

Graduate Student Handbook

Department of Psychology

University of Texas at El Paso

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I. INFORMATION FOR INCOMING GRADUATE STUDENTS

Welcome to the Graduate Program of the University of Texas at El Paso Psychology Department. We look forward to helping you get settled and succeed in your graduate training. This Handbook will familiarize you with many of the policies, expectations, and paperwork requirements that are critical for your success. It is important that you review this information so that you become familiar with our program.

Entry into graduate school can be stressful as well as exciting. Remember that you have been admitted to our graduate program because of your demonstrated talents and potential. We very much look forward to helping you build on those talents and advance your potential as you progress towards earning your PhD.

BASIC INFORMATION FOR INCOMING STUDENTS. PART 1 THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU ENTER THE GRADUATE PROGRAM.

Setting Up Your UTEP Email Account and Goldmine Account

The Graduate School sends a formal acceptance letter to students entering the graduate program. This letter includes a link to the university's [New Student Guide](#). This Guide includes important information about UTEP graduate programs. Incoming students should read it immediately after being accepted into the Psychology Graduate Program.

The New Student Guide provides instructions about how to obtain a UTEP email account and how to obtain an account on [MyUTEP.edu](#), the student services and information system for UTEP students. Please set up your accounts on UTEP Email and MyUTEP.edu by May 1 and then send a brief email to the Graduate Program Director *from your UTEP email account* so the Director will have your email address and know that you are using the account.

Using Your Email Account

Once you have a UTEP Email account, you should use it (not Gmail or other accounts) for all communications that have to do with UTEP or the Psychology Department. Messages to you from the Department will be sent only to your UTEP account. The Department will be sending you important information during the spring and summer before you enter the graduate program, so please check your UTEP email at least twice each week. Once you are in the graduate program you should continue to check your UTEP email regularly (every day during the Fall and Spring semesters, including Finals week; at least once each weekend during the Fall and Spring semesters; at least twice each week during breaks).

Orientation Meetings for New Graduate Students

The academic calendar for Fall of the coming academic year is posted on the website of the [UTEP Registrar](#). It will tell you when classes begin for the Fall semester. New graduate students are required to attend the following orientation meetings during *the week before classes begin*:

- (a) The Graduate School has a day-long orientation meeting for all new graduate students. This meeting is typically scheduled on the Wednesday or Friday before Fall classes begin. In Fall 2018, the first day of classes is Monday, August 27. The Graduate School's New

Graduate Student Orientation is therefore likely to be held on the preceding Wednesday, August 22, although this date is not yet certain.

(b) The Psychology Department has a half-day orientation meeting for all new graduate students in Psychology. This meeting is typically scheduled on the day before the Graduate School orientation meeting. In Fall 2018 the Orientation for New Graduate Students in Psychology is likely to be held on Tuesday, August 21 from 9:00 to 12:00 in the UTEP Psychology Building, Room 310, although this date is not yet certain.

Contacting Your Mentor

In late April or early May you should send an email to your faculty mentor. Your mentor will be your academic advisor and will guide your research during your first year in the graduate program and probably during your entire graduate career. If you don't know who your mentor is, email the Graduate Program Information to find out. Your mentor will be a valuable source for information and guidance as you get started in graduate school

Choosing Your Courses for the Fall

(1) Once you have an account with MyUTEP.edu, you should log on and explore it a bit, to familiarize yourself with the information and services it provides.

MyUTEP.edu provides a listing of the Psychology courses scheduled for next Fall. You can find it on the website under:

Dashboard --> Goldmine --> Registration -->Look Up Classes to Add –
Select "PSYC- Psychology" as subject.

(2) During their first semester, most graduate students usually take the following courses, depending on the program they are in:

PhD students and MA Experimental Students

- (a) A statistics course (PSYC 6307 Applied Correlation and Regression or PSYC 4317 Advanced Statistics)
- (b) A breadth course or a course in the student's area of concentration (Legal, Health or SCN)
- (c) First Year Research (for PhD students) or Research Applications (for Experimental MA students)

Clinical MA Students

- (a) A statistics course (PSYC 6307 Applied Correlation and Regression or PSYC 4317 Advanced Statistics)
- (b) A core clinical course (such as PSYC 5322 Theories and Methods of Psychotherapy)
- (c) A breadth course

Before signing up for classes, consult thoughtfully with your mentor. Some course offerings may be confusing and your mentor can explain them. For instance, what is a "breadth course" and what is a "course in your area"?

It is particularly important that you and your mentor discuss which statistics class you should take in your first semester. If you are good with numbers and feel confident about your undergraduate statistical background, then PSYC 6307 Applied Correlation and Regression is likely to be a good choice for you. On the other hand, if your knowledge of undergraduate statistics is rusty you may want to take PSYC 4317 Advanced Statistics instead.

Transferring Credits or Thesis

If you have previously been enrolled in a Psychology graduate program and want to transfer credits or a thesis to UTEP, please let the Graduate Director know in late April or early May. The Director will send you the paperwork forms you will need to fill out in order to apply for Transfer Credits. The paperwork should be completed and submitted to the Graduate Director by July 15 before you enter the graduate program in the fall. More details about Transfer Credits are provided later in this handbook, in the sections entitled "Applying for Transfer Credits" and "Thesis Waivers."

Levelling Requirements

If you were not a Psychology major as an undergraduate, you must complete the required "Leveling Classes" in Psychology before you enter the graduate program in the Fall. Leveling classes are undergraduate courses that provide a basic background in Psychology and prepare you for graduate work. More information on [Leveling Classes](#) is posted on the Department's website.

If you were a Psychology major as an undergraduate, you do *not* need to take Leveling courses.

Your First Month in the Graduate Program: A Financial Warning

After enrolling for your classes on MyUTEP.edu, you will be asked to pay your tuition. If you are an out-of-state student you can expect that paying your tuition will be confusing and unpleasant, because you will be asked to pay tuition at the out-of-state rate, which is very high (\$4,000-\$5,000).

- (a) Go ahead and pay the full out-of-state tuition to the university.
- (b) Eventually (in late September or early October), the university will recognize that you have been overcharged. Your tuition for the Fall semester will then be retroactively reduced to the rate for in-state students and the money you overpaid will be refunded to you.
- (c) Many new students don't have enough money to make the large out-of-state tuition payment at the beginning of their first semester. Furthermore, they don't receive their first pay check from the university until October 1. Nevertheless, due to bookkeeping requirements, the university will insist that you pay the out-of-state tuition. And there is no arguing with the university on this point: You will have to pay the out-of-state tuition (and then receive a refund a month or so later).

If you need help paying the high out-of-state tuition, there are two strategies. First, some students get a short-term loan from a family member and then repay it when the university refunds the money that was overcharged for tuition. Second, other students get a short-term "Emergency Loan" from UTEP and then repay it when the university refunds the money overcharged for tuition. You can apply for an Emergency Loan at <https://loans.utep.edu/>

Need Help or Information?

Between the time you are admitted and the time you enter the program in August, you may want more information or guidance about your entry into the graduate program. Depending on the nature of your problem, please feel free to contact one of the following individuals:

- (1) Your mentor
- (2) The Psychology Department Secretary
- (3) The Graduate Program Director

BASIC INFORMATION FOR INCOMING STUDENTS. PART 2: THINGS TO DO IMMEDIATELY AFTER ORIENTATION

As already explained, new graduate students must attend a Department orientation meeting during the week before Fall classes begin. Immediately after this meeting you should turn your attention to three things: (1) "getting appointed" by the UTEP Human Resources Department so you can receive financial support and health insurance and apply for a parking space, (2) registering for your Fall courses and paying your fall tuition, and (3) submitting your non-resident tuition waiver and obtaining a UTEP ID card.

Getting Appointed

Students who have not previously been employed at UTEP must 'in-process' at the UTEP Human Resource Services (located in the Administration Building) before they are eligible to be paid and receive other university services. As part of the 'in-process' procedure you must complete three forms included in your orientation packet:

New Hire Information Sheet,
Application for Employment
Paperwork for Criminal Background Check.

After completing these forms, you should take them to the Human Resources (HR) office. You must also take (A) your Social Security card and (B) your driver's license or passport. International students who do not have a Social Security card can just take their passport. If you don't have these IDs, consult the information sheet in your orientation packet that lists other kinds of ID that HR will accept,

The staff at HR will take the three forms, ask you to fill out additional forms, and check your IDs. They will then give you a New Hire Information Sheet. You should *immediately* bring this sheet back to the Administrative Staff in the Psychology Department. The staff will then begin the process of entering you into the University's electronic database system (PeopleSoft) and getting you an official "job appointment." The process of getting a job appointment usually takes two to four weeks after you hand in your New Hire Information Sheet. Once you have a job appointment, you will be put on the university payroll, receive health insurance, and be allowed to apply for a Parking Space. Because the process of obtaining a job appointment takes several weeks, you should get the process started right away by taking the New Hire Information Sheet to the department's Administrative Staff immediately after visiting HR.

Registering for Classes and Paying Tuition

At the department's Orientation Meeting you will meet individually with the Graduate Program Director for Psychology. The Graduate Director will discuss your schedule with you, approve your Fall courses, and sign your preliminary Program of Study. The Director will also ask you to read and sign the department's Milestones Agreement, which describes the steps you must complete to earn your degree.

The Director will send an email listing your Fall courses to your mentor and to the department Secretary. The Secretary will then enter approvals on the university's computer system so you can enroll in classes.

Following your meeting with the Graduate Director, go directly to the Secretary and make sure she has entered the approvals for your courses on the computer system. While you are in the Psychology Department office, use the photocopying machines there to make two copies of your Program of Study and Milestone Agreement. (a) Give the originals of the Program of Study and Milestone Agreement to the Secretary; (b) Take copies of your Program of Study and Milestone Agreement to the university's New Graduate Student Orientation, where they will be collected from you. (c) Retain the other copies for yourself.

After the Secretary has entered approvals on the computer system, you should enroll for your classes on MyUTEP.edu. After enrolling, you must pay your tuition.

As already explained, unless you are already a Texas resident, you can expect that you will be asked to pay tuition at the out-of-state rate, which is very high. The university requires that you pay this amount *temporarily*. It is a real headache, but there is no way around it. For advice on how to handle the situation, see "Your First Month in the Graduate Program: A Financial Warning" in the previous section of this handbook.

Submitting Your Non-Resident Tuition Waiver and Getting Your UTEP ID Card

Your orientation packet contains a Non-Resident Tuition Waiver (its official title is "Verification of RA/RA/AI/Participant Award. Waiver of Non-Resident Tuition Rate"). You must submit this form so that you can pay tuition at the rate for in-state students, which is much lower than the rate for out-of-state students.

The Non-Resident Tuition Waiver requires three approval signatures:

- (1) The waiver needs the signature of the **Department Chair**. The waiver provided in your orientation packet has already been signed by the chair so that you don't have to worry about obtaining this signature.
- (2) The next signature that you need is from the **Dean of the College of Liberal Arts**. After filling out the waiver, you should go to the Dean's office in the Liberal Arts Building and ask the administrative assistant there for the Dean's signature. You will probably be asked to leave the form for the Dean's signature and then return to pick it up at a later time (usually 24 or 48 hours later).
- (3) After you have the Dean's signature you should make a copy of the signed form for your records and then deliver the original to the Graduate School office, which is in the Mike Loya Administrative Services Building. You can leave the form with the person at the front desk of the Graduate School office. The **Dean of the Graduate School**, will sign the waiver and then forward it through the right channels. You do not need to pick up the waiver or deliver it anywhere else after the Dean of the Graduate School has signed it.

While you're at the Graduate School office in the Mike Loya Administrative Services Building, this is a good time to go downstairs and apply for a UTEP Student ID card. At the beginning of the school year there's sometimes a special desk set up on the ground floor of the building where you can request an ID. If you don't see a special desk, just ask one of the people working on the ground floor to tell you where you can obtain a Student ID.

BASIC INFORMATION FOR INCOMING STUDENTS. PART 3: OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS

Research Assistants, Teaching Assistants, and Assistant Instructors

PhD students are generally guaranteed to receive job appointments as Research Assistants (RAs), Teaching Assistants (TAs), Assistant Instructors (AIs) or Advisors for five years. MA students also sometimes receive such appointments, depending on the availability of funding.

TAs provide assistance to instructors who are teaching undergraduate or graduate classes. Additional information about expectations for TA students are provided in a later section of this handbook entitled "Responsibilities of Teaching Assistants." RAs work in the labs of Psychology faculty members or in other research settings outside the Department. AIs are advanced PhD students who serve as the primary instructor (also known as the "instructor of record") for an undergraduate course, such as PSYC 1301 Introduction to Psychology or PSYC 1303 Statistical Methods. Additional information regarding AI positions is provided in a later section of this handbook entitled: "Qualifications of Assistant Instructors (AIs)."

The stipend that accompanies job appointments is for the 9-month academic period from September 1st through May 31st, with 20 hours of work during each week. To receive a job appointment during a Fall or Spring semester, a student must be registered full-time. For incoming graduate students, "full-time" is defined as being registered for at least 9 course credits each semester. There is a more complicated definition of "full-time" for advanced graduate students, as explained later in this handbook. However, during their first year in the program, students can assume that they are "full-time" if they are signed up for 9 credits each semester.

When possible, the job appointments of graduate students are assigned within the Psychology Department. First-year graduate students are usually assigned as TAs, with a few assigned as RAs. As students progress through the graduate program, they often receive appointments as AIs within the Psychology Department or as RAs outside of the Department. AIs serve as the primary instructors for undergraduate courses. AI positions are desirable because they allow graduate students to gain experience as instructors and prepare themselves for teaching opportunities following graduation. Students are eligible to serve as AIs only after they have earned a Master's degree and met other requirements described later in this handbook.

Doctoral students who work as RAs outside the Department typically conduct applied research within the university. In past years, graduate students from the Psychology Department have worked as RAs in a variety of settings within UTEP, including the following:

- Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (ORSP)
- Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research and Planning (CIERP)
- Provost's Office
- College of Pharmacy
- College of Education

RA positions in these applied research settings are desirable because they allow graduate students to build their professional credentials and increase their skills in advanced statistics, psychometrics, grant writing, professional writing, and public speaking.

PhD students are guaranteed a job appointment during every Fall and Spring semester during their first five years in the doctoral program, provided that they (a) reliably perform their assigned assistantship duties, (b) remain in good academic standing and display good research progress in the graduate program, and (c) cooperate with the department's efforts to place them in assistantships within or outside the Psychology department. Under exceptional circumstances, job appointments may be extended beyond the five-year period.

PhD students are not guaranteed job appointments during summers. However, a small number of students are awarded summer positions as RAs or AIs, or obtain special research grants from the university. An RA in a summer position typically works in the lab of a faculty member with grant funding who has hired them. An AI in a summer position teaches an undergraduate course during one of the two summer semesters. An email is sent out to all PhD students by the Graduate Program Director in April or May inviting them to apply for AI summer positions. Applications are then reviewed and AI positions are assigned by the Department Chair. Priority for summer AI positions is typically given to advanced graduate students who have completed and published research during their previous years in the program. In other words, summer AI positions are used to reward to students who have been publishing their research.

MA students are *not* guaranteed job positions during the Fall and Spring semesters but may be hired as TAs (or less commonly, as RAs or Advisors) if the department has sufficient funds to hire them. Assistantships for MA students are subject to the same conditions as those for PhD students (reliably performing duties, remaining in good academic standing).

Although the Department tries to make TA and RA assignments that promote the student's academic and career development, such assignments are not always available. Students who request job appointments are expected to accept the TA and RA positions assigned to them. Under normal circumstances there is only one reason that a student may decline an assignment: if it causes a schedule conflict with a clinical internship, field placement, or regularly scheduled class in which the student is enrolled.

Getting Paid

To be paid by UTEP, you must "get appointed," as already described. In addition you must be registered full-time. For incoming graduate students, "full-time" is defined as being registered for at least 9 course credits each semester. There's a more complicated definition of "full-time" for advanced graduate students and summer semesters, but during your first Fall and Spring semesters you can assume that you're "full-time" if you're signed up for 9 credits each semester.

It is required that you keep and turn in monthly time sheets. Blank time sheets are available in the Department Office. On the next-to-the-last working day of each month, please do the following: (a) Compute your hours, sign the time sheet; (b) Have your faculty supervisor/mentor sign the sheet; and (c) Turn in the time sheet in the Department Office.

Paychecks are available in the Department Office on the first working day of the month after 10:00 A.M. If the first day of the month occurs on a weekend, the checks are given out the following workday.

Students who are funded will normally receive their first paycheck of the year on October 1st, which is pay for the month of September; i.e., pay is for the previous month, not in advance.

Full-Time, Active, and Inactive Status

As already stated, university rules generally require graduate students to be registered full-time during the semesters that they have a job appointment. The definition of "full-time" is somewhat complicated. It is explained in detail in the [General Degree Requirements](#) of the UTEP graduate school and is summarized in the following paragraphs.

The definition of full-time is different for **regular semesters** (Fall and Spring) than for **summer semesters**. (a) During their first few years in the program, MA and PhD students are considered "full-time" during a **regular semester** if they are registered for at least 9 course credits. (b) However, there is a "dissertation exception" to this rule for advanced PhD students, and a similar "thesis exception" for advanced MA students:

- (a) *Dissertation exception.* Advanced PhD students are considered "full time" during a **regular semester** if (a) they have completed all requirements for the degree except dissertation and (b) are enrolled for 3 hours of dissertation (PSYC 6398 or PSYC 6399)

during that semester. PhD students can take advantage of this "dissertation exception" for a maximum of [five semesters](#). They must be enrolled for dissertation for at least two separate semesters: (a) during the semester they propose their dissertation or the first full semester after they propose (PSYC 6398), (b) the semester they defend their dissertation (PSYC 6399), and (c) during all other regular semesters (Fall and Spring) in between (PSYC 6399). Notice that PSYC 6398 is the course number for the first semester of dissertation and PSYC 6399 is the course number for all other semesters.

(b) *Thesis exception*. Advanced MA students are considered "full time" during a regular semester if (a) they have completed all requirements for the degree except the thesis and (b) are enrolled for 3 hours of thesis (PSYC 5398 or PSYC 5399) during that semester. MA students can take advantage of this "thesis exception" for a maximum of [four semesters](#). They must be enrolled for thesis for at least two separate semesters: (a) during the semester they propose their thesis or the first full semester after they propose (PSYC 5398), (b) the semester they defend their thesis (PSYC 5399), and (c) during all other regular semesters (Fall and Spring) in between (PSYC 5399). Notice that PSYC 5398 is the course number for the first semester of thesis and PSYC 5399 is the course number for all other semesters.

The definition of "full time" is different for *summer semesters*. Graduate students are not required to register for classes during the summer, unless they have a job appointment (RA, AI, or TA position). According to [current university requirement posted on this webpage](#) (April 2018), graduate students with summer job appointments must register for at least 3 credit hours during one of the two summer terms. Exceptions to this summer enrollment requirement are sometimes granted, however. Graduate students who have a summer appointment but wish to be exempted from registering for summer courses should send a written request to the Graduate Program Director, with cc to their mentor. The request should describe the student's summer job appointment, indicate the number of weeks of the appointment and the number of hours per week, and specify whether or not the summer appointment involves work on the student's dissertation, thesis, or first-year project. The Graduate Director will approve or disapprove exemptions in accordance with policies established by the Graduate School and the Psychology Department's Graduate Program Committee.

Students are considered to have *active status* in the Psychology graduate program so long as they (a) are in good standing in the program, (b) are making adequate progress toward their degree, and (c) have not exceeded the university time limits for completion of degree (6 years for MA students, 8 years for PhD students, including graduate work completed prior to entering UTEP; see [General Degree Requirements](#)).

It is possible for a student to maintain *active status* within the graduate program even though the student is not *full-time*. For example, suppose a PhD student has advanced to candidacy and already taken advantage of the "dissertation exception" for five semesters. The student could register for only three semester credit hours and technically retain *active status* in the PhD program, even though the student would not be considered full-time or eligible for funding.

Students who do not register for the minimum number of full time credit hours for two consecutive regular semesters will be placed on *inactive status*, unless they have obtained prior permission from the Graduate Program Director. Doctoral students who are placed on inactive status must submit a written request for reinstatement to active status within the doctoral program. Such requests must be submitted to the Graduate Program Committee through the Graduate Program

Director. The Graduate Program Committee will evaluate the request and determine if the individual can return to active status and funding.

In-State Tuition, Out-of-State Tuition, and Tuition Waiver

All PhD and MA students who have job appointments with the university during a particular semester are eligible to pay tuition at the in-state rate during that semester, even if they are not already Texas residents. Ph.D. students also receive a tuition waiver each year to help cover the cost of tuition. In 2016, this waiver was equivalent to \$3,000.

Under current university rules, a graduate student who is not a Texas resident must pay out-of-state tuition for summer classes, including thesis or dissertation, unless the student has a summer job appointment or a university summer research award. This rule applies even if the student had a job appointment and paid in-state tuition during the preceding regular semesters. Because of this rule, graduate students without summer job appointments should consider carefully before enrolling in thesis or dissertation during the summer.

In the past, some out-of-state students who wished to propose or defend their thesis or dissertation during the summer have avoided the expense of out-of-state tuition by establishing legal residency in the state of Texas. The process of becoming a Texas resident requires: (a) Residence in Texas for at least one year, (b) Proof of one year's residence, in the form of a Texas Driver's license issued at least one year previously, and rent or mortgage receipts for a Texas domicile for at least one year, (c) Completion of an application for Texas residency, available through UTEP Financial Aid Office or Graduate School.

The Psychology Department does not provide legal advice and does not guarantee that you can obtain Texas residency by meeting these requirements. However, some of our past students have successfully established Texas residency. The Department suggests you begin collecting the necessary documentation (Texas Driver's License, rent/mortgage receipts) as soon as possible after entering the graduate program, so that you may to obtain Texas residence after you have been in the program for a year.

Health Insurance

All graduate students with official job appointments in the university (Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, and Assistant Instructors) receive health insurance under the Student Health Insurance Program (SHIP). The SHIP health insurance provides good basic health coverage. It is paid for by the university and costs you nothing. Coverage for new graduate students begins at the time they receive their first official job appointment, usually two to four weeks after the Fall semester begins. It is generally safe to assume that coverage will begin by October 1 of your first year in the graduate program. Thereafter coverage extends during the school year (Fall and Spring) and continues during the summer whether or not you work during the summer. This benefit is valued at approximately \$2,200 per year.

In addition to the basic SHIP insurance, graduate students can obtain (a) health insurance coverage that is more comprehensive than SHIP, or (b) coverage for spouse and dependents. However, these additional forms of coverage are paid for by the student, not by the university.

Information on health insurance benefits for UTEP graduate students is available at the Graduate School's webpage [GRADUATE STUDENT EMPLOYEE INSURANCE PLAN](#). Additional information can be obtained by contacting UTEP Human Resources or visiting their website on [employee benefits](#). Information on benefits is also available at the following website: <http://www.utsystem.edu/benefits/>. Information regarding additional non-UTEP resources can be found at www.studentresources.net.

Parking

Graduate students can apply for a parking permit after they have received an official job appointment from the university. As already stated, job appointments are typically made two to four weeks after classes begin.

Once you've received your appointment, you can apply for a parking permit online at MyUTEP.edu or at the [UTEP Parking Office](#) website. [Maps of parking lots and information](#) about student parking are also available online. If you run into problems online, you can go in person to the university Parking Office in the Mike Loya Administrative Services Building and get your permit there.

There is a charge for parking permits. Parking spaces close to campus are more expensive than parking spaces that are further away. The parking lot closest to the Psychology Building is DA-1. If you get a parking space that is further away, you can ride the university's free shuttle service to bring you to campus.

Some graduate students have been successful in applying for parking permits early, *before* receiving their job appointment. After registering for classes, these students have gone in person to the Parking Office, explained their situation, and asked for permission to apply for a parking permit. If you are willing to put in the extra effort you might have success at this approach. You will need to take evidence that you are an incoming graduate student (for instance, a copy of the email message from the Graduate School notifying you of your admission, and maybe a letter from your mentor on UTEP stationery).

Keys

A Key Request form is included in your orientation packet. You should use this form to request two keys – a key to the Psychology Building and a separate key to your mentor's lab. You should make this request as soon as possible, because it takes a while for the keys to be made. To obtain keys:

- (a) Complete the Key Request form;
- (b) Get the form initialed by your mentor (you don't need to get the chair's signature),
- (c) Leave the form with the secretary in the Psychology Department office.

The Secretary will get the Chair's signature and then send the completed Key Request form to the Key Shop. When your key is ready, you will be notified to pick it up at the Key Shop, in Facilities Services on Hawthorn Drive.

More About Keys and Building Security

When you no longer need your key, it is your responsibility to return the key to the Key Shop to have your record cleared. Under no circumstances should you lend or give your key to another person!

With regard to building keys and building security: when you unlock a door, please be sure to re-lock the door before continuing to your office or lab. The doors do not lock automatically. If a faculty member gives you permission to be in the building after normal working hours and/or on weekends, your name will be submitted to the University Police as having that permission. The police regularly check the buildings. If your name does not appear on their list, you will be instructed to leave the building at once. If you do not have a key to a lab or an office, it is presumed that you are not authorized to be there. **The building custodial staff will not let you in!** They have been given specific instructions not to grant these requests.

Unfortunately, theft is a widespread problem on the UTEP campus. Please make sure to leave all doors locked when you leave an office or lab--even if for only a few minutes.

The Department Office, Photocopier, FAX, and Office Supplies

The main Psychology Department Office is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. All PhD students and TAs are assigned individual mailboxes in the office. All other graduate students share common mailboxes, depending on their funding (i.e., a specific faculty member's grant) or in the mailbox labeled "Graduate Students" for those students who do not fall into one of the other categories. It is important to check your mailbox daily during the workweek.

There are two photocopy/scan machines in the main office. When making *copies for a faculty member* on a grant/fellowship/etc., please log the copies on the log sheet beside the copier giving the requested info. When making *personal paper copies*, log them in as "personal." At present, there is no charge for reasonable use of copy machines, but it is important to log your copying anyway. You can also make *pdf scans* and email them to your UTEP email account without charge.

There is a FAX machine in the main office that is available for student use within reasonable limits. Office supplies are kept in the Department Office. They are for department use **ONLY**, not for students' personal use.

Computers and Printers for Student Use

Computers and printers are available to you in the Liberal Arts Center for Instructional Technology (LACIT), the computer center in the Liberal Arts Bldg. The Psychology Building and most other university buildings also have a Wi-Fi network that you can hook up to with your personal laptop.

Department Telephones.

Phones are available in all offices and many of the labs. Most department phones are not equipped for long-distance general access.

If You Travel on University Funds.

This applies only to students who are in any way funded by a grant, fellowship, or award (for instance, by a *travel grant* from the UTEP Graduate School). Before you make any travel arrangements, check with the staff in the Psychology Office about the Travel Authorization that must be completed at least 1 week **PRIOR TO THE TRAVEL**. Do not make any airline reservations without this Travel Authorization. Work with the Psychology staff to obtain authorization, and they will give you an authorization number to make travel reservations.

Reservations should be made only through UTEP's contract travel agencies:

Anthony Travel 1-800-684-2044
Corporate Traveler Planners 1-866-366-1142

The purchase of Internet airfare is **NOT** authorized and will not be reimbursed. NOTE: If you are responsible for teaching a scheduled class or lab, a Travel Authorization must be approved for any travel--UTEP business or personal--during the semester.

II. Curriculum of the Psychology PhD Program

Description of PhD Concentrations

The UTEP Ph.D. Program is designed to train all students in the fundamental or "core" areas of psychology. Furthermore, each student specializes in one of three areas of concentration: (1) Health Psychology, (2) Law and Psychology, or (3) Social Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, and Neurosciences (SCN). In addition, some students specialize in (4) Language Acquisition and Bilingualism (LAB). LAB is technically part of the SCN concentration. However, LAB operates largely as a distinct concentration and its Program of Study is different than the Program of Study for SCN.

Health Psychology. Students in this concentration typically take coursework and conduct research in the following areas: alcohol and tobacco use; addictive behaviors; health promotion; adaptation to chronic illness; judgment and decision making; risk perception and risk communication; developmental changes in health related behaviors; weight loss; and exercise.

Legal Psychology. Students in this concentration typically take coursework and conduct research in the following areas: criminal justice and mental health; offender rehabilitation; adolescent risk taking; juvenile offenders and delinquency; interviews and interrogations in legal settings and national security investigations; and prediction of recidivism in juvenile and adult offenders.

Social Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, and Neuroscience. Students in this concentration typically take coursework and conduct research in the following areas: animal models of addiction; behavioral regulation; social neuroscience; attitudes; social perception, metaphor comprehension; prejudice and stereotyping.

Language Acquisition and Bilingualism. Students in LAB typically take coursework and conduct research in the following areas: cognitive and linguistic approaches to the study of human language processing; bilingual memory; multilingual language processing, and multilingual text processing. As already noted, LAB is technically considered part of the SCN concentration but has its own Program of Study.

The University of Texas at El Paso's location on the U.S./Mexico border provides unique opportunities for investigating how the intersection of nationalities, cultures, and languages affect a range of cognitive processes and behaviors. These issues permeate nearly all of our academic and scholarly activities, including classroom instruction, research, and community placements. We encourage students to take advantage of these unique training opportunities.

Programs of Study for PhD Students: Overview

Ph.D. candidates are required to complete 78 semester credit hours of coursework. Some degree requirements are the same for all PhD students, but other requirements are individualized depending on the student's area of Concentration. The individualized degree requirements for a student are usually referred to as the "Program of Study." However, the Program of Study is sometimes referred to as a "Degree Plan."

Generalized degree plans for the different PhD concentrations degrees can be found on [give departmental website and graduate school website]. However, the Graduate School provides an online individualized degree plan for each student at MyUTEP.edu --> Goldmine --> Degree Evaluation. The Graduate School sometimes refers to this online degree plan as the "Curricular Advising and Program Plan" (CAPP). The following paragraphs provide an overview of the PhD Program of Study as listed on the Graduate School's online Degree Plan. More details about the Programs of Study for each PhD concentration are provided later in this handbook.

The Psychology Core Curriculum. The Core Curriculum is required of all PhD students in all concentrations. It consists of statistics, research methods, and breadth courses, plus First Year Project, Thesis, Dissertation and Research Applications. The courses required for the Core Curriculum are listed (a) at the top of each student's online degree plan and (b) in the Programs of Study for each PhD Concentration later in this handbook.

Concentration Courses. Concentration Courses are specific to the student's area of concentration. They typically include both *concentration requirements* and *concentration electives*. *Concentration requirements* are courses that must be taken by all students in the concentration, whereas *concentration electives* are courses that may be selected by the individual student. For instance, all Legal Psychology Students must take (i) five required concentration courses (Survey of Legal Psychology, two semesters of Special Topics in Legal Psychology, and two semesters of Field Placement), and (ii) three concentration electives. Concentration Courses are listed on the online Degree Plan under the heading of "Area Name: PhD in Psychology (Name of Concentration)".

Concentration electives are intended to strengthen the student's knowledge and skills in their area of concentration. Concentration electives may include (a) courses in the Psychology Department related to the student's research or area of concentration, (b) Statistics or methodology courses, (c) courses outside the Psychology Department that are relevant to the student's research or area of concentration, or (d) Research applications, thesis or dissertation credits. Students are required to obtain their mentor's approval when selecting Concentration Electives, to ensure that these courses are appropriate for their area of concentration and career goals.

Psychology Electives. Psychology Electives consist of additional courses to increase students' knowledge and skills relevant to psychology, research, and professional goals. Psychology Electives may include (a) graduate courses offered in the Psychology Department, including methodology and statistics, (b) research courses offered in the Psychology Department, including dissertation, thesis, or research applications, and (c) courses outside the Psychology Department that the student and mentor agree will advance the student's knowledge, skills, or professional development. Psychology Electives are listed on the online Degree Plan under the heading of "Area Name: Psychology Electives (Name of Concentration)". Students are strongly encouraged to consult with their mentor when selecting Psychology Electives.

Psychology electives may include a maximum of nine credit hours of advanced undergraduate courses (3000 level or 4000 level). These courses must be pre-approved for graduate credit by the student's mentor and the Graduate Program Director.

Research Activity Courses. Because our doctoral program is strongly grounded in empirical research, students are required to actively participate in supervised research projects throughout their training. Courses that promote research participation by PhD student are First Year Project, Thesis, Dissertation, and Research Applications. These courses do not have a separate heading in the online Degree Plan, but instead are listed under the sections for the Core Curriculum, Concentration Requirements, and Psychology Electives.

Non-Course Requirements. The top of the online Degree Plan includes a section titled "Non-Course Requirements." This is a checklist of program requirements, such as proposing and defending the dissertation, that the student must meet in order to graduate. The items on this checklist will be automatically filled in as the student proceeds through the PhD program. Students should be familiar with this list, but should not be concerned about filling it out or correcting it until they are ready to graduate.

Non-Program Electives. The online Degree Plan includes a section titled "Non-Program Electives." This section includes graduate courses taken by the student *that do not count toward the 78 credits necessary for the PhD degree*. This section of the online Degree Plan is often in error and may include courses that should appear in other sections of the Degree Plan. You will have the opportunity to correct errors here and in other sections of the online Degree Plan when you submit your Program of Study at the following times: (a) the semester you are going to defend your thesis, (b) the semester you are applying for Advancement to Candidacy, and (c) the semester you are going to defend your dissertation.

General University Requirements. In addition to Psychology Department requirements described in this document, students in the Ph.D. program must meet all university requirements for the Ph.D. degree described in the [Graduate School Catalogue](#). Students should go online and familiarize themselves with the university requirements.

Programs of Study for PhD Students: Key Requirements

The PhD Program of Study includes certain key requirements that must be met by all doctoral students: (a) Statistics and Methodology Courses, (b) Breadth Courses, (c) First Year Project, (d) Thesis, (e) Dissertation, and (f) Research Applications. These requirements are described in the following paragraphs, along with the Field Placement requirement, which applies only to Legal Psychology students.

Statistics and Methodology Courses

All Ph.D. students are required to complete 12 semester credit hours or coursework in statistics and research methods:

PSYC 6307 Applied Correlation & Regression (3 hours)

PSYC 6308 Experimental Design & Analysis of Variance (ANOVA; 3 hours)

PSYC 6334 Foundations of Research (3 hours)

An additional three-hour graduate course in statistics or research methods from the following list:

PSYC 6303 Seminar in Meta-analysis

PSYC 6302 Structural Equation Modeling

PSYC 6323 Psychometrics

PSYC 6304 Categorical Data Analysis

PSYC 6335 Research Design/Data Analysis

PSYC 6312 Program Evaluation

Another graduate course in statistics, research methods or mathematics approved by the student's mentor and the Graduate Program Director
(note: PSYC 4317 does not meet this requirement)

Because proficiency in statistics and methodology is essential for researchers, students should complete PSYC 6307 (Correlation/Regression) and PSYC 6308 (ANOVA) by the end of their first year in the program and PSYC 6334 (Foundations) by the end of their second year, unless they have received prior approval from their mentor and the Graduate Program Director. If a student does not complete the basic statistics/methodology sequence of PSYC 6307, PSYC 6308 and PSYC 6334 by the end of their second year (for instance, because they take PSYC 4317 Advanced Statistics in their first year), the student must complete the sequence by the end of their third year.

Students who seek the Quantitative Certificate offered by the Department must take additional courses in statistics and research methodology, beyond the four courses required for the PhD degree. More details regarding the Certificate are provided later in this handbook, in the section entitled "Graduate Certificate in Quantitative Methods in Psychology."

Breadth Courses

To ensure that graduates of the doctoral program have broad knowledge in the field of psychology, PhD students are required to complete two breadth courses in basic areas of psychology *outside* their area concentration. For instance, students in Legal Psychology or Health should generally take courses in cognitive, social or developmental psychology.

Breadth courses for SCN students must be outside the students' area of specialization. For instance, graduate students specializing in Social Psychology may not count Social Psychology courses as breadth courses, students in LAB may not count linguistic or psycholinguistic courses as breadth courses, students specializing in Cognitive Psychology may not count cognitive courses as breadth courses, and student specializing in Neuroscience may not count neuroscience or biology courses as breadth courses..

Ph.D. students must complete two breadth courses by the time they defend their thesis. It is often advantageous for students to complete one or two breadth courses by the end of their second year in the doctoral program. However, students should seek the advice of their mentor regarding the

best time for them to take breadth courses. Examples of breadth courses offered by the Department include PSYC 6321 Animal Learning and Behavior, PSYC 6372 Behavioral Neuroscience, PSYC 6330 Social Behavior and PSYC 6374 Cognitive Psychology. A tentative schedule of breadth courses that will be available during the next two years can be obtained from the Department's Graduate Program Director.

First-Year Project

Ph.D. Students are expected to initiate a research project during their first year in the Ph.D. program. The requirements of this first-year project include (1) submitting an IRB or IACUC proposal when appropriate, (2) completing the research, (3) presenting a summary of the research at a brief Departmental colloquium (usually 15-20 minutes in length); (4) submitting a written summary of the project to the student's mentor, according to the mentor's specifications; and (5) drafting the research findings when appropriate for presentation at a scientific conference or for submission to a scientific journal. Students should complete their first-year project, including the written summary and colloquium presentation, during the second semester of their first year or the first semester of their second year.

The first year project, including the choice of the research topic, is supervised by the student's mentor. A first-year project should meet the following four criteria: (1) It is an empirical study based on data collected by the student or a collaborator; (2) It involves substantial effort by the student to carry out data collection and/or data analysis; (3) it will meaningfully expand the student's research skills and knowledge of psychology, statistics, and/or methodology; and (4) it is likely to result in primary or secondary authorship on a published article, or contribute directly to a grant application or the student's thesis. Provided a first-year project meets these criteria, it can be (a) a study in which the student is the primary investigator, (b) a study in which the student is a secondary investigator, or (c) a study that forms one part of a larger project in which someone else is the primary investigator.

To receive credit for their first year project, students must enroll in two semesters of First Year Research (PSYC 6380 & PSYC 6381). Within three days after presenting the First Year Project at a Department Colloquium, the student should send an email to their mentor and the Graduate Program Director indicating that the First Year Project has been completed, with the date and title of the presentation.

Thesis

PhD Students must complete a Masters' thesis and earn what is called a "non-terminal" MA degree en route to earning their Ph.D. The thesis must be based on empirical research and analyses carried out by the student under the supervision of the student's mentor. The thesis cannot be a quantitative review or theoretical analysis. Students must register for thesis at least twice, including the semester they propose the thesis (PSYC 6395), the semester they defend the thesis (PSYC 6396), and during every regular semester in between (PSYC 6396). The course number for thesis is PSYC 6395 in the first semester and PSYC 6396 in all other semesters.

In general, students who enter the PhD program without prior graduate coursework are expected to (a) successfully propose their thesis before the beginning of their third year in the graduate program, and (b) successfully defend their thesis before the beginning of their fourth year in the program. However, these expectations regarding time will often not apply to students who enter the Ph.D. program with prior graduate coursework. Students with prior graduate coursework should confer with their mentor and create an individualized milestones agreement that specifies the expected times for completing their thesis proposal, thesis defense, and other graduate milestones. This individualized milestones agreement should be submitted to the Graduate Director by the end of the student's first semester in the Ph.D. program.

Students who anticipate that they will not complete their thesis proposal or thesis defense by the expected times indicated in the prior paragraph should submit a request for an extension to the Area Head for their area of concentration, with cc to their mentor and the Graduate Program Director. A request for extension of a thesis *proposal* should be submitted at least four weeks before the expected time for completion of the thesis proposal. A request for extension of a thesis *defense* should be submitted at least four weeks before the expected time for the thesis defense.

The request for an extension should indicate the title and subject of the thesis, the members of the student's committee, the current status of the proposal or thesis, and the anticipated date of completion. The Area Head will submit the application to the area faculty, who will approve or disapprove the extension. The area faculty may make their approval conditional upon the student meeting certain requirements or deadlines.

Students are expected to present their thesis at a professional conference and submit it to a journal for publication, unless their thesis advisor recommends otherwise. If a student does not submit the thesis for publication within one year of the thesis defense (or within another time period agreed upon by the student and thesis director), the thesis director may choose to revise the thesis and submit it for publication, usually with the student listed as first author.

The procedures and paperwork requirements for proposing and defending an MA thesis are described later in this handbook in the sections entitled "Thesis Proposal: Procedures and Paperwork Requirements" and "Thesis Defense: Procedures and Paperwork Requirements" in the larger section titled "Procedures and Paperwork Requirements for PhD Students."

If a masters' thesis (a) is completed at another accredited institution, or in another Department of UTEP, and (b) meets the three criteria described in the following paragraph, the thesis can be used to satisfy the Department's thesis requirement for PhD students. In such circumstances, the student is said to receive a "thesis waiver." A student who seeks a thesis waiver should email a written request and a pdf of the thesis to their mentor, the head of the area Committee for the student's

concentration (for instance, the head of SCN or Health Psychology), and the Graduate Program Director. The request may be submitted before a student begins classes in the Ph.D. program, and must be submitted no later than 60 days after the student has begun the Ph.D. program.

The head of the Area Committee will then identify a Reader in the student's area. The Reader and the student's mentor will decide whether the thesis meets the following three criteria for a thesis waiver: (a) The thesis is on an empirical research project; (b) it is equivalent in scope and quality to the typical MA thesis completed by students at UTEP in the student's area of concentration, and (c) it is on a topic appropriate for the student's area of concentration. The Reader and mentor will notify the Head of the Area Committee and the Graduate Program Director of their decision.

If the student's mentor and the Reader both find that the thesis meets the criteria for a thesis waiver, the student will make an oral presentation on the thesis (usually 20-30 minutes) at a research colloquium of the Psychology Department. After making the presentation, the student should notify the Graduate Program Director by email within three days, with a cc to the student's mentor, of the date and title of the oral presentation. The Graduate Program Director will then notify the Graduate School and request a thesis waiver for the student. The student who has received the waiver should apply for Advancement to Dissertation by the end of the first semester of their second year in the graduate program.

Dissertation

PhD Students must complete a dissertation, based on empirical research and analyses carried out by the student under the supervision of the student's mentor. The dissertation cannot be a quantitative review or theoretical analysis. Students must register for dissertation at least twice, including (a) the semester they propose the dissertation or the first regular semester after they propose (PSYC 6398), (b) the semester they defend the dissertation (PSYC 6399), and (c) during every regular semester in between (PSYC 6399). The course number for dissertation is PSYC 6398 in the first semester and PSYC 6399 in all other semesters.

In general, students who enter the PhD program without prior graduate coursework are expected to (a) successfully propose their dissertation by the end of their fourth year in the graduate program, and (b) successfully defend their dissertation by the end of their fifth year in the program. However, these expectations regarding time will often not apply to students who enter the Ph.D. program with prior graduate coursework. Students with prior graduate coursework should confer with their mentor and create an individualized milestones agreement that specifies the expected times for completing their dissertation proposal, dissertation defense, and other graduate milestones. This individualized milestones agreement should be submitted to the Graduate Director by the end of the student's first semester in the Ph.D. program.

Students who anticipate that they will not complete their dissertation proposal or dissertation defense by the expected times indicated in the prior paragraph should submit a request for an extension to the Area Head for their area of concentration, with cc to their mentor and the Graduate Program Director. A request for extension of a dissertation *proposal* should be submitted at least four weeks before the expected time for completion of the dissertation proposal. A request for extension of a dissertation *defense* should be submitted at least eight weeks before the expected time for the dissertation defense.

The request for an extension should indicate the title and subject of the dissertation, the members of the student's committee, the current status of the proposal or dissertation, the anticipated date of completion, and the student's plans for financial support while completing the dissertation. The Area Head will submit the application to the area faculty, who will approve or disapprove the extension. The area faculty may make their approval conditional upon the student meeting certain requirements or deadlines.

Students are expected to submit their dissertation to a journal for publication unless their dissertation director recommends otherwise. If a student does not submit the dissertation for publication within one year of the dissertation defense (or within another period agreed upon by the student and dissertation director), the dissertation director may choose to revise the dissertation and submit it for publication, usually with the student listed as first author.

The procedures and paperwork requirements for proposing and defending the dissertation are described later in this handbook in the sections entitled "Dissertation Proposal: Procedures and Paperwork Requirements" and "Dissertation Defense: Procedures and Paperwork Requirements."

Research Applications

Students must complete at least two semesters of Research Applications (PSYC 6385) with one or more faculty members other than their mentor. This requirement is intended to ensure that PhD students are exposed to a variety of research methods and research questions early in their graduate career so they are better prepared to initiate their own research programs. The project carried out in Research Applications should be one that expands the student's research skills and knowledge of psychology, statistics, and/or methodology, and is likely to result in either primary or secondary authorship on a published article or a grant application. For instance, a student in Research Applications might carry out a meta-analysis or literature review, participate as a secondary researcher in a project in the faculty member's lab, or initiate their own project as primary investigator.

A student who enrolls in the Research Applications course is expected to produce a written product before being assigned a grade. The instructor supervising the Research Applications will decide which type of written product is appropriate and evaluate it when it is complete. Appropriate written products include: (1) An extended abstract for a conference presentation; (2) An Introduction or Method section for an article; (3) A review paper; (4) A fellowship proposal; (5) Written work that will be included in the student's thesis, dissertation, thesis proposal, or dissertation proposal; or (6) Another writing project deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Field Placement (Mainly for Legal Psychology Students)

Students in the Legal Psychology concentration are required to complete a Field Placement. Field Placements are intended to (a) provide students with experience conducting applied research or evaluations in a formal institutional setting, preferably one related to legal issues, (b) give them first-hand knowledge of the institution, its goals and methods of operation, and how it makes use of research, and (c) provide insights and personal contacts that contribute to the students future research and employment opportunities. Field placements must be conducted on-site at the sponsoring institution. The research performed during the placement should be *applied*. That is, the research should have the primary purpose of providing information needed by an institution or

organization to fulfill its mission. It is recommended, but not required, that the sponsoring institution provide on-site doctoral level supervision for the student and pay the student a stipend or salary during the field placements. If an on-site doctoral level supervisor is unavailable, the student must arrange for a member of the Legal Psychology faculty to provide appropriate supervision.

Legal Psychology students must complete six credit hours of Field Placement (PSYC 6390). One hundred fifty hours of clock time are equal to three credit hours of Field Placement. Students may fulfill the field placement requirement by working on-site for (1) three hundred hours during one regular semester or summer term, or (2) one hundred fifty hours during one regular semester or summer term, and one hundred fifty hours during a second regular semester or summer term.

As examples, field placements for Legal Psychology students have been approved at the following sites/organizations in the past:

El Paso Juvenile Probation Department
El Paso Sheriff's Department
National Institute of Justice, Washington DC
Applied Research Associates, Washington DC
UTEP Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (ORSP)
UTEP Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research and Planning (CIERP)

Field placements for Legal Psychology students must be pre-approved by the Legal Psychology Area Committee. Students who wish to enroll in Field Placement must first obtain the permission of their mentor and then submit the following documents via email to the Graduate Program Director and the Head of Legal Psychology Area Committee:

- 1) The [Field Placement Information Sheet](#) that is posted on the department's webpage with [Forms for Graduate Students](#).
- 2) A letter of support from the faculty member who will oversee the field placement, indicating his or her intent to monitor or closely supervise the field placement and provide a grade in the field placement course;
- 3) A letter from the on-site supervisor for the field placement that briefly discusses the nature of the work that will be done in the field placement.

The Head of the Legal Psychology Area Committee will share these documents with the other Legal Psychology faculty, who will review the field placement request. Criteria considered in evaluating the proposed field placement include: (1) The site of the placement and the work the student performs are related to Legal Psychology and/or program evaluation; (2) The field placement duties are appropriate for an advanced doctoral student in psychology and focus on applied research; (3) The student will receive appropriate supervision from a doctoral-level supervisor, or from another individual with the knowledge and experience necessary to guide the student's work; (4) The experience gained in the field placement is likely to advance the student's career goals or future research opportunities; (5) The placement is similar to ones that have been approved for Legal Psychology students in the past; (6) The student will receive an appropriate salary or stipend for performing the Field Placement duties. Field placements are preferred if they meet all or almost all of these criteria.

The Head of the Legal Psychology Area Committee will inform the student and the Graduate Program Director by email whether the request has been accepted or denied. The committee may choose to request additional information and/or meet with the student to discuss the field placement before making a decision. After completing the field placement, students need to submit a brief report to the Head of Legal Psychology Area Committee that describes the work performed during the field placement, including (a) the name, title and contact information for the supervisor, (b) the number of hours worked and the dates, (c) the work activities carried out and the goals accomplished, and (d) whether the student would recommend the field placement for future students, with an explanation for the recommendation.

Students in concentrations other than Legal Psychology are not required to participate in a Field Placement but may complete up to six credit hours of Field Placement if the placement receives prior approval from both their mentor and the faculty committee for their area of concentration. The criteria and procedures for evaluating such field placements are similar to those already outlined for Legal Psychology.

Programs of Study for PhD Students: Requirements by Concentration

All students in the PhD program are required to complete 78 semester hours and fulfill the key requirements discussed in the previous section. However, additional course requirements vary depending on the student's area of Concentration. This section presents the Programs of Study for each of the Department's three PhD concentrations (Legal Psychology, Health, and SCN), and for the LAB program within the SCN concentration.

The Programs of Study for the PhD in Psychology changed slightly in Fall 2016: The number of required Breadth Courses was reduced by one, and the number of Concentration Electives or Psychology elective courses required for graduation was increased by one. Therefore, this section presents two versions of the Program of Study for each area of Concentration. One version applies to students who entered the PhD program in 2016 or later, and the other version applies to students who entered the program prior to 2016. Students who entered the program prior to 2016 may choose to follow the new version of the Program of Study that took effect in 2016, but should notify the Graduate Program Director of this choice early in the semester they intend to defend their dissertation.

Program of Study for Legal Psychology Students Who Enter the PhD Program in 2016 or Later

Core Curriculum (42 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in General Psychology Core"]

PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
PSYC 6307 Applied Correlation & Regression (3 credits)
PSYC 6308 Experimental Design & ANOVA (3 credits)
PSYC 6334 Foundations of Research (3 credits)
PSYC 6380 First Year Research (3 credits)
PSYC 6381 First Year Research (3 credits)
PSYC 6395 Thesis (3 credits)
PSYC 6396 Thesis (3 credits)
PSYC 6398 Dissertation (3 credits)
PSYC 6399 Dissertation (3 credits)
Two Breadth Courses (6 credits)
One additional Research Methods or Statistics Class (3 credits)

Concentration Courses (24 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in Psychology (Legal)"]

Concentration Requirements

PSYC 6342 Special Topics in Psychology & Law (3 credits)
PSYC 6342 Special Topics in Psychology & Law (3 credits)
PSYC 6344 Survey of Legal Psychology (3 credits)
PSYC 6390 Field Placement (3 credits)
PSYC 6390 Field Placement (3 credits)

Concentration Electives

Three elective courses in Legal Psychology or related area
and approved by mentor (9 credits)

Psychology Electives (12 credits total)

12 credits (usually four courses) in Psychology or related area
and approved by mentor

Program of Study for Legal Psychology Students Who Entered the PhD Program Prior to 2016

(Students who entered the doctoral program prior to Fall 2016
may opt to follow the Program of Study for students who enter in Fall 2016 or later)

Core Curriculum (45 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in General Psychology Core"]

- PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
- PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
- PSYC 6307 Applied Correlation & Regression (3 credits)
- PSYC 6308 Experimental Design & ANOVA (3 credits)
- PSYC 6334 Foundations of Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6380 First Year Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6381 First Year Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6395 Thesis (3 credits)
- PSYC 6396 Thesis (3 credits)
- PSYC 6398 Dissertation (3 credits)
- PSYC 6399 Dissertation (3 credits)
- Three Breadth Courses (9 credits)
- One additional Research Methods or Statistics Class (3 credits)

Concentration Courses (24 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in Psychology (Legal)"]

Concentration Requirements

- PSYC 6342 Special Topics in Psychology & Law (3 credits)
- PSYC 6342 Special Topics in Psychology & Law (3 credits)
- PSYC 6344 Survey of Legal Psychology (3 credits)
- PSYC 6390 Field Placement (3 credits)
- PSYC 6390 Field Placement (3 credits)

Concentration Electives

Three elective courses in Legal Psychology or related area
and approved by mentor (9 credits)

Psychology Electives (9 credits total)

9 credits (usually three courses) in Psychology or related area
and approved by mentor

Program of Study for Health Psychology Students Who Enter the PhD Program in 2016 or Later

Core Curriculum (42 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in General Psychology Core"]

- PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
- PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
- PSYC 6307 Applied Correlation & Regression (3 credits)
- PSYC 6308 Experimental Design & ANOVA (3 credits)
- PSYC 6334 Foundations of Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6380 First Year Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6381 First Year Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6395 Thesis (3 credits)
- PSYC 6396 Thesis (3 credits)
- PSYC 6398 Dissertation (3 credits)
- PSYC 6399 Dissertation (3 credits)
- Two Breadth Courses (6 credits)
- One additional Research Methods or Statistics Class (3 credits)

Concentration Courses (36 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in Psychology (Health)"]

Concentration Requirements

- PSYC 6323 Psychometrics (3 credits)
- PSYC 6351 Behavioral Medicine (3 credits)
- PSYC 6352 Public Health/Community Intervention (3 credits)

Concentration Electives

27 credits (usually nine courses) in Health Psychology or related area approved by mentor (24 credits)

Program of Study for Health Psychology Students

Who Entered the PhD Program Prior to 2016

(Students who entered the doctoral program prior to Fall 2016
may opt to follow the Program of Study for students who enter in Fall 2016 or later)

Core Curriculum (45 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in General Psychology Core"]

- PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
- PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
- PSYC 6307 Applied Correlation & Regression (3 credits)
- PSYC 6308 Experimental Design & ANOVA (3 credits)
- PSYC 6334 Foundations of Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6380 First Year Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6381 First Year Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6395 Thesis (3 credits)
- PSYC 6396 Thesis (3 credits)
- PSYC 6398 Dissertation (3 credits)
- PSYC 6399 Dissertation (3 credits)
- Three Breadth Courses (9 credits)
- One additional Research Methods or Statistics Class (3 credits)

Concentration Courses (33 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in Psychology (Health)"]

Concentration Requirements

- PSYC 6323 Psychometrics (3 credits)
- PSYC 6351 Behavioral Medicine (3 credits)
- PSYC 6352 Public Health/Community Intervention (3 credits)

Concentration Electives

24 additional credits (usually eight courses) in Health Psychology or related area
approved by mentor

Program of Study for SCN Students (but not LAB) Who Enter the PhD Program in 2016 or Later

Core Curriculum (42 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in General Psychology Core"]

PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
PSYC 6307 Applied Correlation & Regression (3 credits)
PSYC 6308 Experimental Design & ANOVA (3 credits)
PSYC 6334 Foundations of Research (3 credits)
PSYC 6380 First Year Research (3 credits)
PSYC 6381 First Year Research (3 credits)
PSYC 6395 Thesis (3 credits)
PSYC 6396 Thesis (3 credits)
PSYC 6398 Dissertation (3 credits)
PSYC 6399 Dissertation (3 credits)
Two Breadth Courses (6 credits)
One additional Research Methods or Statistics Class (3 credits)

Concentration Courses (13 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in Psychology (SCN)"]

Concentration Requirements

BIOL 5131 Ethical, Social and Political Dimensions of Science
or an ethics course in the Psychology Department (1 credit)

Concentration Electives

Four elective courses in SCN or related area
and approved by mentor (12 credits)

Psychology Electives (23 credits total)

23 credits (usually eight courses) in Psychology or related area
approved by mentor

Program of Study for SCN Students (but not LAB Students) Who Entered the PhD Program Prior to 2016

(Students who entered the doctoral program prior to Fall 2016
may opt to follow the Program of Study for students who enter in Fall 2016 or later)

Core Curriculum (45 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in General Psychology Core"]

PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
PSYC 6307 Applied Correlation & Regression (3 credits)
PSYC 6308 Experimental Design & ANOVA (3 credits)
PSYC 6334 Foundations of Research (3 credits)
PSYC 6380 First Year Research (3 credits)
PSYC 6381 First Year Research (3 credits)
PSYC 6395 Thesis (3 credits)
PSYC 6396 Thesis (3 credits)
PSYC 6398 Dissertation (3 credits)
PSYC 6399 Dissertation (3 credits)
Three Breadth Courses (9 credits)
One additional Research Methods or Statistics Class (3 credits)

Concentration Courses (13 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in Psychology (SCN)"]

Concentration Requirements

BIOL 5131 Ethical, Social and Political Dimensions of Science
or an ethics course in the Psychology Department (1 credit)

Concentration Electives

Four elective courses in SCN or related area
and approved by mentor (12 credits)

Psychology Electives (20 credits total)

20 credits (usually seven courses) in Psychology or related area
approved by mentor

Program of Study for LAB Students Who Enter the PhD Program in 2016 or Later

Core Curriculum (42 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in General Psychology Core"]

- PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
- PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
- PSYC 6307 Applied Correlation & Regression (3 credits)
- PSYC 6308 Experimental Design & ANOVA (3 credits)
- PSYC 6334 Foundations of Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6380 First Year Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6381 First Year Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6395 Thesis (3 credits)
- PSYC 6396 Thesis (3 credits)
- PSYC 6398 Dissertation (3 credits)
- PSYC 6399 Dissertation (3 credits)
- Two Breadth Courses (6 credits)
- One additional Research Methods or Statistics Class (3 credits)

Concentration Courses (21 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in Psychology (SCN)"]

Concentration Requirements

- LING 5301 Principles of Linguistic Analysis (3 credits)
- LING 5309 Generative Syntax (3 credits)
- LING 5320 Phonology (3 credits)
- LING 5370 First Language Acquisition (3 credits)
- Either LING 5388 Bilingualism
or LING 5348 Second Language Acquisition (3 credits)

Concentration Electives

6 credits (usually two courses) in LAB or related area approved
by mentor (12 credits)

Psychology Electives (15 credits total)

15 credits (usually five courses) in Psychology or related area approved by mentor

Program of Study for LAB Students Who Entered the PhD Program Prior to 2016

(Students who entered the doctoral program prior to Fall 2016
may opt to follow the Program of Study for students who enter in Fall 2016 or later)

Core Curriculum (45 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in General Psychology Core"]

- PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
- PSYC 5385 Research Applications (3 credits)
- PSYC 6307 Applied Correlation & Regression (3 credits)
- PSYC 6308 Experimental Design & ANOVA (3 credits)
- PSYC 6334 Foundations of Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6380 First Year Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6381 First Year Research (3 credits)
- PSYC 6395 Thesis (3 credits)
- PSYC 6396 Thesis (3 credits)
- PSYC 6398 Dissertation (3 credits)
- PSYC 6399 Dissertation (3 credits)
- Three Breadth Courses (9 credits)
- One additional Research Methods or Statistics Class (3 credits)

Concentration Courses (21 credits total)

[Online Degree Plan Description: "Area Name: PhD in Psychology (SCN)"]

Concentration Requirements

- LING 5301 Principles of Linguistic Analysis (3 credits)
- LING 5309 Generative Syntax (3 credits)
- LING 5320 Phonology (3 credits)
- LING 5370 First Language Acquisition (3 credits)
- Either LING 5388 Bilingualism
or LING 5348 Second Language Acquisition (3 credits)

Concentration Electives

6 credits (usually two courses) in LAB or related area approved
by mentor

Psychology Electives (12 credits total)

12 credits (usually four courses) in Psychology or related
area approved by mentor

III. Procedures and Paperwork Requirements for Psychology Graduate Students

Overview and Timeline

As students proceed through the PhD program in Psychology, they must complete certain milestones, procedures and paperwork. This section provides an overview of these tasks, and the sections that follow it provide detailed information about each task.

Task	Expected completion date for students who enter the Ph.D. program without prior graduate work
Submit Annual Activities Report (AAR).....	Annually on April 15
Complete and Present First-Year Project.....	Spring of Year 1 or Fall of Year 2
Propose Thesis.....	Before Fall of Year 3
Defend Thesis.....	Before Fall of Year 4
Advancement to Candidacy & Advancement to Dissertation	Fall of Year 4
Propose Dissertation.....	Year 4
Defend Dissertation.....	Year 5
Graduation.....	Year 5
Submission of Program of Study to Graduate School	Early in semesters that student defends thesis, advances to candidacy, or defends dissertation

Annual Activity Reports: Procedures and Paperwork Requirements

Every April each graduate student in Psychology is required to submit an Annual Activities Report (AAR) that documents their progress during the previous year. Faculty members within the student's area of Concentration then review the AAR and provide the student with a written evaluation letter, typically by mid-June. This letter evaluates the student's accomplishments during the previous year and identifies goals for the future.

The AARs and annual evaluations letters are an important part of the Department's efforts to provide all students with thoughtful guidance and mentoring. The evaluation letters ensure that students regularly receive comprehensive feedback on their performance and are given individualized guidance as they proceed through the PhD Program. In addition, the annual evaluations allow faculty to identify students who are making insufficient progress through the PhD program or having other difficulties. In such cases, evaluation letters may require the student to accomplish specific goals, set deadlines for achieving these goals, and indicate the consequences if these deadlines are not met.

The Instructions and Form for the AAR can be downloaded by students from the Departmental webpage that provides [Information for Current Graduate Students](#). Students should complete the AAR, submit it to their mentor for feedback, make appropriate changes, and then submit the final version of the AAR to the Graduate Program Director by the required deadline. The annual timeline for the AAR process is usually as follows:

April 1 or earlier: The Graduate Program Director notifies students of the deadline for submission of AARs

April 10 or thereabouts: Students submit the completed AAR to their mentor for feedback before submitting it to the Graduate Program Director.

April 15: Students email final version of AAR to the Graduate Program Director.

April 22: AARs are sent to Area directors for distribution to Area faculty

May 15 or earlier: Areas meet to review AARs and complete evaluations

June 1 or earlier: Area head submits final drafts of evaluation letters to Graduate Program Director

June 10: Evaluations letters are distributed to students by the Graduate Program Director.

First Year Project: Procedures and Paperwork Requirements

A detailed description of the procedures for the First Year Project is provided earlier in this handbook under the title "First-Year Project" in the larger section entitled "Programs of Study for PhD Students: Key Requirements." The main paperwork requirements for the First Year Project are as follows: (a) the student must enroll in two semesters of First Year Research (PSYC 6380 & PSYC 6381), and (b) within three days after the project is presented at a departmental colloquium, the student must send an email to the Graduate Program Director, with cc to their mentor, indicating that the First Year Project has been completed, with the date and title of the presentation.

Thesis Proposal: Procedures and Paperwork Requirements

Basic information regarding the thesis requirement for PhD students is provided earlier in this handbook under the title "Thesis" in the larger section entitled "Programs of Study for PhD Students: Key Requirements." The main procedures and paperwork requirements for the thesis proposal are as follows:

(1) The student in consultation with the Thesis Committee chair should identify a thesis committee of four members who are willing to serve in that role. The members must include:

(a) The Thesis Committee Chair. The Chair must be a current member of the UTEP Psychology Department tenured or tenure-track faculty. The chair should be the primary supervisor of the student's dissertation project, except under special circumstances explained later in this handbook in the section entitled "Qualifications of Committee Chairs for Doctoral Dissertations and Masters Theses."

(b) Two additional members of the Psychology Department who are tenured or tenure-track faculty (one of these members may be a post-doctoral fellow or Research Assistant professor in the Psychology Department, as explained later in this handbook in the section entitled "Post-Doctoral Fellows and Research Assistant Professors as Members of Thesis and Dissertation Committees").

(c) One additional committee member who belongs to the UTEP Graduate Faculty but is not in the Department of Psychology.

All committee members must be current members of the UTEP Graduate Faculty or receive special permission from the Graduate School to serve on the thesis committee. A prospective thesis committee member who is not a member of the Graduate Faculty must complete an [Application](#)

[for Temporary Membership in the UTEP Graduate Faculty](#) and be approved before the student proposes (for additional information, see the Graduate School's web page on [Graduate Faculty](#)).

A list of the proposed thesis committee members must be submitted for approval to the Area Head of the student's area of concentration before the proposal meeting. The Area Head will then circulate the list to the area faculty for approval. The area faculty will evaluate the acceptability of the committee members according to the following two criteria: (a) expertise of the committee members in the proposed research area (Does the committee include faculty members who have the most appropriate expertise in the research area?); and (b) rank of the proposed committee members (Are tenured faculty appropriately represented on the committee?). The Area Head will notify the student of the area's decision.

(2) The student must enroll in at least two semesters of Thesis, including the semester they propose the thesis (PSYC 6395), the semester they defend the thesis (PSYC 6396), and every regular semester in between (PSYC 6396). The Graduate School does not allow students to enroll in PSYC 6395 and PSYC 6396 simultaneously, or to enroll in more than 3 hours of thesis in any one semester (see [General Degree Requirements](#)).

(3) The student must prepare a thesis proposal under the supervision of Thesis Committee Chair and schedule a meeting to present it to the members of the committee. The thesis proposal should be distributed to the committee members at least ten days prior to the meeting.

(4) The Departmental [Thesis Proposal Form](#) is posted on the Department's web page that provides [Information for Current Graduate Students](#). The student should print a copy of this form, fill it out (except for signatures), and take it to the proposal meeting.

(5) At the proposal meeting, the student will make an oral presentation of the proposal, followed by comments from the committee members. The objective of the proposal meeting is to insure that the proposed research will contribute to the scientific field and to help the students improve their thesis. If the committee members approve the proposal, the student should obtain their signatures on the Thesis Proposal Form.

(6) If a thesis proposal is presented at a thesis proposal meeting, then within one week the student should (a) notify the Graduate Program Director by email, with a cc to the student's mentor, (b) indicate whether the proposal was unanimously approved by the committee members and (c) provide a brief explanation of the circumstances if it was not unanimously approved.

(7) If a thesis proposal is unanimously approved by all committee members, then within one week of the thesis proposal meeting the student should email a pdf copy of the signed Thesis Proposal Form to the Graduate Program Director, with a cc to the student's mentor. If the signed Thesis Proposal Form cannot be submitted within one week, the student should (a) notify the Graduate Program Director and mentor why there is a delay, and (b) submit the Form as soon as possible, but no later than one month following the proposal meeting.

Thesis Defense: Procedures and Paperwork Requirements

Students must successfully defend their thesis during a final oral examination. The purpose of the thesis defense is to demonstrate the student's proficiency as a scientist and present the results of their thesis research to the general scholarly community and to their thesis committee.

M.A. theses must either (a) have a public defense or (b) be presented at a departmental colloquium. The thesis Chair will consult with the student and decide whether a public defense or colloquium presentation is most appropriate. If a student will not be available to make a public presentation following the defense, then the defense must be public.

If the thesis Chair decides that a public defense is appropriate, the oral defense of the thesis will consist of two parts, the public defense and the private defense. The public defense is open to the public and may be attended by faculty and students from the Psychology Department who listen and ask questions about the dissertation. The private defense follows the public defense. The private defense is attended only by the members of the student's thesis committee, who question the student about the thesis, make suggestions for improvement, and vote on whether the thesis is acceptable.

The student must schedule rooms for both the public and private defenses at least one week in advance and then notify the Graduate Program Director and the department secretary of the time and location of both defenses and the title of the thesis. The department secretary will then distribute an announcement of the public defense to the Department's faculty and students.

If the thesis Chair decides that the student should present a colloquium rather than a public defense, the thesis Chair will notify the Graduate Program Director of this decision before the defense. The student will then arrange to present the thesis at a Department colloquium during the same semester as the defense or during the next regular semester following the defense. At least one week before the colloquium, the student will notify the Graduate Program Director and the department secretary of the time and location of the colloquium and the title of the thesis. The department secretary will then distribute an announcement of the thesis presentation to the Department's faculty and students. Within three days following the colloquium, the student will notify the Graduate Program director, with cc to the student's mentor, that the thesis has been presented, with the title of the thesis and the date of the presentation.

Detailed instructions and forms for the thesis defense are provided in the following two online documents: [MA Thesis Defense Instructions and Forms #1](#) and [MA Thesis Defense Instructions and Forms #2](#). They are posted on the Department's web page that provides [Information for Current Graduate Students](#).

The Graduate School has additional procedures, posted at [How to Graduate](#) and [Thesis Defense Rules and Procedures](#), that the student should consult early in the semester that the student intends to defend. For instance, (a) early in the semester that a student intends to defend their thesis, the student must notify the Graduate School, attend a meeting there, and submit documentation, including a Degree Plan (see the section later in this handbook entitled "How to Submit a Degree Plan") (b) the student must format the thesis in accordance with Graduate School rules and submit a draft for format check, (c) the student must submit a pdf copy of the final thesis that will be archived at Proquest Dissertations, and (d) the student must make prior arrangements if they intend to participate in Commencement ceremonies.

PhD students must apply for Advancement to Dissertation within 8 weeks after defending their thesis. Advancement to Dissertation requires the completion of certain courses. These course should be completed either before the Thesis defense or during the same semester as the defense (for more details regarding Advancement to Dissertation, see the next section).

Advancement to Dissertation/Advancement to Candidacy: Procedures and Paperwork Requirements

After completing their thesis, PhD students must receive approval from the Department of Psychology (Advancement to Dissertation) and the UTEP Graduate School (Advancement to Candidacy) to undertake a dissertation and continue in the doctoral program. The procedures for Advancement to Dissertation and Advancement to Candidacy have a similar purpose: To evaluate whether the student is qualified to initiate a dissertation and continue in the doctoral program, or instead should end their studies with a "terminal MA." For instance, it may be that a student's progress through the program has been unacceptably slow, or that the student had difficulty completing a thesis. In such cases, the Department or the Graduate School may determine that the student is unqualified to initiate a dissertation and finish the PhD program.

The Psychology Department requires that PhD students receive approval for Advancement to Dissertation (Department procedure) before they propose their dissertation or apply for Advancement to Candidacy (Graduate School procedure). Students who complete their thesis in the UTEP Psychology program are generally required to apply for Advancement to Dissertation within eight weeks following their thesis defense, unless their mentor recommends they apply within a shorter time period. However, an exception to this requirement will be made for (a) students who have completed their thesis at another institution and received a thesis waiver from UTEP, and (b) students who have been admitted to the PhD program in Psychology after first being enrolled in the Department's M.A. program. These students may wait until the end of the first semester of their second year in the doctoral program to apply for Advancement to Dissertation.

Students who anticipate they will soon be applying for Advancement to Dissertation should realistically assess whether their application is likely to be approved. Before enrolling in new courses or making other important decisions, they should consult with their mentor about whether approval is likely.

The Application for Advancement to Candidacy (Graduate School) must be submitted within two weeks after the student has successfully defended their dissertation proposal and completed all coursework for the PhD except Dissertation. Graduate School rules state that students may not begin gathering data for the Dissertation unless they have been approved by the Graduate School for Advancement to Candidacy.

Advancement to Dissertation (Department of Psychology). Students are generally expected to apply to the Department for Advancement to Dissertation within eight weeks of successfully defending their MA thesis at UTEP (or by the end of the first semester of their second year in the program, if they have (a) received a thesis waiver for a thesis completed at another institution, or (b) entered the PhD program after first being enrolled in the Department's MA program). Students may not propose their dissertation unless the application has been approved. In addition to the thesis, students are expected to have completed the following coursework before applying for Advancement to Dissertation:

- (a) The Basic Statistics/Methodology sequence for PhD students (PSYC 6307, PSYC 6308, PSYC 6334)
- (b) At least two breadth courses
- (c) First-year project
- (d) All other requirements for the M.A. degree

These coursework requirements must be completed either before or during the semester the thesis is defended.

Instructions and forms for applying for Advancement to Dissertation are posted on the Department's webpage with [Information for Current Graduate Students](#). Different Areas of Concentration have different application procedures, so each student should follow the procedures and use the form appropriate for their area. The application for Advancement to Candidacy should be submitted in pdf form via email to the Graduate Program Director and the Head of the student's area of Concentration, with cc to the student's mentor. The application will then be evaluated by the faculty in the student's area of Concentration.

Approval of the student's application for Advancement to Dissertation is not automatic or guaranteed after the completion of a masters' thesis and associated coursework. Based on the student's application and other information, the faculty in the area of Concentration will decide whether the student has demonstrated the abilities and motivation to successfully propose and defend their dissertation in a timely manner. The Area Head will notify the student, the Graduate Program Director, and the Department's Administrative Assistant of the faculty's decision.

Advancement to Candidacy (Graduate School). The Graduate School at the University of Texas at El Paso requires that all doctoral students be approved for Advancement to Candidacy prior to gathering data for the dissertation. The Graduate School typically approves students for Advancement to Candidacy if they have (a) completed all requirements for the MA degree, including thesis, (b) successfully proposed their dissertation and (c) received approval from their dissertation Committee and the Graduate Program Director of Psychology. The Psychology Department further requires that (d) students applying for Advancement to Candidacy must have already been approved for Advancement to Dissertation.

Doctoral students in Psychology who have been approved for Advancement to Dissertation by the Psychology Department and whose dissertation proposal has been approved by their committee should apply for candidacy through the Graduate School within two weeks of their proposal meeting. The [Application for Advancement to Candidacy](#) is posted on the Graduate School web page [How to Graduate](#) .

Once admitted to candidacy by the graduate school, the student is considered a "PhD candidate" by the Graduate School and is required to continuously register for dissertation (PSYC 6398 or PSYC 6399) during every regular semester. A student who is taking Dissertation for the first time must enroll in PSYC 6398. Thereafter the student must enroll in 6399. University rules state that a student may not enroll in PSYC 6398 and PSYC 6399 simultaneously nor enroll in more than three hours of dissertation per semester.

Dissertation Proposal: Procedures & Paperwork Requirements

Basic information regarding the dissertation requirement is provided earlier in this handbook under the title "Dissertation" in the larger section entitled "Programs of Study for PhD Students: Key Requirements." The main procedures and paperwork requirements for the dissertation proposal are as follows:

(1) The student in consultation with the dissertation committee Chair should identify a dissertation committee of five members who are willing to serve in that role. The members must include:

(a) The Dissertation Committee Chair. The Chair must be a current member of the UTEP Psychology Department tenured or tenure-track faculty. The chair must be the primary supervisor of the student's dissertation project, except under special circumstances explained later in this handbook in the section entitled "Qualifications of Committee Chairs for Doctoral Dissertations and Masters Theses."

(b) Three additional members of the Psychology Department tenured or tenure-track faculty (one of these members may be a post-doctoral fellow or Research Assistant professor in the Psychology Department, as explained later in this handbook in the section entitled "Post-Doctoral Fellows and Research Assistant Professors as Members of Thesis and Dissertation Committees").

(c) One additional committee member who belongs to the UTEP Graduate Faculty but is not in the Department of Psychology.

All committee members must be current members of the UTEP Graduate Faculty or receive special permission from the Graduate School to serve on the dissertation committee. A prospective dissertation committee member who is not a member of the Graduate Faculty must complete an [Application for Temporary Membership in the UTEP Graduate Faculty](#) and be approved before the student proposes (for additional information, see the Graduate School's web page on [Graduate Faculty](#)).

A list of the proposed dissertation committee members must be submitted for approval to the Area Head of the student's area of concentration before the proposal meeting. The Area Head will then circulate the list to the area faculty for approval. They will evaluate the acceptability of the committee members according to the following two criteria: (a) expertise of the committee members in the proposed research area (Does the committee include faculty members who have the most appropriate expertise in the research area?); and (b) rank of the proposed committee members (Are tenured faculty appropriately represented on the committee?). The Area Head will notify the student of the area's decision.

(2) The student must enroll in at least two semesters of Dissertation, including the semester they propose the dissertation (PSYC 6398), the semester they defend the dissertation (PSYC 6399), and every regular semester in between (PSYC 6399). The Graduate School does not allow students to enroll in PSYC 6398 and PSYC 6399 simultaneously, or to enroll in more than 3 hours of dissertation in any one semester (see [General Degree Requirements](#)).

(3) The student must prepare a dissertation proposal under the supervision of Dissertation Committee Chair and schedule a meeting to present it to the members of the committee. The dissertation proposal should be distributed to the committee members at least ten days prior to the meeting.

(4) The Departmental [Dissertation Proposal Form](#) is posted on the Department's web page that provides [Information for Current Graduate Students](#). The Graduate School's [Application for Advancement to Candidacy](#) is posted on the Graduate School web page [How to Graduate](#). The student should print copies of both forms, fill them out (except for signatures), and take them to the

proposal meeting.

(5) At the proposal meeting, the student will make an oral presentation of the proposal, followed by comments from the committee members. The objective of the proposal meeting is to insure that the proposed research will contribute to the scientific field and help the students improve their dissertation. In order to initiate the dissertation, the student must obtain approval from all members of the committee. If all committee members approve the proposal, the student should obtain their signatures on the Dissertation Proposal Form and the Application for Advancement to Candidacy.

(6) If a dissertation proposal is presented at a dissertation proposal meeting, then within one week the student should (a) notify the Graduate Program Director by email, with a cc to the student's mentor, (b) indicate whether the proposal was unanimously approved by the committee members and (c) provide a brief explanation of the circumstances if it was not unanimously approved.

(7) If a dissertation proposal is unanimously approved by all committee members, then (a) within one week of the dissertation proposal meeting the student should email a pdf copy of the signed Dissertation Proposal Form to the Graduate Program Director, with a cc to the student's mentor, and (b) within two weeks should submit the Application for Candidacy to the Graduate School and send a pdf of this application (with signatures) to the Graduate Program Director via email. If the Dissertation Proposal Form and Application for Candidacy cannot be submitted within these time periods, the student should (a) notify the Graduate Program Director and mentor why there is a delay, and (b) submit the Form and Application as soon as possible, but no later than one month following the proposal meeting.

Dissertation Defense: Procedures & Paperwork Requirements

Students must successfully defend their dissertation during a final oral examination. The purpose of the dissertation defense is to demonstrate the student's proficiency as a scientist and present the results of their dissertation research to the general scholarly community and their dissertation committee.

The oral defense consists of two parts, the public defense and the private defense. The public defense is open to the public and may be attended by faculty and students from the Psychology Department who listen and ask questions about the dissertation. The private defense follows the public defense. The private defense is attended only by the members of the student's dissertation committee, who question the student about the dissertation, make suggestions for improvement, and vote on whether the dissertation is acceptable. In order for a dissertation to be accepted for the PhD requirement, it must be approved by the chair of the dissertation committee. It must also be approved by all, or all but one, of the other committee members.

The student must schedule rooms for both the public and private defenses at least one week in advance and then notify the Graduate Program Director and the department secretary of the time and location of both defenses and the title of the dissertation. The department secretary will then distribute an announcement of the public defense to the Department's faculty and students.

Detailed instructions and forms for the dissertation defense are provided in the following two online documents: [Dissertation Defense Instructions and Forms #1](#) and [Dissertation Defense Instructions and Forms #2](#). They are posted on the Department's web page that provides [Information for Current Graduate Students](#)

.In order to initiate the dissertation, the student must obtain approval from all members of the committee.

The Graduate School has additional procedures, posted at [How to Graduate](#) and [Dissertation Defense Rules and Procedures](#), that the student should consult early in the semester they intend to defend. For instance, (a) early in the semester that a student intends to defend the student must notify the Graduate School, attend a meeting there, and submit documentation, including a Degree Plan (see the following section "How to Submit a Degree Plan," (b) the student must format the dissertation in accordance with Graduate School rules and submit a draft for a format check, (c) the student must submit a pdf copy of the final dissertation to be archived at Proquest Dissertations, and (d) the student must make prior arrangements if they intend to participate in Commencement ceremonies.

Field Placement: Procedures and Paperwork Requirements

A description of the procedures and paperwork requirements for Field Placement are provided earlier in this handbook, in the section titled "Field Placement" in the more general section entitled "Programs of Study for PhD Students: Key Requirements."

How to Submit a Degree Plan

Students are required to submit a Degree Plan (also known as a "Program of Study" or "CAPP") to the Graduate School several times during their graduate career, including

- (1) the semester of the Thesis Defense,
- (2) when the student applies for Advancement to Candidacy, and
- (3) the semester of the Dissertation Defense.

Before submitting a Degree Plan to the Graduate School, the student should first complete the following department procedures:

(a) Update and correct your online Degree Plan, following the instructions for Updating Your Degree Plan as posted on the Department's webpage with [Information for Current Graduate Students](#). The degree plan requirements for each PhD Area of Concentrations are described earlier in this handbook, in the section entitled "Programs of Study for PhD Students: Requirements by Concentration."

(b) After your Degree Plan is updated and corrected, fill out the appropriate Degree Plan Worksheet posted on the Department's _ and email it to the Graduate Program Director of Psychology for approval.

(c) After the Graduate Program Director has approved the Degree Plan Worksheet, complete the Degree Plan form for the Graduate School, obtain all necessary signatures, send a pdf to the Graduate Program Director of Psychology, and submit the Degree Plan with signatures to the Graduate School.

IV. Other Information for Graduate Students

Mentoring

All PhD students are assigned a mentor in the spring before they enter the program and are expected to contact the mentor during April or May. The mentor is a tenured or tenure-track faculty member who serves as the student's primary academic advisor and as the student's research mentor, takes the student into their lab, and helps the student develop research skills and ideas.

Mentor assignments are based on the research interests expressed by the student in their application to graduate school. Most students keep the same mentor throughout their entire time in the PhD program. However, both students and faculty members have a right to end a mentorship relationship if they wish to do so. For example, if a student believes that another faculty member is more appropriate as a mentor, and that faculty member agrees, that faculty member may become the student's mentor. In addition, students are not limited to conducting research with their mentor. In fact, the PhD program's requirement for Research Applications is intended to encourage students to pursue research projects with multiple faculty.

The relationship between the mentor and student has many aspects, which include the following: (a) The mentor helps the student identify topics for the First Year Project, Thesis, and Dissertation, and should directly supervise all stages of these projects; (b) The mentor should provide advice and approval regarding the student's selection of courses and fulfillment of other degree requirements, such as Field Placements; (c) The student should seek the mentor's feedback and approval before submitting important documents, such as IRB proposals, Annual Activities Reports (AARs), or applications for grants or other funding; (d) The student should seek the mentor's advice regarding career planning, including arranging TA, AI or RA positions, attending conferences, or applying for temporary or long-term employment.

Time Limits for Graduation and Leave of Absence

The UTEP Graduate School requires that PhD students must complete all requirements for their degree within eight years, and MA students must complete all requirements within 6 years. The eight-year period for Ph.D. students and six-year period for M.A. students begin with the term of the first course listed on the student's Program of Study. For Ph.D. students who receive Advanced Standing Credit for courses taken at a prior program, the eight-year period begins with the first course that (a) was taken at the prior program and (b) is listed on the Program of Study. More details regarding these time limits can be found in the [General Degree Requirements](#) of the UTEP Graduate School. Exceptions to the 8-year and 6-year rules can be made for unusual circumstances, but require special justification and must be approved by the Psychology Graduate Program Committee and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Although the Graduate School requires Ph.D. students to graduate within eight years, the Psychology Department normally expects students to complete the graduate program within 5 years (or in less than 5 years if they were previously enrolled in an MA program). Guaranteed funding for doctoral students is limited to the number of years referred to in the student's acceptance letter.

Although students are expected to proceed through the graduate program without extended absences, a leave of absence for one or two semesters may be granted under special circumstances. A student who seeks a leave of absence should first discuss the possibility with their mentor and then submit the following two documents by email to the Graduate Program Director:

(1) A request for the leave of absence. The letter should indicate the reason for the request and the intended date of return to the program. The letter should also include a commitment by the student to keep in regular contact with the student's mentor during the leave of absence, and to keep the mentor up-to-date regarding the student's plans to return on the intended date.

To protect privacy, the student's letter can indicate simply that the student's reasons for leaving are "medical" or "personal," without revealing details. However, the student should frankly and fully discuss these reasons with the mentor, so the mentor can understand and evaluate them.

(2) A letter of support from the student's mentor, which indicates (a) that the student's reason for requesting the leave of absence is serious and valid, (b) the intended date of the student's return, (c) the plan of the mentor and student for keeping in touch while the student is on leave, and (d) whether the mentor intends to continue serving as the student's mentor when the student returns.

The request for a leave of absence will be evaluated by the Chair and Graduate Program Director, who may consult with the student's mentor, the Graduate Program Committee, or other faculty. A leave of absence will be granted if it is determined that there is a valid reason for requesting it, if the student has a reasonable chance of succeeding in the program following the leave, and if financial and other considerations within the department allow it. The Chair and Graduate Program Director will notify the student and mentor of their decision, and may specify additional conditions that must be met before a leave is granted.

If a student complies with the terms of the leave of absence, he or she will normally be allowed to re-enter the graduate program on the specified date. However, the Chair and Graduate Director may terminate a leave of absence if the student fails to comply with those terms, or if they and the student's mentor agree that the student is highly unlikely to return on the specified date. Extensions of the leave of absence beyond the period initially requested will not usually be allowed except under very exceptional circumstances.

Academic Standards for Graduate Students in Psychology

The University of Texas at El Paso requires that all graduate students maintain an overall cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better in all upper-division and graduate courses. Graduate students whose cumulative GPA drops below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation by the Graduate School. The student must return the cumulative GPA to 3.0 within the next nine hours of graduate courses. Under current Graduate School rules (October, 2017), only courses listed in the catalogue as "Graduate Courses" are included in the nine hours of the probationary period. An upper division undergraduate course, such as PSYC 4317 Advanced Statistics, is not included in the nine hours. Failure to meet the 3.0 grade point average requirement during the probationary period will result in dismissal from the Graduate School. The Curriculum and Classroom Policies of the Graduate School provide additional information on GPA requirements, probation, dismissal, and reinstatement following dismissal.

In addition to the University requirement regarding GPA, the Department of Psychology has a "2C rule" that any graduate student who receives two grades of "C" or lower in upper division or graduate Psychology courses must be dismissed from the program.

Any instructor who assigns or expects to assign a grade of C or lower to a graduate student should notify the Graduate Program Director as early as possible.

If a graduate student earns a grade of C or lower in a *single* course, the student must retake the same course the next time it is offered and earn a grade of B or better.

If a graduate student earns a grade of C or lower in *two* courses, the Graduate Program Director will email a Notification of Impending Dismissal to the student as soon as possible stating that (a) the Graduate Program Director will recommend to the Graduate School that the student be dismissed from the graduate program, unless (b) an appeal is received from the student within one month. A copy of the Notification will also be sent to the student's mentor, the Head of the Student's Area of Concentration, the Department Chair, and the Department Secretary. If no appeal is received from the student within one month, the Program Director will contact the Graduate School and recommend dismissal.

If a student wishes to appeal the dismissal, the Appeal must be submitted to the Graduate Program Director within one month of the Notification of Impending Dismissal. In the Appeal, the student should provide a justification, with appropriate supporting documentation, why the student should not be dismissed. The appeal should (a) fully explain the circumstances that led to *both* of the C- or-lower grades and (b) provide documentation that the student has consistently performed well in other graduate activities (e.g., coursework, first-year project, thesis and/or dissertation, research involvement) and met graduate milestones on schedule. The student may attach a letter of support from their mentor to the Appeal, although the mentor is not required to write a letter of support.

The Graduate Program Director will forward the Appeal and supporting documents to all members of the Graduate Program Committee (GPC) and the student's mentor for review. Within two weeks of receipt of the Appeal, the GPC will hold an Appeal Meeting, to discuss and vote on the Appeal. A quorum (50% or higher) of the GPC is necessary and sufficient for an Appeal Meeting. The student's mentor will not attend the Appeal Meeting or participate in its Discussions, even if the mentor is a regular member of the GPC. However, whenever possible the mentor should be available during the time of the Appeal Meeting to answer questions from the GPC members as they deliberate.

Following a thorough discussion of the materials provided by the student and all other relevant information, the GPC members present at the Appeal Meeting will vote on whether to overturn the dismissal. A dismissal will be overturned only if the GPC members determine that (a) there is a compelling and excusable reason why the student earned two C's (for example, documented and serious illness is such a reason; lack of ability or lack of effort is not), (b) the student otherwise has a well-established and stable record of average or above-average performance in other graduate courses and activities, and (c) the student's future performance in the program and success in meeting milestones is likely to be average or above-average. Within one week following the Appeal Meeting, the Graduate Program Director will notify the student by email of the committee's decision. If the committee has denied the student's Appeal and upheld the dismissal, the Graduate

Program Director will recommend dismissal to the Graduate School and notify the Graduate School of the unsuccessful Appeal.

Graduate Certificate in Quantitative Methods in Psychology

Many PhD students in Psychology opt to earn a Graduate Certificate in Quantitative Methods in Psychology ("Quant Certificate") while earning the doctorate. Students must meet three requirements to receive a Quant Certificate:

Coursework Requirement. The student must successfully complete six courses (18 hours) of graduate statistics or methodology, including the three basic Statistics/Methodology courses required of all PhD students in Psychology (PSYC 6307, PSYC 6308, PSYC 6334), plus three other elective courses in statistics, methodology or mathematics.

Teaching/Evaluation Requirement. The student must teach a one-semester undergraduate course in statistics (usually PSYC 1303) as an AI *or* serve as TA for a one-semester graduate course in statistics, *or* work for one semester as an evaluator or data analyst in the UTEP Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research and Planning (CIERP) or the UTEP Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (ORSP).

This Teaching/Evaluation requirement is intended to provide students with extended professional experience in teaching statistics or conducting evaluations, in order to enhance their employment opportunities in academic or applied settings following graduation. Students may fulfill the Teaching/Evaluation requirement by conducting evaluations or applied research in settings other than CIERP or ORSP, provided they have received prior approval from the Quantitative Certificate faculty in Psychology.

Presentation Requirement. The student must make a presentation on an advanced statistical topic to the Psychology Department.

Students build their professional skills in statistics and methodology while earning the Quant Certificate, and so become more attractive for future employment as teachers and researchers. Most students find that they can fulfill the requirements for the Quant Certificate without difficulty, because (a) three of the six courses required for the Certificate (PSYC 6307, PSYC 6308, PSYC 6334) are also required for the PhD degree, (b) the additional three elective courses required for the Certificate can also be counted toward the course requirements for the PhD, and (c) the Teaching/Evaluation requirement can usually be fulfilled during a student's regular work as an RA, TA, or AI.

Students should also consult the Requirements for Quantitative Certificate on the Department's web page for additional information. In addition, a detailed description of the [Graduate Certificate in Quantitative Methods in Psychology](#) is provided online in the UTEP [Graduate Catalogue](#) .

Students who wish to make a presentation on a statistical topic to the Department in fulfillment of the Quant Certificate Presentation requirement must first contact the Head of the Quantitative Certificate program with the proposed date and title of the presentation and arrange for at least two members of the Quantitative faculty to attend the presentation. The student should also arrange with the Department Secretary for an announcement of the presentation to be distributed to the

Department at least one week before the presentation. The announcement should state that the presentation is in fulfillment of the requirements for the Quantitative Certificate in Psychology.

The presentation should be 15-20 minutes long. Following the presentation, the Head of the Quantitative Certificate Program will notify the Graduate Program Director, the student, and the student's mentor whether the Quantitative faculty have approved the presentation as meeting the Presentation requirement.

Students who have completed all requirements for the Quant Certificate should fill out the [Application for Graduate Certificate](#) available on the Graduate School website, obtain the necessary signatures, and submit it to the UTEP Graduate School, with a pdf copy emailed to the Graduate Program Director.

MA in Clinical Psychology for PhD Students

Some PhD students in Psychology, particularly those in Health Psychology or Legal Psychology, may benefit from completing the Department's MA program in Clinical Psychology. For instance, a student's research may focus on psychopathology or mental health in forensic or medical populations, or the student may want to teach Abnormal Psychology or related courses following graduation.

PhD students who wish to earn an MA in Clinical Psychology en route to the PhD should consult the Department's web page on the [MA Clinical Psychology Curriculum](#). To pursue an MA in Clinical Psychology, the student must receive approval from their mentor, the Head of the Clinical Psychology program, and the Graduate Program Director. Except under special circumstances, PhD students seeking a Clinical MA should follow the PhD Preparation Track that is part of the Clinical MA curriculum. The students must complete 3 hours of internship, and should make prior arrangements with the Head of the Clinical Psychology Program before planning internships or contacting internship sites. Because all courses required for the Clinical MA can also count toward the doctoral degree, PhD students who earn a Clinical MA are expected to meet all milestones according to the same schedule that applies to all PhD students.

Responsibilities of Teaching Assistants (TAs)

The responsibilities of the Teaching Assistants in the Psychology Department are as follows:

(1) A TA assigned to a class is expected to promptly and punctually carry out all class-related responsibilities assigned by the instructor. These duties may include but are not limited to:

- (a) administering and scoring tests and quizzes;
- (b) grading homework;
- (c) recording and organizing grades;
- (d) keeping office hours to meet with students;
- (e) attending class meetings of the assigned class;
- (f) teaching occasional classes or leading class exercises; or
- (g) regularly teaching classes (Experimental Methods only).

(Note: The tasks assigned to the TA should normally be limited to activities that promote the educational mission of the assigned class. Instructors should not use TAs for work unrelated to the assigned class)

(2) A student may be assigned as TA to one or more different classes. The total amount of time devoted to these assignments is usually 20 hours per week, although special arrangements may be made by the director of TAs for assignments of fewer than 20 hours. If the total amount of time exceeds 20 hours (or the number of hours arranged with the director of TAs), the student should keep a log of their hours and discuss the issue with the instructor, the director of TAs, or the Graduate Program Director.

(3) At the beginning of the semester, after receiving their class assignments, TAs should immediately contact the instructors of each class by email and make arrangements to meet with the instructor and learn their duties.

(4) During the semester, TAs are required to check their email daily for messages from the instructors of the assigned classes, and must respond within 24 hours to any messages sent by the instructors.

(5) Instructors who become dissatisfied with the performance of a TA, or TAs who feel that they are being treated in an unfair or unreasonable way by an instructor, are asked to contact the director of TAs or the Graduate Program Director immediately. Letting problems "ride" for a month or two is not a good idea.

(6) Performance in TA positions is one of the criteria for judging the overall performance of graduate students and is taken into account when assigning funding or positions within the Psychology Department.

(7) Immediately after accepting a position, undergrad TAs should contact the staff in the Psychology Department office to make arrangements for their salary and hours.

Qualifications of Assistant Instructors (AIs)

Assistant Instructors (AIs) are advanced graduate students who serve as Instructors of Record (primary instructors) for lower division undergraduate courses. The courses most commonly taught by AIs are PSYC 1301 Introduction to Psychology and PSYC 1303 Statistical Methods. AIs are also sometimes assigned to teach PSYC 2302 Social Psychology, PSYC 2306 Personality, or other courses during summer sessions.

Most graduate students decide to work as AIs because they want to gain experience as college instructors and improve their chances for employment in academia following graduation. Summer AI positions are considered especially desirable because they provide a source of summer support.

Graduate students who want to teach as AIs in Psychology must meet two requirements, plus a third requirement if they want to teach the undergraduate statistics class:

1. AIs must have a Master's Degree and meet all other university requirements for instructors of lower division undergraduate courses.
2. AIs must first serve as a TA for PSYC 3201 General Experimental Psychology (GEP) for at least one semester and be approved by the primary instructor for that course as having the skills necessary to teach their own course.

3. All AIs for PSYC 1303 Statistical Methods must first serve successfully as a TA for that course.

Professional Conduct

Graduate students are expected to observe the highest standards of professional and ethical behavior. This includes maintaining ethical and professional standards with respect to conducting research with human and animal subjects (e.g., obtaining Institutional Review Board approval before initiating a research project). Students are expected to refrain from scientific and ethical misconduct in all phases of their professional and academic life. The faculty reserve the right to dismiss students from the program for egregious or recurrent unprofessional or unethical behavior.

Professional Contact

An important aspect of professional life is being aware of the activities of other professionals. Students are expected to become acquainted with current research of others by engaging in the following activities:

Department Colloquia. The Psychology Department offers a weekly colloquia series in which visiting and local speakers discuss their current research. Students are expected to attend most departmental colloquia, and most informal functions with visiting speakers, such as meetings or social gatherings with visiting researchers or prospective faculty. Discussions at more informal functions can be very useful and informative because they can provide students with the opportunity to make contacts that may lead to collaborative research and job opportunities.

Scientific Conferences. Scientific conferences provide students with the opportunity to (1) learn of recent research that may not appear in print for a year or more and (2) present research to others and obtain valuable feedback. In addition, conferences offer a means of making contact with colleagues from other institutions. Thus, students are strongly encouraged to attend and present research at scientific conferences.

UTEP Research and Travel Support for Graduate Students

UTEP provides many scholarships and grants to support student research and professional development. Graduate Students in Psychology are strongly encouraged to visit the Graduate School's webpage on [Internal Funding for UTEP Graduate Students](#) and apply for funding from the sources listed there, including the following:

[*Travel Awards.*](#) These awards provide financial support for graduate students who are travelling to professional conferences to present their research.

[*Graduate Student Research Assistant Summer Program.*](#) This program provides summer support for graduate students who are pursuing their research

[*Dodson Research Grants.*](#) These grants provides students with funds to cover the expenses of their dissertation and thesis research.

[*Natalicio Dissertation Fellowship.*](#) This fellowship provides support to outstanding graduate students during the last semester they are working on their dissertation.

Awards for Graduate Students

The Psychology Department bestows annual awards for (a) Best Thesis in Psychology and (b) Best Dissertation in Psychology. Nominations for these awards are usually made in early Fall of the academic year for theses and dissertations defended during the *preceding academic year*. For instance, in early Fall 2016, nominations were made for Best Thesis and Best Dissertation of 2015, and all theses and dissertations completed during the 2015 Academic Year (Fall 2014, Spring 2015, Summer 2015) were eligible for nomination.

Nominations for Best Thesis and Best Dissertation in Psychology may be made by any member of the Psychology Department faculty, including the mentor, and must be approved by the mentor of the nominated student. Nominations should be sent via email to the Head of the Department's Award Committee or the Graduate Program Director. A nomination must include pdf copies of (a) the final version of the approved dissertation/thesis and the (b) Learning Outcome Assessment ratings of the dissertation/thesis by the members of the dissertation/thesis committee. The Head of the Award Committee or the Graduate Program Director will nominate the Best Thesis and Best Dissertation in Psychology for the Best Thesis and Best Dissertation Awards of the College of Liberal Arts.

The Psychology Department also bestows the following annual awards to Graduate Students:

- (a) Research Award (Best Article Published by a Graduate Student)
- (b) Best Graduate Teaching Assistant (TA)
- (c) Best Graduate Associate Instructor (AI)

Nominations for Research, TA and AI Awards may be made by any Faculty Member or Graduate Student in the Department. Nominations should be emailed to the Department's Award Committee or the Graduate Program Director. Application Forms and Protocols for the Awards are posted on the department's webpage for Information for Current Graduate Students.

Incentives for Graduate Student Publications

When the Department assigns graduate students as AIs for summer semesters or allots departmental travel awards, special consideration will be given to students who meet the following criteria (in order, from highest priority to lowest priority): (a) The student has had a first-author publication, either published or accepted for publication, during the prior 12 months; (b) The student has had a secondary-author publication, either published or accepted for publication, during the prior 12 months; (c) The student has submitted a first-author publication with a faculty co-author during the prior 12 months; (d) The student's work has been published during previous years in the program, although not during the prior 12 months.

Mental Health and Wellness for Graduate Students

During graduate school, students sometimes encounter emotional or behavioral difficulties or know other students dealing with such issues. Difficulties faced by graduate students can include anxiety, depression, or other psychiatric disorders, drug or alcohol abuse, violence or threats, stalking, abuse, or harassment.

The UTEP Psychology Department encourages all faculty, staff, and students to work cooperatively in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect in addressing all aspects of mental health, to work collectively for the safety and success for every person.

Graduate students who are facing such problems are strongly urged to discuss them frankly with their mentor or another trusted member of the Psychology Department faculty. Short-term help and crisis interventions are available from the UTEP Counseling Center, located in the UTEP Student Union, West Wing. A list of local mental health resources for crisis counseling, support services, long-term therapy and other types of assistance is available online at this link:

<https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/resources/Mental-Health-Resources-for-UTEP-Students.html>

In addition, suggestions for mental health resources can be obtained from the Psychology Department's Graduate Program Director.

Students who know that another student is dealing with serious emotional or behavioral problems are strongly encouraged to seek advice from their mentor or another trusted member of the Psychology Department faculty. By working together, students and faculty can develop strategies to obtain assistance for friends and colleagues.

Applying for Transfer Credits

Students accepted into the Ph.D. program with graduate credit from The University of Texas at El Paso (including the Psychology Department) or from another university must satisfy the same requirements as those beginning their Ph.D. graduate training in Psychology at UTEP without previously earned graduate credits.

A PhD student may submit a request to transfer a maximum of 24 hours of graduate credit (including up to 6 hours of thesis) completed at UTEP or another institution. If approved by the Graduate Director, these transferred credits may be used to fulfill the 78-hour requirements for the PhD degree and requirements for the Core Curriculum, Concentration Requirements, Concentration Electives or Psychology Electives. As explained in the next section of this handbook ("Thesis Waiver") students may also request to receive credit for an MA thesis completed at a prior institution.

Transfer credits will appear as Advanced Standing Credits (ASCs) on the student's transcript and Plan of Study. Students who have taken PSYC 5301 (Research Applications) from UTEP prior to admission to the Ph.D. program may request that a maximum of 3 credit hours for this course be included in the 24 hours that may be counted toward their Ph.D. degree as long as those hours were not used to meet requirements for a previous or separate degree.

Receiving Advanced Standing Credit (ASC) reduces the time that a student is allotted to complete the PhD degree. As stated earlier in this handbook, PhD students in Psychology must complete all requirements for the degree within one eight-year period. The eight-year period begins with the term of the first course listed on the student's degree plan, *including any course taken at another institution*. In other words, (a) for most students, the "eight-year clock" starts ticking in the semester that they first enter the UTEP graduate program, but (b) for students with ASC, the clock starts ticking in the semester that they took their first transferred class at their previous institution. Thus, a transferred course cannot be used to fulfill the requirements for the UTEP PhD degree if the transferred course was taken more than 8 years before the student received their PhD.

Students who wish to apply for Advanced Standing Credit must complete the Application for Advanced Standing Credit and submit it to the Graduate Director within 60 days of beginning their first semester in the PhD program. Whenever possible, students are urged to submit the Application during the summer before they begin the program. The application must be accompanied by (a) an official transcript from the previous institution from which the student seeks to transfer credit, (b) syllabi of all classes which the student seeks to transfer, and (c) a signed statement indicating that the student has read the section in the graduate student handbook concerning ASCs, including the discussion regarding the decreased time-to-graduation.

After consulting with relevant faculty, the Graduate Program Director will either approve or disapprove the student's application for ASCs. The Graduate Program Director's decision is subject to final approval from the Graduate School.

Thesis Waivers

Students who completed a Master's thesis at a prior institution may apply for a "thesis waiver" at UTEP. If the waiver is approved, the student's thesis at the prior institution is accepted as meeting the thesis requirement for the UTEP Psychology PhD program. A request for a thesis waiver may be submitted before a student begins classes in the graduate program, and must be submitted no later than 60 days after the student has begun the PhD program. More information on thesis waivers is provided earlier in this handbook, in the section entitled "Thesis," in the larger section titled "Programs of Study for PhD Students: Key Requirements."

Qualifications of Chairs of Dissertation and Thesis Committees

The Psychology Department's general policy is that (a) the chairs of dissertation and thesis committees should be current tenured, tenure-track, or Emeritus members of the Psychology Department faculty, and (b) if a student's mentor leaves the department, the student should find a new mentor who is still within the department.

However, an exception to this general policy will be made if a thesis proposal or dissertation proposal was already approved by the student's committee before the mentor left the department. In this case, the Graduate Program Director will generally allow the student to complete the thesis or dissertation under the former mentor's supervision as Co-Chair, with a current faculty member serving as Chair (university policy requires that chairs be current members of the UTEP faculty). The Graduate Program Director's approval is conditional upon the mentor also obtaining approval from the Graduate School.

Another exception to the policy can be made if the outgoing mentor and student petition the Graduate Program Committee (GPC) and request that the mentor be allowed to supervise the thesis or dissertation as Co-Chair, with a current faculty member serving as Chair (university policy requires that chairs be current members of the UTEP faculty). The GPC will approve such requests only if (a) no other member of the Psychology Faculty is available to provide appropriate mentorship for the dissertation or thesis, (b) the student will experience substantial hardship or unreasonable costs if the request is denied. The approval of the GPC is conditional upon the mentor also obtaining approval from the Graduate School.

The Policy Regarding Mentorship of Dissertations and Theses is posted online, on the Department's webpage with [Information for Current Graduate Students](#). The policy also describes the procedures to be followed when petitioning for an exception to the Department's policies regarding mentorship of theses and dissertations.

University policies require that all thesis and dissertation committee members be approved by the university as members of the Graduate Faculty before the thesis or dissertation is proposed. Committee members who are not members of the UTEP Graduate Faculty should apply for temporary membership before the proposal meeting using the [form provided by the graduate school](#).

Post-Doctoral Fellows and Research Assistant Professors as Members of Thesis and Dissertation Committees

A post-doctoral fellow (post-doc) or Research Assistant Professor (RAP) in Psychology may serve as a departmental member (but not Chair or Co-Chair) of a thesis or dissertation committee in Psychology, provided that he/she has (a) submitted an [application for temporary membership](#) in the UTEP Graduate Faculty according to the [Graduate School procedures](#) (this application requires sign-off by the Department), (b) been approved for temporary membership in the Graduate Faculty by the UTEP Graduate Council, and (c) received prior approval from the Department's Graduate Program Committee (GPC) to serve on the particular committee in question.

To receive prior approval from the GPC to serve on a particular thesis or dissertation committee, the post-doc/RAP should submit a request to the Graduate Program Director via email, including the name of the student proposing the thesis or dissertation, its title, and the names of the other members of the committee. The post-doc/RAP should also include a copy of his/her CV.

The GPC will approve the request of the post-doc/RAP to serve on a particular committee if the following criteria are met: (a) the research and publication record of the post-doc/RAP is at least equal to what would be expected of a tenure-track Assistant Professor in the Department, (b) the expertise of the post-doc/RAP is relevant to the topic of the thesis/dissertation, and (c) the post-doc/RAP is not supervised or supported by the chair or co-chair of the thesis/dissertation.

Exemptions and Special Circumstances

The program requirements of the Graduate Program are intended to assist students in developing the knowledge and skills required to advance science and solve problems within their discipline. Although the faculty expect that most students will benefit from each of the requirements, the faculty realize that the requirements do not anticipate every student's needs given the diversity of our scientific field and the employment opportunities available to prospective graduates. Students

who believe that a specific program requirement does not serve their career objectives may request that they be exempted from that program requirement. The student may petition to be exempted from a program requirement by making a written request to the Graduate Program Committee via the Graduate Program Director. In this request, students must discuss clearly their career objectives, the reasons why the program requirement does not help to prepare them for these objectives, and, if appropriate, alternative requirements that would be more helpful. A student's petition must have the support of the student's mentor.



UTEP New Doctoral Student Milestones Agreement Form Psychology

Student Name & UTEP ID

This form is provided for the purpose of informing students about the academic milestones that they will be expected to reach in order to earn their Ph.D. degree as well as when they are expected to complete these milestones. Advisors are expected to work with each student to customize the list of responsibilities included in the agreement. Students are expected to reach each milestone within the specified time period in order to make satisfactory progress through the program. Students who are not making satisfactory progress may lose funding, be placed on academic probation, or be dismissed from the program. If a student has ongoing concerns or grievances related to his or her Milestones Agreement, the student may obtain third party consideration of those concerns by following the institution's policies and procedures regarding academic grievances.

Academic Advising

Upon entering the doctoral program, all students will be assigned an advisor. The advisor will be a member of the department. Each student will meet annually with the Graduate Program Director.

Academic advising includes the following elements that are designed to ensure that students remain in good academic standing and make satisfactory progress through the program. Advisors are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that annual reviews between student and advisor and/or supervising committee occur. The results of this review will be included in the program's annual doctoral progress report.
- Providing suggestions on course selection.
- Reviewing the student's Degree Plan to determine if the student is making progress consistent with the expectations of the program and reaching milestones according to the timeline provided on this form; working with the Doctoral Studies Committee and student to determine if modifications are necessary.
- Clarifying the timetable for completing any remaining course requirements, examinations, and other requirements.
- Providing the student with assistance in understanding the requirements for successful completion of dissertation.

- Providing the student with assistance in assembling a dissertation committee.
- Providing the student with experiences and information that will optimize the student's career opportunities and success.

Requirements for Doctoral Students Who Enter the Ph.D. Program Without Prior Graduate Work

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Expected Time of Achievement</u>
Filing of Preliminary Degree Plan	End of first semester
Review of student's progress by Area Committee.	Annually
First year project successfully completed & presented	First semester of year two
Thesis proposal completed and approved by Committee	Before start of year three
Research protocols and/or IRB approval for thesis	First semester of year three
Thesis successfully completed	Before start of year four
Student advancement to dissertation (Department)	First semester of year four
Coursework successfully completed	Year four
Dissertation committee appointed and approved by Area	Year four
Dissertation proposal completed and approved	Year four
Student advancement to doctoral candidacy (Graduate School)	Year four
Student completes and files all paperwork required for graduation	Year five
Dissertation completed, defended, and approved by Committee	Year five
Dissertation accepted by Graduate School.	Year five
Exit interview completed.	Year five
<i>Survey of Earned Doctorates</i> submitted (applicable to Ph.D. only).	Year five

Degree Completion Checklist for Students

- Maintain active student status by registering for courses every fall and spring semester.
- Complete *Milestones Agreement Form* with your advisor no later than the last class day of the first academic year.
- Complete all required organized coursework.
- Apply for Advancement to Dissertation (Department)
- Form your dissertation committee in consultation with your dissertation Chair.
- Have your committee approved by faculty in your Area of Concentration.
- Prepare and successfully present your dissertation proposal.
- Enroll in required dissertation hours and complete your dissertation.
- Successfully complete your defense of your dissertation.
- Submit required documentation to the Graduate School for completion and graduation.

I have read this form and have had the opportunity to discuss the information contained in it with my advisor. I understand the academic milestones that I am expected to reach in order to successfully complete the program, as well as the expected timeline for completing these milestones.

Student's Name and Signature

Date

Advisor's Name and Signature

Date

Dean's Name and Signature

Date

Graduate School Signature

Date