduate School Administrator for an extension. All extensions are granted on a year-by-year basis, and are based on progress toward the degree.

II. Departmental Requirements

A. Overview

Each program has requirements designed to meet the special needs of the students in the program. In addition to course work, common to all programs, is a set of research requirements for the first 5 semesters. These requirements include a first-year project that forms the basis of an oral presentation before faculty and of a written report that is evaluated by the faculty. This report (or the report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year research project in the case of clinical students) can be submitted to the University as a Thesis to obtain the Master's Degree. The Master's degree is optional for each student, and does not advance a student in the program. The student must follow the procedures described in the University Graduate Catalog to obtain the Master's degree. Students without the M.A. degree, who have made equivalent progress in their training program, may be certified by the department to be eligible for compensation by the University for teaching, during winter and summer terms, at a rate equivalent to what M.A. students receive.

Also common to each program is a qualifying exam. This exam should be completed during, or soon after, the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> semester of graduate study (depending of specific area), and must be completed successfully before the Dissertation proposal is defended. Each

exam requires a written product and three programs require an oral defense. Successful defense of the Dissertation proposal advances the student to Ph.D. candidacy. After the student acquires 9 credits of Dissertation research, the student can go on sustaining status. This has the advantage of requiring a minimal registration fee each semester to retain graduate student status. All students, including sustaining students, must be registered in the semester in which the degree is officially offered. Sustaining registration is required for summer and winter session only if the degree is awarded at the conclusion of the summer or winter session. Sustaining fees assessed during those semesters are the student's responsibility.

#### B. Statistics

In programs other than Behavioral Neuroscience and Cognitive, students must complete at least two semesters of Graduate Statistics with a grade of B- or better. If a student has already taken two graduate statistics courses at another university, and will not benefit from additional work, the student may request a waiver from the faculty of the student's program. The faculty will place a letter confirming the waiver in the student's record. Behavioral Neuroscience requires one ortwo semesters depending on the student's background and Cognitive requires one semester. It should be noted that even if a waiver is granted, the student still needs to complete the total number of credits needed for the degree by taking other courses/electives/research to do so.

#### C. Course Distribution

The student should consult the requirements related to individual programs in planning courses. The general requirements are as follows.

Individual Programs may include additional coursework:

Year 1: 2 to 3 courses per semester and research

Year 2: 2 courses per semester and research

Year 3: 1 course per semester and research

Year 4: Research

The minimum number of credits needed for the optional Master's degree is 24, plus 6 credits of Thesis (869).

After admission to Ph.D. candidacy, the student must register continuously each fall and each spring semester either in Research (868), Special Problems (866), 600-800- level seminars, or in Dissertation research (969). Once 9 credits of Dissertation research is completed, the student may register in Doctoral Sustaining (U999) until the Graduate Office accepts the Dissertation.

NOTE: Students on fellowship contract must register for at least 9 credit hours per semester. Students on TAs or RAs must register for at least 6 credit hours per semester.

#### D. Students with a Master's Degree

Students entering the Psychology graduate program with an empirical Master's Thesis may be able to place out of course work and out of the second-year research requirement that requires a paper in journal-article format. Placement depends on faculty evaluation of the adequacy of course work and of the adequacy of the Master's Thesis. This Thesis must be submitted to faculty members of the student's program. Other requirements involving presentation of current research in program colloquia cannot be waived, and when course work is placed out of, the student still needs to complete the total number of credits needed for the degree by taking other courses/electives/research to do so. Students entering with a Master's Degree are eligible for four years of support in accordance with the guidelines set for other students.

It is also possible in certain cases when a student transfers in from another program and has completed substantial coursework in the other program to have the prior coursework count toward the PhD degree in our program. This process begins with the student providing the program director with syllabi for courses that they had already taken that they believed were similar to courses that we require. The area director then asks faculty members who teach our "comparable" course to make a determination about whether the previously-taken courses are indeed comparable. If it is deemed that that they are, then the credits from the previous university are transferred to UD using a credit transfer form available from the Graduate School website and processed by the Assistant Provost for Graduate and Professional Education. Via this process, the courses actually appear on the student's UD transcript, and this is only possible for courses taken for a letter grade (not P/F) and successfully passed. If the instructor of our "comparable" course deems that the previously-taken course is not comparable, then students are required to take our course.

### III. Programs and Advisors

#### A. Description

A student is admitted into one of the four departmental programs: Behavioral Neuroscience, Clinical Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, or Social Psychology. Advisor selection is often made before a student is admitted. If not, the advisor should be selected early in the first semester.

The primary advisor will work out a plan of research with the student and will provide guidance in course selection. The advisor/student relationship is one of mutual agreement. A student can change advisors if either advisor or student believes that a change is advisable. Advisor selection should be considered carefully, as more than one can slow progress toward the Ph.D. significantly.

Because a student is admitted through review by members of a single program, the student cannot change programs at will. A change in program requires application to and acceptance by the new program. On the rare occasion of a change, financial support arrangements must be made with the new program. Support commitments do not apply when a student leaves that program.

B. Evaluation of Performance

1. Letters of Evaluation

After each semester during the first two years, the program faculty will provide each student with a letter of evaluation of progress in the program. The letter will refer to coursework, laboratory performance, TA/RA/Fellowship performance, clinical performance (where applicable) and general progress. The faculty will specify any shortcomings in performance and set goals for improvement and progress. This feedback is important for new students, and students should discuss the letter with their faculty advisors. After the first two years, evaluations in the Behavioral Neuroscience, Cognitive Psychology, and Social Psychology programs will occur at least once per year (at the end of the academic year) unless circumstances require otherwise. After the first two years in the Clinical Science program, evaluations will continue to occur at the end of each fall and spring semester.

2. Grades

In graduate school, grades from A to B- are passing grades. A grade of C+ or below indicates unsatisfactory performance. To retain good standing, a student must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 (B). TA and RA contracts require that a student maintain at least a 3.0 for continued funding. Please consult the Graduate Catalog to see the rules of the Office of Graduate Education regarding students who do not maintain a 3.0. The Office of Graduate Education will terminate a student if the cumulative GPA is not improved within a specified time period.

3. Fifth Year & Support

Students who have satisfactory grades and letters of evaluation, and who meet the requirements of the program area, are eligible for four years of departmental support in the form of a fellowship, TA, or RA position. Any support given to a student beyond the fourth year depends on resource availability and is at the discretion of the faculty in the student's program area.

#### 4. When Issues Arise

When questions arise for you in the program, your faculty advisor is your first point of inquiry. If the answer to your question is not known, then you should consult with your Program Director. If still unresolved, then the question can go to the Director of Graduate Education. The graduate office should not be contacted unless Faculty Advisor, Program Director, and Director of Graduate Education have all been consulted.

#### 5. Termination

A student may be terminated from graduate study in the department on any one of six academic grounds. These are (a) two evaluation letters describing unsatisfactory performance, (b) unsatisfactory grades (e.g., for the clinical area, two grades of lower than B-), (c) a failure to pass program requirements (e.g., first- or second-year projects, qualifying exam), or (d) failure to meet these requirements in a timely fashion, (e) unethical conduct, and (f) failure to arrange an advisor from program faculty. Less severe sanctions for unsatisfactory performance, such as a loss of eligibility for financial support, is reserved for students with special circumstances. Termination requires a majority vote (2/3 in the case of the clinical program) from program faculty.

#### C. Grievance Procedures

The University has a detailed procedure for grieving grade disputes and claims about harassment and discrimination. Consult the publication, “Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog” at <http://www.udcatalog.udel.edu/> for details about grade disputes and contact the Office of Women’s Affairs <http://www.udel.edu/OWA/> for information about harassment and discrimination issues. Students may also wish to contest the program’s evaluation of laboratory, clinic, or TA/RA/Fellowship performance, and students may wish to get help in resolving interpersonal difficulties with faculty members. The grievance procedure for these cases has four steps. Confidentiality will be maintained at each step, if the student requests. That is, within legal and ethical limits, no information will be released to anyone else concerning the problem without the student’s expressed permission.

1. The Student should first attempt to resolve any complaints directly with the faculty member who is the primary source of the evaluation or interpersonal difficulty. If the student cannot approach the faculty member for some reason or cannot resolve the difficulty, the student should consult his or her Advisor in the Psychology Department.

2. If the problem is with the Advisor or if the Advisor is unsuccessful in resolving the problem, the student should consult the Program Head.

3. If the above steps do not resolve the problem, the student should take the issue to the Director of Graduate Education.

4. The final step will be to appear before a Grievance Committee composed of the members of the Graduate Committee and the Psychology Department Chairperson. The disputing parties will appear separately before the committee. The parties should bring relevant evidence to the Committee meeting.

D. Behavioral Neuroscience

1. General Requirements

In the first two years, students must complete successfully the neuroscience core sequence of four courses, and one or two advanced courses in statistics, depending on the student's background. The core sequence consists of ordered courses in Neuroanatomy (Neuroscience I), Neurophysiology (Neuroscience II), Neuropharmacology (Neuroscience III), and the two semester offering of Integrative Neuroscience (Neuroscience IV). In addition, students must complete a first-year research project, which requires an oral presentation of the results before the faculty by the end of the second semester and a written report by the end of the third semester of study. During the third year of study, the student must pass the qualifying exam.

2. Qualifying Exam

By the beginning of the third year, the student and their advisor approach the BN Area faculty about a plan to take the qualifying exam. The student must compose a comprehensive list of readings, in consultation with the BN faculty that will consist of major review articles, relevant books, and empirical journal articles that define the major cores of behavioral neuroscience (neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, neuropharmacology, and behavior) and the student's area of interest. This list should be completed and approved as soon as possible but not later than November of the third year. Based on the reading list, the student develops questions for the qualifying exam that are then approved by the faculty. The faculty selects and revises, as needed, four questions for the exam, in consultation with the student. The written exam should be taken as soon as possible but no later than the end of the spring semester of the third year. For each question, the student is given two and a half days to prepare a written response. Thus, the exam is taken in four parts (one question limited to 2500 words each plus references), normally over a three-week period (15 working days providing 2.5 days for each question plus 1-2 day breaks as negotiated by the student). Questions are typically submitted and returned via email, which provides documentation of start and end times for each question. Failure to submit the exam by the deadline decreases the likelihood of a passing grade. This written exam is then evaluated by at least three area faculty members. The faculty can also ask an expert outside of the area or university to read and contribute to the evaluation. The student will be consulted and/or notified about the exam readers before undertaking the exam. The faculty is responsible for determining the student's grade on the basis of feedback from the exam readers. The student is given written feedback on the answers to the questions within two weeks

to allow for preparation for the oral exam. Within two weeks of receiving the written exam evaluation, the student then participates in a single-session oral exam with the readers and area faculty members that would like to take part in the evaluation. The same questions are revisited and the student provides arguments and responses in an interactive setting.

After evaluation of both the written and oral exams by the readers, a high-pass, pass, or fail grade and a written feedback report are provided to the student. In the event that the exam or parts of the exam did not meet criteria for passing by consensus of the readers, the student can elect to retake the exam or parts of the exam. These may be the same questions or new questions. Feedback from the readers will be given to help prepare the student for the retest. The re-administered exam (written and/or oral) must be completed within two months of completing the first exam. One re-take exam is allowed. Failure to pass the re-take exam disqualifies the student from the doctoral program.

#### E. Clinical Program

##### 1. General Requirements

The clinical psychology program includes coursework, research, and practicum training. Formal coursework is completed over a four-year period. The sequence of some coursework is fixed in order to provide the necessary background for simultaneous research and practicum activity. More flexibility is provided in the timing of departmental breadth requirements and elective courses.

Students start their research involvement in the first year. By the end of this year, a First-Year Project must be defended to the clinical faculty. The Second-Year Project must be defended to the clinical faculty and submitted to the Graduate School by the end of the fall semester of the third year. The fourth and usually fifth years are devoted primarily to Dissertation research.

Some practicum training starts in the first year, when students typically conduct their first assessment at the Psychological Services Training Center. Practicum intensifies in the second year, when students serve as primary therapists under close faculty supervision at the Psychological Services Training Center or affiliated sites where faculty supervise (e.g., Early Learning Center). In the third year and beyond, students work in external clinical practicum sites or continue to work at the Psychological Services Training Center.

The internship is usually taken during the sixth year. The Ph.D. cannot be awarded until both the internship and dissertation are completed.

## 2. Qualifying Exam

Students take the comprehensive exam in the summer of their third year, after they have:

- Completed the three years of coursework specified in the Overview section and cleared all incomplete grades
- Successfully defended the First-Year Project
- Successfully defended the Second-Year Project

Areas covered by the comprehensive exam include but are not limited to:

- Psychopathology and Developmental Risk
- Assessment/Tests and Measures
- Psychotherapy and Prevention
- Personality and Individual Differences
- Professional Issues
- Ethics
- Diversity
- Research Design and Methods

Questions are intended to be integrative and will generally involve more than a single substantive area.

Reading lists for each area will be reviewed each fall by the entire faculty and updated as needed to reflect the most current developments in these areas. Updated reading lists will be provided to students by October 31 of their third year.

The format of the written exam is as follows:

- The written exam will be administered over two consecutive days and will include six possible questions.
- Half of the questions will be administered on the first day of written exams, and the second half will be administered on the following day. Students are to answer two of the three questions for each day.
- Exams are administered in a take-home, email format. Each day's questions will be sent electronically to students at 8:30 am of each written exam day, students word-process their responses from their homes, and email their responses to a department secretary by 4:30 pm of each written examination day.
- The essay answer to each question should not exceed five double-spaced pages (12-point font, 1 inch margins on all sides).
- Students should include a reference page with each of their answers. This can be cut and pasted from the electronic copy of the reading list.

Anonymity of written responses will be accomplished by having students select a four-digit identification number to be included with all responses, rather than their name. Students will inform the department secretary of their identification number when they submit their written responses via email. The secretary will de-identify students' responses before distributing them to the DCT. After grading of the written portion of the comprehensive exams is completed, the DCT will get the list matching students' names with their identification numbers from the department secretary.

Within one week of the written exam, students will be scheduled for a 45-minute oral exam administered by the clinical faculty. The purpose of the oral exam is to allow students to expand upon the written answers that they provided. Following students' oral exam, the clinical faculty will decide whether students passed or failed each of the four questions, taking into account both the written and oral performances.

If a student fails any exam question(s), the clinical faculty will prepare brief written feedback on the reasons for the failure and steps the student should take in preparing for the makeup exam. This feedback will be prepared by the faculty as a group as soon as the oral exam is completed. The feedback will be delivered to the student by the DCT following the oral exam.

If students fail any exam question(s), they may take a makeup exam for that/those question(s) within 1-3 months after the original exam, on dates that are acceptable to both the student and the faculty. The new question(s) will be on the same content area(s) as the failed question(s); a choice of questions will not be provided. Four hours will be allotted for the written portion of each makeup question, and up to 45 minutes will be allotted for the oral portion of the makeup exam for all makeup questions combined. Since it is likely that only one student will take a makeup exam at a time, it will not be possible for responses to remain anonymous. All other aspects of the makeup exam procedure will parallel the procedures followed for the original exam. If students fail any makeup question, this signifies failure of the comprehensive exams, and they will be terminated from the program.

When students have passed all questions on the comprehensive examinations, the DCT will write a letter stating that they have completed the comprehensive examination requirement. The original of this letter will be given to students, and the DCT will give a copy of the letter to his/her assistant to place in the student's file.

If students are seriously ill or experiencing serious personal hardship (e.g., death in the family, fire, accident) immediately before or on the days of the exam, they may request a make-up exam. This request must be made in writing and approved by the clinical faculty. Make-up exams should occur within one month of the regularly scheduled exam, but

students will be allowed a maximum of three months to schedule make-up exams. Make-up exams will consist of new questions written and approved by the clinical faculty.

F. Cognitive Program

1. General Requirements

Full-time graduate students are required to take at least 9 credits each semester, distributed among research and courses/seminars; the Graduate School requires this amount for a student to receive funding. Register for research credit as *PSYC 868: Research* until the course requirements for admission to candidacy have been met (usually the first four semesters), the next semester register for research as *PSYC 964: Precandidacy*. After admittance to candidacy, students register for research as *PSYC 969: Dissertation Research*. When you register for research you will need to select your advisor's name as well as specify the number of research credits for that semester when you register.

*Required Courses/Seminars (8):*

- a) Statistics (*PSYC 860: Statistics*)
- b) At least five (5) courses (taught by full-time faculty in the Cognitive Area; these include topics in attention, perception, memory, language, cognition and emotion, and cognitive development)
- c) At least two additional graduate seminars/courses that are electives. These can be in any area of Psychology (including Cognitive or additional Statistics courses), or any area related to the student's field of study in other graduate departments at the University (e.g., Linguistics, Computer Science, Neuroscience/Biology, Education). Elective course decisions are made in consultation with one's advisor and must have advisor approval. Students are discouraged from taking more than 2 courses/seminars in a semester so that they can maintain a steady focus on their research throughout their graduate career.

Beyond these requirements, students are expected to participate in weekly Cognitive brown bags. Graduate students are required to be active during these brown bags, to ask questions and in general to be engaged in faculty and student presentations. Ideally, we expect each student to ask at least one question at each brown bag.

*First Year Project:*

During their first year, all students engage in a research project. Results from the first year project are presented in a special Cognitive brown bag in the Spring semester of the first year. During this brown bag, students give a brief presentation of their work followed by general questions from the audience. After the discussion, everyone but the faculty and the student leave the room and the student discusses his or her project in greater depth.

Students are strongly encouraged to submit a written version of their project to their advisor by the beginning of their second year incorporating the feedback they received in their presentation.

## 2. Qualifying Exam

The qualifying exam is taken after the student has completed 2 full years in the graduate program. The first part is a review paper (similar to a Psych Review or Psych Bulletin article) on a topic that is central to the student's area of interest. This can be on a single major topic (e.g., "Categorization in Infant Cognition"), or a combination of topics across different areas or disciplines (e.g., a Cognitive Science topic that cuts across areas in Linguistics and Psychology). The second part is an Oral defense of the paper in which the student and the Cognitive faculty discuss issues and ideas that are raised by the paper.

The review paper complements coursework and laboratory research by providing an additional means of developing one's scholarship and enhancing one's expertise in their chosen area of study. The combination of writing and oral presentation mirrors both upcoming milestones in the student's graduate career (dissertation proposal and oral presentation) and the kinds of activities scientists must excel at throughout their careers (presentation of research & question/answer periods at meetings, writing). Timeliness is a critical component of this requirement.

Students should begin discussing their paper topic with their advisor during their first year of graduate school. The first year project can serve as a springboard for topic choice, but the topic is not at all constrained by the first year project. The student's topic should be one that will likely lead into their doctoral dissertation proposal. The student will provide *at most two* drafts to their advisor for feedback before submitting the paper. The timing of the draft(s) will be determined by the student and their advisor well in advance but a draft should be handed in at least a month before the final paper. The advisor will provide comments and raise issues for the student to solve.

- **September 7th** (Third Year): Due date for submitting the paper to the Cognitive Faculty
- **October 7th**: Deadline for faculty to provide feedback to the student. Feedback will be similar to that obtained by authors who submit review papers to journals. Grading is pass/fail.
- Given a PASS on the paper, the student will schedule an **Oral defense** with the faculty to be held by **October 14** (or in case of scheduling conflicts, no later than **October 21**).

Successful completion of the written and oral exam is necessary before submitting one's dissertation proposal for approval. The qualifying exam is a necessary step toward admittance to candidacy.

In the event of an unsatisfactory review paper, the student can elect to revise the paper based on faculty feedback and submit the revision a month later (due:

**November 7th**). Feedback would be returned by **Dec 7**. Given a PASS, the student would then schedule an oral during Finals week. If the revision does not meet minimum criteria for passing, the cognitive area faculty will convene to critically evaluate the student's record to date. In most cases, if all other requirements have been met, the student can opt to write up their first year project as a Master's Thesis, so that when they leave the program they will do so having earned a Masters' Degree in Psychology.

*Timeliness is a critical part of the qualifier.* Students must submit the qualifier by the due date. Failure to do so is seen as opting out of the program. If all other requirements have been met, the student can choose to write up their first year project for a terminal masters as described in the last paragraph. This option may also be taken by students who are in good standing in the program but decide not to complete the doctoral program.

## G. Social Program

### 1. General Requirements

Students in the Social Psychology program take each of the social psychology program courses (one per semester) and a research course until all degree requirements are completed. If a particular course was already taken students are expected to register for the course although course work for that student will be tailored to avoid unnecessary redundancy in content. The general course work involves core domains of social psychological research: Social Cognition, Individual & Group Processes, and Personality. More specialized seminars in social psychology include, for example, cross-cultural psychology, psychology of employee motivation, intergroup relations, psychology of social interdependence, psychology of Black American and the psychology of creativity. In addition, students in the social psychology program take a four-course statistics sequence during the first and second year, attend weekly social psychology brown-bag meetings, and attend all Psychology Department colloquia and job talks. Although it is not required, it is the faculty's desire to see our graduate students become more involved with the research interests of more than one faculty member. Students also prepare a qualifying exam and complete a dissertation.

Students meet the research requirement, in part, by completing a first-year project and a second-year project, both of which are summarized with written reports. For the first-year project, the student composes a written proposal in memorandum form that summarizes the student's idea and research plan and also presents these ideas at a social psychology brown-bag meeting during the first semester of graduate study. Toward the end of the second semester or possibly early in the fall of the third semester, the student gives an oral presentation of the final project at a social psychology brown-bag meeting. In addition, beyond the first year of graduate study, graduate students will present their current research (or plans for future research) at the Social Program Brown Bag weekly meetings at least once per semester prior to the completion of their degree. The second-year project requires the participation and

approval of two faculty advisors. The student prepares a written abstract of the proposed research that must be signed by the faculty advisors by the end of the fall semester in the second year. The research must be presented before the social faculty by the end of the second year. In addition, the student must prepare a written paper describing the research prior to the beginning of the third year. This paper can be formatted in a way that meets Graduate School requirements, if the student elects to obtain a Master's Degree.

## 2. Qualifying Exam

The qualifying exam has two options, either of which must be completed by the end of the fall semester of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year or at the very latest by the end of the spring semester of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

Option A: A *Psychology Bulletin* (or *Psychology Review* or *Personality and Social Psychology Review*) type review paper summarizing a focal area of the student's interest and leading to the formulation of a dissertation research paper. This paper should be of suitable quality to be submitted to a major journal and thus, this paper is expected to offer a valuable perspective or theoretical analysis of the issues reviewed, rather than just a summary of research conducted in the field.

Option B: A grant proposal detailing the plans for the student's dissertation work. This proposal should be of suitable quality to be submitted to a major granting agency. Thus, this proposal is expected to offer a valuable perspective or theoretical analysis of the focal issue.

In preparation for either option of the comprehensive exam, the student creates a committee consisting of the student's advisor and two other members of the social faculty. In consultation with the committee, the student generates a reading list of at least 20 articles and books important to the focal topics, and composes a 2- to 5-page overview of the goals and value of the proposed project. The committee must approve the topics and reading list, and must approve the final paper. This paper is then submitted to the entire social faculty for approval (determined by majority vote). In the event of an unsatisfactory evaluation by the social faculty, the student has one opportunity to revise the paper and resubmit it for approval of the advisory committee and the entire social faculty. If the student does not pass the second time, the student may elect to get a terminal Master's degree by submitting the completed and approved second-year project to the Graduate School.

## H. Qualifying Exam Approval for All Areas

Upon successful passing of the qualifying exam, all students should receive an official confirmation letter confirming this passing of a major program milestone from the program director of the student's area. A copy of the letter should be provided for the graduate

secretary for placement in the student's file. A template for the letter is posted on the Department Intranet Site: Psych Forms > Grad Student Form > Qualls-Comps Passing Letter

#### IV. The Master's Degree

Students may elect to get a Master's degree after completion of the written report and oral defense of research conducted in the first and second years of graduate study. The Master's degree is optional, and does not advance or retard progress in the course of study. The written report must fulfill the requirements for a Master's degree as described in the University handbook for graduate students. The report must be formatted according to the University standards, and must be approved by the student's advisor, at least one other faculty member with expertise on the subject, the chair of the Department, and the Associate Provost for Graduate Education. The minimum number of credits required for the Master's degree with thesis is 24 semester hours plus 6 hours of thesis (PSYC 869).

#### V. The Doctorate

##### A. The Dissertation Committee

The Dissertation committee is formed after successful completion of the second-year research requirements, after successfully passing the qualifying exam, and during preparation of the Dissertation proposal.

The committee must contain at least four members and no more than six. The Chair is the student's advisor. At least three members must be departmental faculty, with two representing the primary area of study, and one representing a secondary area of study or from a different program. At least one member must be an external examiner. This individual must have a Ph.D. with expertise in the student's area. This external examiner may be from another department or may be from outside the University.

##### B. The Proposal

The Dissertation committee evaluates a written proposal that presents background, procedure, rationale, and potential outcomes of the student's prospective Dissertation research prior to the student beginning the research. The purpose of this requirement is to provide feedback about the student's intended research while that research is in its formative stages, when alterations in planning can most easily be implemented.

The student must explain and defend the proposal before the entire Dissertation Committee. The proposal defense must occur after the student passes the program qualifying exam. The committee signifies acceptance of the written proposal on the appropriate university form (see section D.1. below). Acceptance of the proposal indicates that the research is well-conceived and properly designed to address an appropriate question. As is true with all scientific proposals, the proposal cannot predict the unexpected. Part of the student's training includes

learning to revise research plans as necessary to reach a reasonable answer to the question under investigation. As the research unfolds, the student may be required to revise procedures where necessary. Changes are not arbitrarily mandated by one person, but the written changes are evaluated through the joint consideration of the student, advisor, and committee. Acceptance of the proposal means that the student can begin conducting Dissertation research, it does not constitute a contract or guarantee for the Doctoral Degree. Conferral of the degree depends upon the quality of the completed research and its oral defense.

Following acceptance of the proposal, the student should file the appropriate form for admission to candidacy (see section D.1. below) and begin his/her Dissertation research. Once the form is filed, the student is officially admitted to candidacy. A copy of the proposal and any approved changes to the proposal must be added to the student's file maintained by the Department.

### C. The Ph.D. Defense

When the student and advisor consider the thesis to be complete, a copy of the written document is distributed to the members of the dissertation committee. The time allowed for reading is discussed with the members of the committee and will usually range from 2 weeks to a month depending on the project and the committee members' other comments. The committee may consult with the student to discuss the document and request revision where necessary. In consultation with the committee, the student schedules an oral defense.

At least two weeks prior to the defense, a final copy of the dissertation must be submitted to each member of the Dissertation Committee. (NOTE: the committee may request a longer lead time if the draft is a major revision of the last draft read.)

The defense consists of a presentation of the student's research and answers to questions by the committee members and members of the audience. The questions typically address the theoretical and empirical adequacy of the research, and also its relation to the general field and related areas. At the end of the oral defense, the committee votes on the outcome. One dissenting committee member vote is permitted in adjudging a defense to be successful.

### D. Forms required for the Ph.D. Committee, Proposal, and Degree

1. Proposal Approval Form (Recommendation for Candidacy):  
Committee signs when prospectus meeting is held and thesis proposal is approved. Return to Office of Graduate Studies with a copy to the Graduate Secretary in Psychology.

<http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/forms/candidacyform.pdf>

2. Application for Advanced Degree Form:  
Fill out and return to Office of Graduate Education with a copy to the Graduate Secretary in Psychology. This should be done early in the semester that the student

expects to receive their degree in. For example, if the student is expecting the degree at the end of the spring term in May, then the Application for Advanced Degree Form should be completed at the beginning of the spring term. The actual deadline dates for receipt of this are posted in the University Academic Calendar.

[http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/forms/application\\_for\\_advanced\\_degree.pdf](http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/forms/application_for_advanced_degree.pdf)

3. Committee Membership Form:

Fill out and return to Office of Graduate Education with a copy to the Graduate Secretary in Psychology as soon as a committee is confirmed. This should occur sometime prior to an oral defense being scheduled.

<http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/forms/committeeconfirmation.pdf>

4. Oral Defense Presentation Form:

Fill out and return to Graduate Secretary in Psychology. This form may be accessed from the Department's Intranet Site: Psych Forms > Grad Student Forms > Oral Defense

5. Certification for Ph.D. Dissertation Defense:

Committee signs when thesis has been successfully defended. Return to Office of Graduate Education with a copy to the Graduate Secretary in Psychology.

<http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/forms/certificationdefense.pdf>

**NOTE: FOR ANY OF THE ABOVE FORMS THAT REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR'S SIGNATURE, THE DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE EDUCATION WILL SIGN AS THE CHAIR'S PROXY. THE DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE EDUCATION WILL SIGN PAPERWORK ONLY AFTER FACULTY ADVISORS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS (WHERE APPLICABLE) HAVE SIGNED.**

E. Format of Ph.D. Thesis

An example of how your Ph.D. Thesis should be formatted may be found on the Department Intranet Site: Psych Forms > Grad Student Forms > Dissertation Format Template

In addition, the University has step-by-step guidelines to follow for submitting your thesis that may be found at:

<http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/polproc/steps.html>

Note however that the university template for formatting is a generic. It is the example on the Department Intranet Site that is the one to follow (the one that has the Director of Graduate Education signature line on p. 2).

## VI. Guidelines for Approving Research Proposals Involving Human Subjects

A. The Psychology Department's procedures for approving research proposals involving human subjects conform to the principles set forth in the H.E.W. Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 (Nov. 1978) as well as those of the American Psychological Association.

B. Before the research proceeds, the research proposal must be approved by the University's Institutional Review Board. Effective July 9, 2009, all research involving human subjects at the University of Delaware must be submitted using IRBnet. Guidelines for submitting human subject research protocols may be found at <http://www.udel.edu/research/preparing/humansub-protocolreview.html>. Approval will be granted for one year only when the board believes that the research procedures are in compliance with the guidelines set forth below. Investigators may not reserve, run or otherwise contact prospective subjects until the investigator receives approval from IRBnet. The proposal should include all procedures, all associated questionnaires and debriefing forms, statements indicating how confidentiality will be assured as well as how participants will be informed of the full purpose and results of the studies. Also include the explanation of the study that subjects will be given before they are asked to sign the Informed Consent Statement. The IRBnet identifies all of the items needed to gain IRB approval.

C. All proposals submitted by students must be accompanied by the approval (i.e., electronic signature) of their primary faculty advisor. The faculty advisor attests to the scientific merit of the planned research and also that the procedures appear to conform to all ethical guidelines set forth by the APA.

### D. Guidelines

#### 1. Freedom from coercion to participate

It is considered essential that subjects for any departmental research project voluntarily elect to participate in said project, under no threat of reduced course grade, reduced or altered services or treatments, or other penalty. This absence of penalty, and the freedom of subjects to change their minds regarding participation and to withdraw from experimental or other research settings at any time, must be made clear to potential subjects as part of informed consent procedures.

#### 2. Informed Consent

Potential subjects must be informed in oral or written form in a manner that they will understand:

a. What the purpose of the study is. However, if disclosing the full and true purpose of the research would surely invalidate the objectives of the research, deception may be permissible as long as:

- i. the risk to the participant is minimal
  - ii. It seems reasonable to assume that the participant would agree to participate if the full and true purpose of the study was disclosed in advance.
- b. That participation is voluntary.
- c. That refusal to participate will not affect their grades or access to services of the institution or agency in which they were contacted. Also, potential subjects must be informed that their refusal to participate will not be conveyed to anyone, particularly those who could affect their status as a student, employee, or recipient of health care.
- d. That the subject has the right to withdraw his or her participation or refuse to answer any question at any time without penalty of any kind. For subject populations for which penalties would not be conceivably relevant, “penalties” need not be mentioned (e.g., door to door surveys).
- e. Any anticipated risks or potential for physical or psychological injury. In the event that there is some potential for injury:
  - i. it must be explained that in the event of physical injury resulting from research procedures, financial compensation is not available, but the cost of emergency medical treatment, not covered by insurance, would be paid for by the University
  - ii. These proposals must undergo a Full Board Review by the University IRB. Also, when there is some potential for injury, the following statement must appear on the informed consent document:

“I understand that in the event of physical injury resulting from research procedures, financial compensation is not available, but the cost of necessary emergency medical treatment, not covered by insurance, would be paid for by the University.”
- f. How much time it will take to complete his or her participation.
- g. That their anonymity and confidentiality is assured throughout all phases of the project. Thus, no subject will be identified by name or social security number in any oral or written report of the study. To ensure confidentiality, data on individual subjects will be identified by code number. The name associated with code numbers, if necessary to maintain, will be stored in a locked file accessible only to the investigator and will be held no longer than four years unless specific permission has been obtained. In instances where the specific name and location of an institution or agency might lead to the presumptive identification of individual subjects, the institution or agency is to be identified in a report by general, not specific, attributes.

h. (in Clinical settings)... That the experimental treatment is or is not within the realm of usual practice in the agency or institution and that it is within the realm of safe practice and is supported either empirically or theoretically in the literature and/or by experts in the field. Also, participants are to be informed that there are one or more treatment groups to which they could be assigned. Untreated control group subjects must be provided with the experimental treatment as soon as possible after the experiment, if the treatment proves efficacious. If assignment to more than one experimental group is to be made after the individual consents to participate, subjects must be informed of the possible assignments before they are asked to consent.

i. That informed consent is not required, however, for studies which do not intrude upon or interrupt the participants from their normal course of activity or if such intrusion or interruption is not an unusual and unexpected event in the immediate context, so long as neither place the participant at risk. For example if an investigator was interested in the willingness of people to assist a black or white stranger by exchanging two dimes and a nickel for a quarter in a location, such as a shopping center, informed consent would not be necessary. Similarly, informed consent would not be necessary, if an investigator was interested in pedestrian traffic flow on a crowded street.

3. Informed Consent Documents must contain:

a. Name of Experiment, Experimenter and the amount of participation credit given, if the latter is germane to the subject's participation.

b. The signature of the participant or, in the case of minors, the signature of the parent or legal guardian. Also the signature of minors over 12 years of age should be obtained.

c. Information pertinent to potential physical or psychological injury.

d. Statements informing participants about their right to decline or withdraw their participation (without any penalty – when pertinent). Students in Psychology 100 (General Psychology) are given the General Informed Consent document prior to any participation in research. This document operationalizes the principles discussed herein. Another Informed Consent document is given to the Psychology 100 students upon their appearing for a particular study.

e. Separate Informed Consent documents are to be used with participants affiliated and unaffiliated with the University.

f. A release for permission to retain audio- or video-taped records of the participant's behavior recorded during the experiment must be used. This release must state the purpose of maintaining the record, who will have access to such record and when it will be

destroyed. Also, it must be clear that the participant may deny such permission (without penalty when applicable) and if permission is denied the record will be destroyed immediately.

g. Informed Consent Documents for Parents and Legal Guardians  
must include:

- i. An enlightening view of the purpose of the research.
- ii. Assurance of freedom to refuse their child's participation without penalty of forfeiture of normal service to the family or child.
- iii. An affirmative signature of permission. That is, the parent or guardian must sign the document if he/she wishes to give permission for their child to participate.
- iv. The investigator's telephone number, in the event the parent or guardian desires more information.

#### 4. Debriefing & Reporting of Results

Participants for whom informed consent has been obtained have the right to learn more fully about the purpose and significance of the research as well as the nature of the results. Investigators will provide the opportunity for this information to be shared with the participants, unless it is believed that the interests of the research participants will best be served by not releasing this information. However, when results are released they will be presented in group form only, without reference to specific individuals.

#### 5. Department Policy on the Use of Clinical Instruments

When in the professional judgment of the clinical psychology faculty, questionnaire responses on clinical instruments are deemed indicative of serious maladjustment (e.g., imminent performance of self-destructive or other violent behaviors), the Department of Psychology is compelled to reach a decision in the best interests of the student. Considering the totality of information contained in our research instruments clinical faculty may decide to contact the individual respondent for the purposes of clinical validation and discussing possible referral to the University Counseling Center or to some other appropriate site. Such a course of action will always be weighed against the potentially deleterious effects of such an intervention. However, there are times when the clinical picture is reasonably clear, and the costs of laissez faire posture are too great to warrant inaction. In the event of such an intervention, the member of the clinical psychology faculty, who is the principle investigator or an advisor to the principle investigator, will contact the student. Confidentiality will not be breached in that the student will be contacted by a member of the research team.