

Graduate Student Handbook

Department of Psychology

The University of Texas at El Paso

Revised August 2026

Introduction

Welcome to the Psychology graduate programs at The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP)! Our goals are to support our graduate students and see them succeed in our program and future careers. Graduate school can be daunting—that is why we put together this handbook, which contains essential information for our graduate students. It outlines program requirements, policies, procedures, and resources to support your success as a graduate student.

This handbook should be used in conjunction with the UTEP Graduate Catalog and other university policies. University policies, such as those found in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HoOP) and the Graduate Catalog, override any inconsistencies in information found in this handbook.

Students are responsible for knowing and following all policies and procedures outlined in this handbook and in university documents. The Graduate Program Committee reviews this handbook annually, and updates are posted on the department SharePoint site. If you have questions, please reach out to your faculty mentor or the Graduate Program Director.

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Links to Select University Policies and Procedures

The following links provide access to important university-wide policies and resources:

- Graduate School New Student Guide: <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/current-students/new-student-guide.html>
- Guidance for New International Students: <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/current-students/international-students.html>
- In-State Tuition Guidance: <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/current-students/tuition.html>
- UTEP Graduate Catalog: <https://catalog.utep.edu/>
- Handbook of Operating Procedures (HoOP): <https://www.utep.edu/vpba/hoop/>
- Student Life Policies and Procedures: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students-office/>
- Human Resources Student Employment Guidelines: <https://www.utep.edu/hr/>
- Disability and Reasonable Accommodation Policy: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>
- Title IX Anti-Discrimination Policy: <https://www.utep.edu/titleix/>
- Academic Integrity Guidelines: <https://www.utep.edu/vpba/hoop/section-2/student-conduct-and-discipline.html>
- Department Graduate Student Resources: <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/psychology/for-current-grads/>
- Graduate School Forms: <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/forms.html>

1. Program Overview

The PhD program in Psychology at UTEP is designed to train scientists in the fundamental areas of psychology. The program emphasizes empirical research, methodological rigor, and the development of expertise in specialized areas of psychology, preparing students to contribute to the advancement of psychological science and its application to real-world problems.

Mission and Goals

Our program prepares students to:

- Conduct high-quality original research that advances psychological science
- Develop expertise in their chosen concentration area
- Communicate research findings effectively through publications and presentations
- Apply psychological principles to address societal challenges
- Pursue careers in academia, research institutions, government agencies, or applied settings

Program Concentrations

The doctoral program offers five concentration areas and one dual degree program, in addition to a master's degree in Experimental Psychology. Students must choose one concentration or the dual degree program upon admission, though they may work with faculty across areas.

Behavioral Neuroscience

The Behavioral Neuroscience concentration focuses on the biological bases of behavior, including research in addiction, recreational substances, behavioral regulation, and neurobiological mechanisms underlying psychological processes.

Bilingualism, Language and Cognition

The Bilingualism, Language and Cognition concentration examines bilingual language processing (including lexical and syntactic processing), bilingual memory, reading and dialogue, event cognition, time perception, attention, and cognitive aging.

Health Psychology

The Health Psychology concentration focuses on psychological, behavioral, and social factors that influence physical health and illness. Students examine topics such as adaptation to chronic illness, health behavior change, stress and coping, food and fluid intake, judgment and decision-making in health contexts, smoking prevention and cessation, and underage drinking.

Legal Psychology

The Legal Psychology concentration examines psychological issues within the legal system, including mental health in the criminal justice system, legal decision-making, investigative interviewing, jury decision-making, and risk assessment.

Social/Cultural Psychology

The Social/Cultural Psychology concentration investigates how individuals think about, influence, and relate to one another. Research areas include social neuroscience, social perception, prejudice and stereotyping, and related topics in social cognition and interpersonal processes.

Dual Degree Program

PhD in Psychology with Master of Public Health (MPH)

The dual degree program combines the PhD in Psychology with a Master of Public Health degree. This program is particularly well-suited for students interested in public health interventions, health disparities, behavioral medicine, and community health research. The dual degree program requires 72 credit hours and integrates coursework from both Psychology and Public Health, including:

- Core psychology statistics and methodology courses
- Public Health core courses (Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Social and Behavioral Approaches, Environmental Health, Health Services Administration)
- Health psychology concentration courses
- Public Health practicum experience
- Both a Public Health thesis and Psychology dissertation

For complete degree requirements and course listings, see the Graduate Catalog at <https://catalog.utep.edu/grad/college-of-liberal-arts/psychology/psychology-phd/>

Optional Certificate Programs

In addition to the PhD degree, students may pursue graduate certificates that provide specialized training:

Graduate Certificate in Quantitative Methods in Psychology

This certificate provides advanced training in quantitative methods, experimental design, and statistical techniques. Requirements include 6 hours of required courses (Applied Correlation & Regression Methods, Experimental Design/Analysis of Variance), 12 hours of elective courses in advanced statistics, a quantitative-focused talk presented in departmental colloquium, and a supplemental requirement involving application of quantitative techniques in an external setting. For complete details, see Appendix C or visit <https://catalog.utep.edu/grad/college-of-liberal-arts/psychology/quantitative-methods-psychology-graduate-certificate/>

Graduate Certificate in Clinical Psychology

This certificate provides foundational training in clinical psychology principles and practices. For requirements and information, see Appendix D or visit <https://catalog.utep.edu/grad/college-of-liberal-arts/psychology/clinical-psychology-graduate-certificate/>

Master of Arts in Experimental Psychology

The Experimental M.A. Program emphasizes a theoretical and empirical approach to research including training in research methodology, experimental design, and statistical analysis. The program is designed to provide students with the research background needed to propose and complete an original, empirical thesis. The MA in Experimental Psychology plan of study can be found at <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/psychology/academic-programs/masters/experimental-ma/ma-experimental-psychology-plan-of-study-.pdf>

Program Expectations

Graduate training in psychology extends beyond formal coursework to include participation in the intellectual community of the department and the broader field. Students are expected to engage in both formal and informal educational activities throughout their time in the program.

Formal Requirements:

- Maintain full-time enrollment in Fall and Spring semesters (9 credit hours per semester, unless student has completed all requirements for the degree except the dissertation in which case the student must be enrolled for 3 hours of dissertation (PSYC 6398 or PSYC 6399))
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 in all upper-division and graduate courses
- Make satisfactory progress toward degree completion through timely achievement of program milestones
- Actively participate in research activities throughout the program
- Complete all degree requirements within eight years from initial enrollment (including graduate work completed prior to entering UTEP; see <https://catalog.utep.edu/policies-regulations/graduation-requirements/#graduatedegree requirements text>)
 - Be aware that as of August 2026, this policy is expected to be updated in the near future—please check the Graduate School website for more details
- Maintain professional and ethical conduct in all academic and research activities

Milestones Agreement:

The milestones agreement outlines expected timelines for completing major degree milestones (first-year project, thesis proposal and defense, advancement to dissertation, dissertation proposal and defense). Students review this agreement with their mentor during their first semester in the program and submit it to the Graduate School. Students are expected to make satisfactory progress according to this timeline. The Milestones Agreement is available on SharePoint as well as <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/forms.html> (Navigate to Doctoral Milestone/IDP form then Liberal Arts then choose the relevant program).

Departmental and Professional Engagement:

In addition to completing program requirements, graduate students should participate in activities that help develop the knowledge, skills, and professional networks necessary for successful careers in psychology:

- Attend weekly departmental colloquia (typically Thursdays at noon) featuring visiting and local speakers
- Participate in informal discussions and social gatherings with visiting researchers
- Attend area-specific meetings and seminars within your concentration
- Present research at departmental events (first-year project, thesis defense, dissertation defense)
- Engage with faculty and peers to stay current with ongoing research in the department
- Present research at regional, national, and international professional conferences
- Submit research for publication in peer-reviewed journals
- Engage in collaborative research with faculty and fellow students
- Participate in professional organizations relevant to your area of study
- Apply for grants and fellowships to support graduate training, research, and conference travel as applicable
- Develop other professional skills such as networking and public speaking

Graduate Program Committee

The Graduate Program Committee (GPC) oversees all aspects of the graduate program, including:

- Admission procedures and decisions
- Curriculum development and course offerings
- Student progress monitoring and evaluation
- Conflict resolution involving students, faculty, or program requirements
- Policy development and program improvement

The GPC consists of the Graduate Program Director (who serves as chair) and several graduate faculty members representing different areas of psychology. The current Graduate Program Director is Dr. Jennifer Eno Loudon (jloulouden@utep.edu).

2. Program Components and Degree Requirements

The PhD program in Psychology requires 60-72 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree, depending on which concentration they select. All students must complete the curriculum outlined below and fulfill additional non-course requirements.

For detailed and current degree requirements, please refer to the UTEP Graduate Catalog at <https://catalog.utep.edu/> and your concentration-specific degree plan available on the department website at <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/psychology/for-current-grads/>

Leveling Course Requirements

Students whose undergraduate degree is in a field other than Psychology must consult with the GPC Director prior to admission to determine whether leveling courses will be required before beginning the program. Students requiring leveling courses will be granted conditional admission dependent upon completing the required courses.

All students entering the program must have:

- Introduction to Psychology (or at least one upper division psychology course)
- An introductory statistics course
- A research methods course in a closely related field

Credit Hour Requirements

Total credit hours required: 60-72 credit hours (depending on concentration)

All PhD students complete a master's thesis as part of their doctoral training. Credit hour requirements include:

- 6 thesis credit hours (PSYC 6395 Thesis I and PSYC 6396 Thesis II)
- 6 dissertation credit hours (PSYC 6398 Dissertation I and PSYC 6399 Dissertation II)
- Core curriculum, concentration courses, and electives to reach the total required hours for the specific concentration

Core Curriculum Requirements

Core curriculum requirements vary by concentration. All students complete foundational coursework in statistics, methodology, and breadth areas, but the specific courses and credit hour requirements differ across the concentration areas.

Students should consult their concentration-specific degree plan document for exact requirements. Degree plan documents are located on the department SharePoint site and are also provided to students at orientation.

General core areas (specific requirements vary by concentration):

Statistics and Methodology

Most concentrations require courses such as:

- PSYC 6307: Applied Correlation & Regression Methods
- PSYC 6308: Experimental Design/Analysis of Variance
- Additional statistics/methodology courses as specified by concentration

Breadth Courses

Students typically complete 6 credit hours from breadth areas outside their concentration. Specific courses that satisfy this requirement are listed on program-specific degree plans.

Concentration Requirements

Students must complete 9-15 credit hours in their chosen concentration area as specified by their concentration. Specific requirements vary by concentration. See your concentration-specific degree plan and Appendix D of this handbook for detailed requirements.

Research Activity Courses

Students enroll in research activity courses to document ongoing research work:

- PSYC 5301: Research Applications (typically 3 hours per semester; note some programs require multiple semesters and may require taking credit with a faculty member other than the primary mentor; see below)
- PSYC 6380: First Year Project I (1 credit hour, Fall of first year)
- PSYC 6381: First Year Project II (1 credit hour, Spring of first year)

Exception: Students in the Legal Psychology concentration complete comprehensive examinations instead of the first-year project. See the Comprehensive Examinations section below for details.

- PSYC 6390: Field Placement (Mainly for Legal Psychology students)
- PSYC 6395: Thesis I (3 credit hours, for PhD students)
- PSYC 6396: Thesis II (3 credit hours, for PhD students)
- PSYC 6398: Dissertation I (3 credit hours)
- PSYC 6399: Dissertation II (3 credit hours)

Note: Thesis and Dissertation credits may not be taken simultaneously.

Requirements for Research Applications

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. This

could be a meta-analysis or literature review, engagement as a secondary researcher in a project in the faculty member's lab or initiating a 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.

Requirements for Field Placement (Mainly for Legal Psychology Students)

Students in the Legal Psychology concentration can choose to complete a Field Placement as part of their degree plan. Field Placements are intended to (a) provide students with experience conducting applied research or evaluations in an 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 student's future research and employment opportunities.

Field placements must include an applied research component and ideally should be conducted in conjunction with a sponsoring institution or department. 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)

It is recommended, but not required, that the sponsoring institution provide a supervisor who is at least a master's level researcher. If an on-site supervisor is unavailable, the student must arrange for a member of the Legal Psychology faculty to provide appropriate supervision. In addition, it is encouraged that the placement pay the student a stipend or salary. It is recommended that the student communicate with the sponsoring institution/supervisor to identify a deliverable (e.g., evaluation report, presentation) to be turned in at the end of the placement.

Legal Psychology students who choose to do a Field Placement (PSYC 6390) can complete 3 or 6 credit hours for this course. One hundred fifty hours of clock time are equal to three credit hours of Field Placement. Students seeking to do 6 hours of Field Placement can complete their hours at one site (e.g., one large project) or two sites (e.g., two smaller projects).

Students who wish to enroll in Field Placement should discuss this with their mentor (or alternate member of the Legal Psychology faculty) to discuss the appropriateness of the placement and the

activities they plan to engage in. The student and faculty member will work together to come up with a timeline of activities and a deliverable upon which the student's final grade will be based.

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.

Major Milestones and Timeline

The following sections detail the major milestones in the PhD program and typical timelines. Students should consult the PhD Milestone Agreement signed at program entry and review their degree evaluation in Goldmine regularly. Students entering with transfer credits will typically complete milestones earlier than the timelines listed below.

Degree Evaluation Checkpoints

Timeline: Ongoing throughout program

Each semester, students should:

- Review their degree evaluation in Goldmine
- Cross-reference with their concentration-specific degree plan
- Discuss progress with their mentor
- Meet with the Graduate Program Director if they have questions about their progress or degree requirements

Annual Reviews (Individual Development Plan)

Timeline: Conducted every Spring semester

Each spring semester, students complete an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that includes:

- Student self-evaluation of progress toward degree milestones
- Discussion of research activities and professional development
- Goal-setting for the upcoming year

Process:

- Students submit IDP form, CV, and degree plan for review to SharePoint by April 5 (or closest business day)
 - Faculty mentor input is encouraged but no faculty comments are required for this step

- GPC Director shares IDP documents with faculty by April 6 (or closest business day) on OneDrive
- Faculty mentors provide detailed feedback on goals
- Area faculty meet to provide additional comments and finalize comments to GPC by April 30 (or closest business day)
- GPC reviews and provides additional comments to students by May 21 (or closest business day)
- Students edit IDP (if necessary) and submit final version with all faculty comments to Graduate School by May 31 (<https://www.utep.edu/graduate/forms.html> Navigate to Doctoral Students/IDP then IDP)

Further information about the IDP process is available on the department SharePoint site.

First-Year Project

Timeline: Year 1 (Fall and Spring semesters; must be completed by the end of the second semester of the first year or the first semester of the second year at the latest).

Note: This requirement applies to all concentrations except Legal Psychology. Students in the Legal Psychology concentration complete comprehensive examinations instead. See Comprehensive Examinations section below.

All students (except Legal Psychology and those in the dual degree MPH/PhD program) complete a first-year research project under faculty supervision.

The purpose of the first-year project is to familiarize students with research methods in their field. All students should be engaged in research in the lab of their primary mentor, which can look like: (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. This may include submitting an IRB or IACUC proposal when appropriate. Students' research activities during the first year are closely supervised by the primary mentor, and mentors determine the scope of the first-year project, with the idea that students will present what they have learned during the first year early in Fall of Year 2, which may not necessarily be a full-fledged standalone project.

This milestone requires:

- Enrollment in PSYC 6380 First Year Project I during Fall semester of first year
- Enrollment in PSYC 6381 First Year Project II during Spring semester of first year
 - o Because students typically complete the First Year Project presentation after completing the required credits, faculty mentors should communicate to students the requirements for passing grades in PSYC 6380 and PSYC 6381
- Students must email the colloquium organizer during the first week of the semester in Fall of Year 2 to get on the colloquium schedule for that semester

- Students must present a summary of the progress of their research at the Departmental colloquium or other scheduled event (15-20 minutes unless otherwise specified)
 - o The typical format is that of a standard research presentation (introduction, method, results (or anticipated results), implications/discussion), though faculty mentors may provide more specific guidance.
 - o There is no formal assessment of these presentations, but faculty mentors are responsible for determining whether the presentation is acceptable. If a faculty mentor determines that the presentation was not acceptable, they should provide the student with specific feedback on how they can improve in the future and this should be noted in the student's IDP for that year.
- Students submit First Year Project completion form on SharePoint with the name of the project and the date it was presented. Mentors will be contacted by the GPC director to confirm the student has successfully fulfilled the milestone.

Master's Thesis Proposal

Timeline: Spring of Year 2 or Fall of Year 3

Students should begin discussing their thesis proposal with their mentor early in Year 2.

This milestone requires:

- Form thesis committee in consultation with mentor (see Section 3 for committee composition)
 - External (non-UTEP) committee members must complete temporary membership form: https://www.utep.edu/graduate/_files/docs/application-for-temporary-membership-in-the-graduate-faculty.pdf
- Enroll in PSYC 6395 Thesis I during the semester of proposal (typically Fall or Spring of second year)
 - Note: If PSYC 6395 was taken previously without proposing, enroll in PSYC 6396 instead
- Distribute thesis proposal document to committee at least 10 business days before proposal meeting unless a shorter timeframe is unanimously agreed to by the committee
 - Note: Students should keep in mind this timeline when scheduling meetings, because if the document is not distributed to the committee by the deadline the meeting must be rescheduled unless the committee unanimously agrees to a shorter timeframe. Committee members should reach out to the student and mentor if they do not receive the document on time.
- Student presents oral proposal to committee. The objective of the proposal meeting is to ensure that the proposed research will contribute to the scientific field and to help the students improve their thesis.

- Committee evaluation of proposal:
 - Committee members will communicate to the committee chair (without the student present) whether the student passes (a) the oral presentation and (b) the written document.
 - Oral presentations are rated pass/fail. If two or more committee members indicate that the student failed the oral presentation, the student must present again no later than the end of the following semester. Students failing a second thesis proposal may not progress in the program.
 - Documents can be rated as approved, approved pending revisions, or not approved. When the document is approved pending revisions, the student will send a memo to all committee members outlining the changes that need to be made before moving forward and the mentor is responsible for ensuring those changes are made. When a document is not approved, the student must submit to the committee members again for further review. Revisions must be made to the document until all committee members approve and research must not commence until this occurs.
- Obtain committee signatures on Thesis Proposal Form if approved (form available on department SharePoint site)
- If all committee members approve the proposal, the student should upload completed and signed Thesis Proposal Form to department SharePoint site
- Notify Graduate Program Director within one week of meeting of the proposal whether it was unanimously approved; if not unanimously approved, the student should provide a short explanation
- After the Graduate Program Director returns the signed Thesis Proposal Form to you, submit it to the Graduate School

Thesis proposal procedures and forms are available on the department SharePoint site and at <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/psychology/for-current-grads/>

It is generally expected that the student carry out the research as described in the proposal document and presentation. If substantive changes to the study methodology are needed after the proposal (e.g., change of participant source, change in sample size, change in measurement), the student is encouraged to communicate these changes with their committee members. Students should consult with their mentors for guidance in these situations and be aware that committee members are under no obligation to accept significant changes to the project after the proposal stage.

Requirements for Thesis

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 are expected to present their thesis at a professional conference and submit it

to a journal for publication, unless their mentor 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 mentor), the mentor may choose to revise the thesis and submit it for publication, usually with the student listed as first author.

Master's Thesis Defense

Timeline: Fall or Spring of Year 3

After successful thesis proposal, students should:

- Enroll in PSYC 6396 Thesis II each Fall and Spring semester during thesis work (must be enrolled the semester when thesis is defended; keep this in mind if planning a Summer defense)
- Complete thesis research and writing
- Schedule defense and notify Graduate Program Director no later than one week before defense using the link available on department SharePoint site
 - Note: It is expected that the student schedules the defense during a time that all committee members are available to attend. If this is not possible, the student may petition the GPC director for permission to hold the defense to a partial committee. If approved, the committee chair is responsible for recording the public and private portions of the defense for the absent committee member to review. If a committee member has an emergency that precludes their attendance at a defense, the committee chair must record the public and private portions of the defense for the committee member to review.
 - If a committee member becomes unavailable altogether for the defense (e.g., goes on leave), they must be replaced with an alternate faculty member such that the composition of the committee still meets the requirements laid out later in the handbook.
- Distribute thesis document to committee at least 10 business days before defense meeting unless a shorter timeframe is unanimously agreed to by the committee
 - Note: Students should keep in mind this timeline when scheduling meetings, because if the document is not distributed to the committee by the deadline the meeting must be rescheduled unless the committee unanimously agrees to a shorter timeframe. Committee members should reach out to the student and mentor if they do not receive the document on time.
- Complete the SafeAssign Form and distribute the originality check to all committee members (checks for plagiarism)
- Defend thesis publicly (online, in person, or hybrid) or at departmental colloquium

- After the public defense, there should be a private defense following the public defense where members of the student's thesis committee question the student about the thesis, make suggestions for improvement, and vote on whether the thesis is acceptable
- Committee evaluation of thesis defense:
 - Committee members will communicate to the committee chair (without the student present) whether the student passes (a) the oral presentation and (b) the written document.
 - Oral presentations are rated pass/fail. If two or more committee members indicate that the student failed the oral presentation, the student must present again no later than the end of the following semester. Students failing a second thesis defense may not progress in the program.
 - Documents can be rated as approved, approved pending revisions, or not approved. When the document is approved pending revisions, the student will send a memo to all committee members outlining the changes that need to be made before moving forward and the mentor is responsible for ensuring those changes are made. When a document is not approved, the student must submit it to the committee members again for further review. Revisions must be made to the document until all committee members approve, even if this means graduation is delayed. Students are strongly encouraged to take this into account when scheduling defenses.
 - If a committee member believes that the document is unable to be brought up to the required standard even with revisions (e.g., insufficient data, failure to follow procedures outlined in proposal without prior committee approval), the committee member(s) must justify this in writing to the committee chair.
 - The committee chair is then responsible for determining future action. If the committee chair believes the project can be brought up to the standards of the department, they may recommend that the student continue working on the thesis project in preparation for a second attempt at a defense. Alternatively, the committee chair may initiate an appeal to the GPC that allows for a non-unanimous decision from the committee to pass. A thesis document may be passed with a non-unanimous vote of the thesis committee provided only one committee member indicates the document is not able to be brought up to standard even with revisions. The GPC will review these on a case-by-case basis.

After the defense, complete the following steps:

- Obtain committee signatures on the Thesis Defense Form (available on department SharePoint site)

- Obtain committee signatures on the Thesis Title Page (template available on department SharePoint site)
- Request that each committee member (other than your chair) complete the Learning Outcome Assessment (LOA) form (available on department SharePoint site) and submit it to Goran Pavlov at gpavlov@utep.edu
 - LOAs should be completed based on the quality of the presentation and document. Committee members should evaluate the quality of the document as it was distributed to them unless the document requires extensive revisions (i.e., was not approved by the committee), in which case the final document should be evaluated.
- Complete the Online Degree Evaluation form
- Submit completed thesis to Graduate School following defense
- Complete Application for Graduate Degree at <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/forms.html> (navigate to Graduation → Master's → Application for Graduate Degree)

Note: Students must apply to graduate and complete all paperwork requirements even if not participating in commencement ceremony. Begin reviewing graduation requirements in August (for Fall defense) or January (for Spring defense).

Comprehensive Examinations (Legal Psychology Only)

Timeline: Spring of Year 3

Students in the Legal Psychology concentration complete comprehensive examination instead of the first-year project. The comprehensive examination assesses students' knowledge in their concentration area and demonstrates readiness to advance to dissertation-level work.

Requirements and procedures for comprehensive examinations:

- The content of the exam should be a publication-quality review article of a psycho-legal topic
- Each student will form a comp committee composed of (a) the student's primary Legal Psychology mentor and (b) at least one other member of the Legal Psychology faculty. An additional faculty member from outside the Legal area or Psychology Department may be added to the committee if relevant subject matter expertise is needed.
- Students submit a written 2-page proposal to their committee and prepare an oral presentation of their proposed exam topic to the Legal area faculty and graduate students to solicit feedback
- Students submit the final paper to their committee members and present their a mini-lecture of their topic at the departmental colloquium and meeting of the Legal area faculty and graduate students

- Students must pass the comprehensive examination before proceeding to dissertation proposal
- If a student does not pass on the first attempt, they may retake the examination according to area policies

Additional details regarding the content and format of the Comprehensive Examination are presented in Appendix F.

Advancement to Dissertation

Timeline: Within 8 weeks after MA thesis defense (for students transferring in a thesis, it should be done after the thesis has been presented to the department *and* required coursework has been completed)

The Advancement to Dissertation process serves as a checkpoint in the student's degree program to ensure that the student is ready to begin work on the dissertation. At this time, the student should have completed the coursework necessary for a master's degree in our department.

Note: Advancement to Dissertation is NOT the same as Advancement to Candidacy. Advancement to Candidacy happens when the student successfully proposes their dissertation (see below).

Requirements and procedures for advancement to dissertation:

1. Locate the appropriate Advancement to Dissertation application for their concentration area on the department SharePoint site
2. Download the application document to their computer
3. Complete the Department of Psychology Evaluation of Advancement to Dissertation application form
4. Save their completed application as a Word document named "Advancement_Application"
5. Update their CV and save as a Word document or PDF named "CV"
6. Download an updated electronic copy of their program of study/degree evaluation from Goldmine and save as a PDF named "Degree_Evaluation"
7. Submit electronic versions of all three documents (application, CV, and degree evaluation) using the link on SharePoint (located in the same folder as the application form)

What happens after submission:

- The Graduate Program Director will disseminate the student's application to the faculty in their concentration area
- Area faculty must meet to discuss whether the student advances to the dissertation stage

- If a student is two or more semesters behind on milestones or has had concerns raised on their prior IDPs, it is encouraged that the area invite the student to meet with them so an informed decision can be made. This meeting should be forward focused with the goal of determining the student's current level of ability to proceed and students are not compelled to share any sensitive details regarding prior delays beyond what was shared in IDPs. The purpose of this process is so students do not begin the arduous work of writing a dissertation proposal if it is unlikely they will be successful at the dissertation stage.
- Area faculty will decide whether the student has demonstrated the abilities and motivation to successfully propose and defend their dissertation in a timely manner
 - Each faculty member in the area will vote to approve the advancement or not approve, with the votes tallied by the area chair. Votes are limited to Psychology faculty unless the student's mentor is in another department, in which case the mentor will also vote.
 - If more than one faculty member does not approve, the advancement is considered failed. Students who do not successfully advance to dissertation may not continue in the program.
- Advancement of students who are two or more semesters behind on milestones or have had issues raised on their prior IDPs must be approved by the GPC (by majority vote) in addition to the area faculty.
- The student will be notified of the outcome by the head of their program area, usually within 2 weeks (may take longer during summer)
- If the student does not hear anything after 2 weeks, they should contact the Graduate Program Director

Once approved for advancement to dissertation, the student may enroll in dissertation research credits (PSYC 6398) and begin working on their dissertation proposal.

Note: Student in Legal may reach the point of enrolling in Dissertation credit only before advancement is approved due to the timing of the Comprehensive Exam. When this occurs, the advancement is considered provisional and dependent on successful completion of the advancement.

Doctoral Dissertation Proposal

Timeline: Fall of Year 4

After successful advancement to dissertation, students should:

- Enroll in PSYC 6398 Dissertation I (do not enroll until advancement to dissertation is approved unless in Legal Psychology program)
- Form dissertation committee in consultation with mentor (see Section 3 for committee requirements)

- Ensure all committee members are approved by Graduate School before proposal
 - External committee members must complete temporary membership form: https://www.utep.edu/graduate/_files/docs/application-for-temporary-membership-in-the-graduate-faculty.pdf
- Distribute dissertation proposal document to committee at least 10 business days before proposal meeting unless a shorter timeframe is unanimously agreed to by the committee
 - Note: Students should keep in mind this timeline when scheduling meetings, because if the document is not distributed to the committee by the deadline the meeting must be rescheduled unless the committee unanimously agrees to a shorter timeframe. Committee members should reach out to the student and mentor if they do not receive the document on time.
- Present oral proposal to committee; the objective of the proposal meeting is to ensure that the proposed research will contribute to the scientific field and help the students improve their dissertation
- All members of the dissertation committee must approve the dissertation before the study commences
- Committee evaluation of proposal:
 - Committee members will communicate to the committee chair (without the student present) whether the student passes (a) the oral presentation and (b) the written document.
 - Oral presentations are rated pass/fail. If two or more committee members indicate that the student failed the oral presentation, the student must present again no later than the end of the following semester. Students failing a second dissertation proposal may not progress in the program.
 - Documents can be rated as approved, approved pending revisions, or not approved. When the document is approved pending revisions, the student will send a memo to all committee members outlining the changes that need to be made before moving forward and the mentor is responsible for ensuring those changes are made. When a document is not approved, the student must submit to the committee members again for further review. Revisions must be made to the document until all committee members approve and research must not commence until this occurs.
- By approving the dissertation proposal, the Dissertation Committee affirms that the candidate:
 - has presented and successfully defended an acceptable research topic
 - has the academic and professional background to address the topic

- has completed coursework requirements, only lacking the completion of the dissertation to satisfy degree requirements
- Obtain committee signatures on Dissertation Proposal Form if approved (form available on department SharePoint site)
- Upload completed and signed Dissertation Proposal Form to department SharePoint site
- Notify Graduate Program Director within one week of meeting of the proposal whether it was unanimously approved; if not unanimously approved, the student should provide a short explanation

It is generally expected that the student carry out the research as described in the proposal document and presentation. If substantive changes to the study methodology are needed after the proposal (e.g., change of participant source, change in sample size, change in measurement), the student is encouraged to communicate these changes with their committee members. Students should consult with their mentors for guidance in these situations and be aware that committee members are under no obligation to accept significant changes to the project after the proposal stage.

Requirements for 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 are advised to use caution when collecting data before their proposal is complete or using secondary data, as committee members often have suggestions for study design.

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.

Application for Candidacy

Timeline: Year 4 (within two weeks after dissertation proposal is approved)

After successful dissertation proposal, students apply for candidacy:

- Complete online Application for Candidacy:
<https://forms.utep.edu/form.aspx?pid=303bd7c4-e334-4570-af66-867e2a2fad48&formid=8185e7de-afb8-4709-8ad7-724e895f92a6>
- Obtain required signatures electronically
- Receive approval from Graduate School

Once approved, students are officially doctoral candidates and may enroll in PSYC 6399 Dissertation II (3 credits per semester) to maintain full-time status, provided all other coursework is complete.

Doctoral Dissertation Defense

Timeline: Year 5

Students should:

- Enroll in PSYC 6399 Dissertation II each semester while working on dissertation (must be enrolled the semester when dissertation is defended; keep this in mind if planning a Summer defense)
- Schedule defense and notify Graduate Program Director no later than one week before defense using the link available on department SharePoint site
 - Note: It is expected that the student schedules the defense during a time that all committee members are available to attend. If this is not possible, the student may petition the GPC director for permission to hold the defense to a partial committee. If approved, the committee chair is responsible for recording the public and private portions of the defense for the absent committee member to review. If a committee member has an emergency that precludes their attendance at a defense, the committee chair must record the public and private portions of the defense for the committee member to review.
 - If a committee member becomes unavailable altogether for the defense (e.g., goes on leave), they must be replaced with an alternate faculty member such that the composition of the committee still meets the requirements laid out later in the handbook.
- Distribute document to committee at least 10 business days before defense meeting unless a shorter timeframe is unanimously agreed to by the committee
 - Note: Students should keep in mind this timeline when scheduling meetings, because if the document is not distributed to the committee by the deadline the meeting must be rescheduled unless the committee unanimously agrees to a shorter timeframe. Committee members should reach out to the student and mentor if they do not receive the document on time.
- Defend dissertation publicly (this is the oral examination); a private defense follows the public defense that 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
 - 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
 - Defenses can be conducted in person, online, or hybrid
- Committee evaluation of dissertation defense:

- Committee members will communicate to the committee chair (without the student present) whether the student passes (a) the oral presentation and (b) the written document.
- Oral presentations are rated pass/fail. If two or more committee members indicate that the student failed the oral presentation, the student must present again no later than the end of the following semester. Students failing a second dissertation defense may not progress in the program.
- Documents can be rated as approved, approved pending revisions, or not approved. When the document is approved pending revisions, the student will send a memo to all committee members outlining the changes that need to be made before moving forward and the mentor is responsible for ensuring those changes are made. When a document is not approved, the student must submit to the committee members again for further review. Revisions must be made to the document until all committee members approve, even if this means graduation is delayed. Students are strongly encouraged to take this into account when scheduling defenses.
 - If a committee member believes that the document is unable to be brought up to the required standard even with revisions (e.g., insufficient data, failure to follow procedures outlined in proposal without prior committee approval), the committee member(s) must justify this in writing to the committee chair.
 - The committee chair is then responsible for determining future action. If the committee chair believes the project can be brought up to the standards of the department, they may recommend that the student continue working on the dissertation project in preparation for a second attempt at a defense. Alternatively, the committee chair may initiate an appeal to the GPC and the GPC will review these on a case-by-case basis.

After the defense, complete the following steps:

- Obtain committee signatures on the Dissertation Title Page (template available on department SharePoint site)
- Request that each committee member (other than your chair) complete the Learning Outcome Assessment form (available on department SharePoint site) and submit it to Goran Pavlov at gpavlov@utep.edu
 - LOAs should be completed based on the quality of the presentation and document. Committee members should evaluate the quality of the document as it was distributed to them unless the document requires extensive revisions (i.e., was not approved by the committee), in which case the final document should be evaluated.
- Complete the Online Degree Evaluation form

- Complete the SafeAssign Form
- Submit completed dissertation to Graduate School following defense
- Complete Application for Doctoral Degree at <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/forms.html> (navigate to Graduation → Doctoral → Application for Doctoral Degree)
- Complete the Exit Survey using the link on department SharePoint site
- Complete all other graduation requirements outlined at <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/forms.html>
- See the Defense Checklist on department SharePoint site for additional information

Begin reviewing graduation requirements in August (for Fall defense) or January (for Spring defense) of the intended defense semester.

For complete graduation requirements and deadlines, see the Graduate School website at <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/current-students/graduation.html>

Transfer Credits and Advanced Standing

Students may request to transfer up to 24 credit hours from prior graduate work at UTEP or another institution. Transfer credits appear as Advanced Standing Credits (ASC) and may count toward degree requirements.

Important considerations:

- Transfer credits reduce the time allotted to complete the PhD (eight-year clock starts with first transferred course)
- Applications for ASC must be submitted by the end of the first week of the student's first semester in the program
- Applications must include official transcripts, syllabi, and signed acknowledgment of time-to-degree implications
- Thesis credits awarded at another institution cannot replace thesis credits at UTEP but can count as Research Applications credit
- Graduate Program Director reviews applications in consultation with faculty
- Students with transfer credits will complete a tailored Milestone Agreement to reflect an accelerated timeline
- Final approval from Graduate School is required

Thesis Waivers

Students who completed a master's thesis at another accredited institution or in another department at UTEP may apply for a thesis waiver. If approved, the student is not required to complete a second thesis at UTEP.

Eligibility Criteria:

The thesis must meet three criteria:

1. The thesis is based on an empirical research project (not a quantitative review or theoretical analysis)
2. It is equivalent in scope and quality to the typical MA thesis completed by students at UTEP in the student's area of concentration
3. It is on a topic appropriate for the student's area of concentration

Application Process:

1. The student submits a written request via email to their mentor, the head of their area committee (concentration area head), and the Graduate Program Director, including a PDF of the thesis
 - Timeline: Requests are strongly encouraged to be submitted by May 1 of the spring before beginning classes in the PhD program and must be submitted no later than the end of the first week of the student's first semester in the program
2. The area committee head will identify a Reader in the student's area
3. The Reader and the student's mentor will evaluate whether the thesis meets the three criteria listed above
4. The Reader and the student's mentor will notify the area committee head and Graduate Program Director of their decision

If Approved:

- The student will make an oral presentation on the thesis (20-30 minutes) at a departmental research colloquium
- After the presentation, notify the Graduate Program Director by email within three days (with CC to the student's mentor) including the date and title of the presentation
- The Graduate Program Director will notify the Graduate School and request a thesis waiver
- Students who receive a thesis waiver should apply for Advancement to Dissertation by the end of the first semester of their second year in the graduate program

Note: Students with approved thesis waivers should consult their milestone agreement for the timing of subsequent milestones.

Time Limits

All degree requirements must be completed within eight years from initial enrollment in the program. As noted earlier, this policy is likely to be updated by the Graduate School in the near future, so students are encouraged to check the Graduate School website for updates. Students who do not complete requirements within this timeframe may petition for an extension, but extensions are granted only under exceptional circumstances.

Exemptions And Special Circumstances

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

3. Advising, Selection of Advisor, and Mentoring

Mentoring Philosophy

The Psychology Department is committed to providing comprehensive mentoring that supports students' academic, professional, and personal development. Effective mentoring is essential to student success and involves regular communication, constructive feedback, and collaborative goal setting.

Initial Advising and Mentor Assignment

Upon admission, each student is assigned a faculty mentor based on shared research interests. Students are encouraged to:

- Meet with their assigned mentor during the first week of classes
- Discuss research interests, career goals, and program expectations
- Attend lab meetings and research presentations to learn about faculty research

Students should complete the Milestone Agreement with their mentor during their initial advising meeting in the first semester. This agreement is required by The University of Texas System. The completed agreement should be kept by both the student and the mentor for reference throughout the program.

The purpose of this agreement is to ensure that doctoral students are aware of the academic milestones they are expected to reach to earn their doctoral degree. Students are expected to reach each academic milestone within a specified time period to make satisfactory progress through the program.

Mentor Responsibilities

Faculty mentors provide:

- Guidance on degree planning and approval of course selections each semester
- Supervision of research activities and projects
- Guidance on expectations for research lab activities (formal lab expectations documents are encouraged)
- Professional development opportunities (conference presentations, publications, grant writing)
- Career counseling and networking opportunities
- Regular meetings to discuss progress and address concerns
- Support through academic challenges and milestone completion
- Feedback on IDPs annually or more frequently as needed
- Proactive communication with students who are struggling or are behind on milestones

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to:

- Maintain regular communication with their mentor
- Come to meetings prepared with questions and updates on progress
- Be proactive in seeking guidance and feedback (e.g., submitting IRB proposals, IDPs, conference presentations, grant proposals, etc. to the mentor for feedback)
- Meet agreed-upon deadlines and commitments
- Communicate concerns or conflicts promptly and professionally

Semesterly Advising

All students must meet with their mentor each semester before registration to:

- Review academic progress and degree evaluation
- Plan coursework for the upcoming semester
- Discuss research activities and milestones

- Update Individual Development Plan (IDP) as needed (see prior section)

Mentoring Agreements

In addition to the required Milestone Agreement, mentors and students are strongly encouraged to establish a mentoring agreement (or lab expectations document) during the first semester that outlines expectations specific to their working relationship. A mentoring agreement is not submitted to the Graduate School but should be kept by both parties for reference and revisited as needed. Topics commonly addressed include:

- **First-year project expectations:** the student's role (primary investigator, secondary investigator, or contributor to a larger project), the anticipated scope of the project, expected milestones within PSYC 6380 and PSYC 6381, and criteria the mentor will use to determine whether the Fall Year 2 presentation is acceptable.
- **Authorship and publication:** expectations for authorship order on resulting papers or presentations, and whether the mentor may revise and submit the project (or thesis) for publication if the student does not do so within a reasonable time frame.
- **Data and materials ownership:** how research data, code, and materials are stored, shared, and used after a student leaves the lab.
- **Lab expectations:** meeting schedule, lab hours, authorship on unrelated lab projects, and any required trainings (IRB/IACUC, safety, etc.).
- **Professional development:** expectations around conference presentations, grant or fellowship applications, and manuscript submissions.
- **Communication:** preferred meeting cadence, response-time expectations, and how progress will be tracked between IDP updates.

Mentors are encouraged to document these understandings in writing, even informally, to avoid ambiguity as projects progress.

Thesis and Dissertation Committee Formation

Students form thesis and dissertation committees in consultation with their mentor. All committee members must be approved by the Graduate School before proposal meetings.

Master's Thesis Committee Composition

Thesis committees must include four members with specific roles:

1. Chair (the student's direct mentor). Must be faculty in Psychology Department or an approved external mentor
2. Tenured Psychology Faculty Member: One member of the Psychology Department who is tenured and at the associate or full professor rank (not including the chair). Emeritus faculty from the Department can also serve in this role.
3. Additional Psychology Department Member: One additional member from the Psychology Department with no rank/tenure requirements. Can include research faculty or postdoctoral fellows, provided they are not supported by or working under the supervision of the committee chair.

4. External Member: One faculty member from outside the Psychology Department. Can be from another UTEP department or from outside UTEP. If from outside UTEP, they must complete temporary membership form before scheduling. May be research faculty or postdoctoral fellow, but if so, member #3 above must have tenure or be tenure-track (maximum one research faculty/postdoc total on committee). Note that if the committee chair is from a department other than Psychology, they do not count as the external member.

Doctoral Dissertation Committee Composition

Dissertation committees must include five members with specific roles:

1. Dissertation Chair: The student's direct mentor, who must be faculty in Psychology Department or an approved external mentor.
2. Tenured Psychology Faculty Member: One member of the Psychology Department who is tenured and at the associate or full professor rank (not including the chair). Emeritus faculty from the Department can also serve in this role. In some situations, this could be a tenured individual at UTEP who is not in Psychology if they are a co-mentor (requires advance approval from GPC).
3. Additional Psychology Department Member: One additional member from the Psychology Department with no rank/tenure requirements. Can include research faculty or postdoctoral fellows, provided they are not supported by or working under the supervision of the committee chair. Co-mentors from outside Psychology at UTEP may serve in this role with advance GPC approval.
4. External Member: One faculty member from outside the Psychology Department. Can be from another UTEP department or from outside UTEP. If from outside UTEP, must complete temporary membership form before scheduling. May be research faculty or postdoctoral fellow, but if so, member #3 above must have tenure or be tenure-track (maximum one research faculty/postdoc total on committee). Note that if the committee chair is from a department other than Psychology, they do not count as the external member.
5. Tenure/Tenure-Track Faculty Member: One additional committee member at the tenure or tenure-track level (assistant, associate, or full professor - not postdoctoral fellows or research faculty). Can be from inside or outside the Department, or outside UTEP. If from outside UTEP, must complete temporary membership form.

Timeline for Committee Formation

Students should form their thesis committee by the beginning of the semester they propose (typically Year 2) and their dissertation committee before proposing dissertation (typically Year 4). All committee members must be approved by the Graduate School before proposal meetings.

Committee Member Qualifications

All committee members must be members of the UTEP Graduate Faculty or approved for temporary membership. Faculty from other institutions must apply for temporary membership

using the form at https://www.utep.edu/graduate/_files/docs/application-for-temporary-membership-in-the-graduate-faculty.pdf

Post-doctoral fellows and Research Assistant Professors may serve on committees (but not as Chair or Co-Chair) with specific approvals. See the department's Policy Regarding Mentorship of Dissertations and Theses at <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/psychology/for-current-grads/> for complete details.

Mentorship When Faculty Leave the University

The Psychology Department's general policy is that dissertation and thesis committee chairs should be current tenured, tenure-track, or Emeritus members of the Psychology Department faculty. If a student's mentor leaves the department, the student should generally find a new mentor within the department.

An exception may be made if a thesis or dissertation proposal was already approved before the mentor left, the former mentor may continue as Co-Chair with a current faculty member serving as Chair (requires Graduate Program Director and Graduate School approval).

Changing Mentors

While mentor-student relationships are generally stable, circumstances may necessitate a change in mentorship. Students who wish to change mentors should:

- Discuss concerns with their current mentor if possible
- Consult with the Graduate Program Director
- Identify a new mentor willing to accept them
 - Mentors must be faculty in the Psychology Department or approved by the Psychology Department to serve as primary mentors. Consult the GPC Director for a current list of approved mentors.
- Inform the GPC Director

The Graduate Program Director will work with students to facilitate smooth transitions and minimize disruptions to degree progress.

4. Academic and Professional Performance

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress to remain in good standing and maintain eligibility for employment and tuition remission. Satisfactory progress is defined as:

- Maintaining a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA in all upper-division and graduate courses
- Earning grades of B or better in all core courses

- No more than two grades of C or lower in Psychology courses
- Making timely progress toward degree milestones
- Meeting annual review expectations
- Demonstrating professional and ethical conduct in all activities

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. Failure to meet the 3.0 grade point average requirement during the probationary period will result in dismissal from the Graduate School.

Grading Policies

Graduate courses are graded on UTEP's A-F scale. Grades of B or better are needed to pass graduate courses.

- Students who receive two grades of C or lower in Psychology courses will be dismissed from the program
- Students who earn a grade of C or lower must retake the course the next time it is offered and earn a grade of B or better

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades may be assigned when a student has been unable to complete course requirements due to circumstances beyond their control. Students and instructors must:

- Complete an incomplete grade contract specifying work to be completed
- Set a deadline for completion (no more than one year)
- Submit a contract in Goldmine

Incomplete grades that are not resolved within one year automatically convert to F. Please refer to UTEP's policy on incomplete grades: <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/resources/student-resources/academic-standing.html>

Academic Probation and Dismissal

Students may be dismissed from the program for the following reasons:

1. Earning a grade of C or lower in two Psychology courses
2. Failure to pass oral (thesis or dissertation) proposal or defense on second try
3. Failure to advance to dissertation
4. Failure to make satisfactory progress towards their degree milestones
5. Failure to comply with UTEP's institutional Code of Conduct
6. Plagiarism or any other type of scientific misconduct

For 1-3 above, the GPC director will email a Notification of Impending Dismissal to the student as soon as possible stating that:

- The Graduate Program Director will recommend to the Graduate School that the student be dismissed from the graduate program, unless
- An appeal is received from the student within 30 calendar days

A copy of the Notification will also be sent to the student's mentor, the Head of the Student's Area of Concentration, and the Department Chair. If no appeal is received from the student within 30 calendar days, the Program Director will contact the Graduate School and recommend dismissal.

Students who fail to maintain satisfactory progress (#4 above) may be placed on a remediation plan.

While on a remediation plan, students must:

- Meet regularly with their mentor and the Graduate Program Director
- Develop and follow a remediation plan
- Demonstrate improvement within one semester

Students who do not show improvement within one semester of a remediation plan will be recommended for dismissal.

Appeal Process:

If a student wishes to appeal a 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:

- Fully explain the circumstances surrounding the situation leading to their dismissal (e.g., reason for earning two C or lower grades or failure to make progress)
- 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/or 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

Appeal Review and Meeting:

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.

Appeal Decision Criteria:

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:

- There is a compelling and excusable reason why the student earned two C's or failed to meet program milestones (for example, documented and serious illness is such a reason; lack of ability or lack of effort is not)
- The student otherwise has a well-established and stable record of average or above-average performance in other graduate courses and activities
- 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.

Cases involving misconduct (#5-6 above) will be handled in conjunction with the appropriate UTEP office. Students who do not show improvement while on probation or who engage in misconduct may be dismissed from the program. UTEP's policies on dismissal decisions are outlined in HoOP Sections 3.5, 3.5.1, 3.6, and 3.6.2.

Professional Conduct Expectations

Graduate students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior including:

- Respectful and collegial interactions with faculty, staff, and peers
- Punctual attendance at classes, meetings, and research activities
- Responsible completion of assigned duties and commitments
- Ethical conduct in research and academic work
- Professional communication in all formats (email, presentations, publications)
- Appropriate use of university resources and facilities
- Follow all relevant HoOP policies with regards to ethical and professional conduct for university employees

Access to Educational Records

Students have the right to access their educational records in accordance with FERPA. Educational records maintained by the department include:

- Admission materials and transcripts
- Annual review evaluations (IDPs)
- Correspondence regarding academic progress

Students may request to review their records by contacting the Graduate Program Director.

5. Academic Integrity and Safety

Much of the information in this section contains highlights of UTEP policies for students' reference. Students should consult their mentors for lab-specific policies and the linked UTEP resources for additional detail.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to the educational mission of UTEP and the Psychology Department. All students must adhere to the highest standards of honesty in their academic work.

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

- Plagiarism: Using others' words or ideas without proper attribution
- Fabrication: Falsifying data, citations, or research results
- Cheating: Using unauthorized materials or assistance on examinations or assignments
- Facilitating academic dishonesty: Helping others engage in dishonest behavior

For detailed university policies on academic integrity, see HoOP Section 2.2 at <https://www.utep.edu/vpba/hoop/section-2/student-conduct-and-discipline.html>

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Faculty mentors, committee members, and course instructors should communicate expectations and policies surrounding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in their research labs and courses. If students are unsure what the policy on AI is in a given situation, they must consult the relevant faculty member(s) before using AI. Students serving as TAs or Associate Instructors must also follow relevant UTEP policies on the use of AI. Students serving as TAs must additionally consult the instructor of record on AI use in grading and other teaching related activities before using AI.

When conducting research, students must follow UTEP's policy on use of AI, available at <https://catalog.utep.edu/policies-regulations/graduation-requirements/#graduatedegree requirementstext> (click Graduate, then expand AI policy section).

Authorship and Collaboration

The Psychology Department typically follows APA guidelines for authorship and publication ethics. Authorship should be based on substantial contributions to:

- Conception and design of the research
- Data collection and analysis
- Interpretation of results
- Drafting or revising the manuscript

Students should discuss authorship expectations with their mentors at the beginning of each project.

Citation and Documentation

Written work (e.g., theses, dissertations) should follow appropriate style guidelines set forth by the mentor/committee. Most use APA style guidelines for citations and references, but other styles are possible.

Students should:

- Cite all sources of ideas, data, and direct quotations
- Use quotation marks for exact wording from sources
- Distinguish clearly between their own ideas and those from other sources
- Include complete and accurate reference lists

Resources for APA style are available at <https://apastyle.apa.org/>

Thesis and dissertation documents must also follow the criteria of the Graduate School https://www.utep.edu/graduate/_files/docs/admission-and-enrollment/thesisdissertationformat.pdf

Research Integrity

Students conducting research must complete training in Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) through CITI Program modules. Required topics include:

Research misconduct

- Data management and sharing
- Authorship and publication
- Peer review
- Conflicts of interest
- Collaborative research

RCR training is available through the CITI Program at <https://www.utep.edu/orsp/>. Students should consult with their mentors about which RCR training modules are most relevant to their research area. For more information about RCR training requirements and available modules, visit the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects website.

CITI training must be completed within the first year and renewed every three years. Access CITI training through <https://research.utep.edu/research-compliance/>

Human Subjects Research

All research involving human participants must be reviewed and approved by the UTEP Institutional Review Board (IRB) before data collection begins. Students must:

- Complete CITI training in human subjects protection
- Submit IRB applications with mentor oversight
- Follow approved protocols exactly
- Report any adverse events or protocol deviations immediately
- Maintain participant confidentiality

IRB information and applications are available at <https://research.utep.edu/research-compliance/irb/>

Animal Research

All research involving vertebrate or cephalopod animals must be reviewed and approved by the UTEP Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) before any animal work begins. Students must:

- Complete IACUC training through the SciShield and Occupational Health Program (OHP) enrollment
- Be listed on an approved IACUC protocol before beginning any animal work

- Submit IACUC protocol applications with mentor oversight and veterinary consultation
- Follow approved protocols exactly—any changes require IACUC amendment approval
- Report any adverse events, animal welfare concerns, or protocol deviations immediately
- Maintain accurate animal care and use records and ensure humane treatment

IACUC information and applications are available at <https://www.utep.edu/research/iacup/>. For questions, contact the IACUC office at iacuc@utep.edu or (915) 747-6056. For veterinary consultation, contact LARC at larc@utep.edu or (915) 747-8751.

Laboratory Safety

Students working in research laboratories must:

- Complete required safety training before beginning lab work
- Follow all safety protocols and use appropriate protective equipment
- Report safety hazards or incidents immediately to mentor and Environmental Health & Safety
- Maintain clean and organized workspaces
- Properly dispose of materials and secure equipment

Additional safety requirements apply for laboratories working with biohazards, chemicals, or specialized equipment. Contact Environmental Health and Safety at <https://www.utep.edu/ehs/> for specific requirements.

Data Security and Confidentiality

Research data must be stored securely and protected from unauthorized access. Students should:

- Use password-protected computers and encrypted storage for sensitive data
- De-identify data files and maintain secure linking documents
- Never share participant information with unauthorized individuals
- Follow mentor and IRB requirements for data retention and destruction
- Back up data regularly and store backups securely

Travel and Travel Safety

Students traveling for research or professional activities should:

- Review and follow the Student Travel Policy in the Graduate Catalog
- Maintain emergency contact information

- Follow university travel safety guidelines
- Have appropriate insurance coverage
- If any portion of the travel is being funded by UTEP, students must complete required travel authorization at least one week **before** departure (<https://www.utep.edu/travel/student/>)
- If flights are being paid for by UTEP, they **must** be booked through Anthony Travel 1-800-684-2044 (travel authorization must be completed first)

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.

For emergencies while traveling, contact the Dean of Students Office at

<https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students-office/>

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, such as the Graduate Program Director. 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 and other support services is available here: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/resources/>

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 and to make a referral to UTEP's Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment Team: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/bita/> By working together, students and faculty can develop strategies to obtain assistance for friends and colleagues.

Students experiencing ongoing mental health or physical health challenges are strongly encouraged to seek accommodations through CASS for both their coursework and program milestones if appropriate <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>

6. Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution

Student Code of Conduct

All students must comply with the UTEP Student Code of Conduct as outlined in HoOP Section 2.2. The University administers student discipline according to established procedures of due process. Violations may result in disciplinary sanctions including warning, probation, suspension, or expulsion.

For complete information, see <https://www.utep.edu/vpba/hoop/section-2/student-conduct-and-discipline.html>

Conflict Resolution Procedures

Student-Faculty Conflicts

If a conflict arises with a faculty member, students should:

- First, attempt to resolve the issue directly with the faculty member through professional communication
- Document all meetings and communications regarding the conflict
- If unresolved, consult with the Graduate Program Director
- If still unresolved, meet with the Department Chair
- As a last resort, file a grievance with the appropriate university office or contact the Dean of Students Office through their Student Outreach and Support (SoS) Program

The department encourages local resolution before escalating matters to university-level offices.

Student-Student Conflicts

Conflicts between students should be addressed by:

- Attempting to resolve the issue through direct, professional communication
- Consulting with mentors or the Graduate Program Director if needed
- Filing a Student of Concern report if behavior is concerning, threatening, or potentially harmful to self or others

Student of Concern reports can be submitted at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/>. These reports are reviewed daily and a case manager will follow up with both the reporter and the student(s) being reported.

Grievance Procedures

Academic Grievances

Academic grievances (grades, academic requirements, comprehensive exams, etc.) may be pursued only on the basis of malice, bias, arbitrary or capricious decision-making, or

impermissible discrimination. Grievances cannot be based on the standards employed as long as those standards are applied impartially.

Students should:

- First attempt to resolve through consultation with the faculty member
- Then consult with the faculty member's supervisors (Graduate Program Director, Department Chair)
- If unresolved, consult with and/or file a challenge with the Chairperson of the Student Welfare and Grievance Committee
- Complete grievances within specified timelines (typically within one year of the questioned decision for grades)

For specific information and grievance forms, visit <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students-office/resources/grade-grievance.html>

Non-Academic Grievances

Non-academic grievances regarding university policies or procedures (excluding discrimination) should be directed to:

- The relevant department or office initially
- The Office of the Provost if unresolved
- The Dean of Students Office for general concerns

Non-academic grievances must be initiated within 10 working days of the questioned decision.

Discrimination and Harassment

UTEP prohibits discrimination and harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or genetic information. Students who experience or witness discrimination or harassment should:

- Report immediately to the Office of Equal Opportunity at <https://www.utep.edu/eoo/>
- Contact Title IX office for sex-based discrimination at <https://www.utep.edu/titleix/>
- Seek support from the Dean of Students Office

The university takes all reports seriously and investigates promptly.

Accommodations for Disabilities

Students with disabilities (including temporary disabilities) are encouraged to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) to arrange reasonable accommodations:

- Website: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>

- Email: cass@utep.edu
- Phone: 915-747-5148
- Location: Union Building East, Room 106

Students should provide accommodation letters to instructors at the beginning of each semester. Retroactive accommodations are generally not provided.

Students should be aware that accommodations can be made for program milestones (e.g., thesis, dissertation) in addition to courses. Students who might benefit from accommodations such as timeline extensions should contact CASS and discuss their needs with the GPC Director.

Leave of Absence

Students facing medical, personal, or family emergencies may request a leave of absence for up to one year. During a leave:

- Students are not enrolled and do not pay tuition
- Graduate assistantships are suspended
- Health insurance coverage may be affected

Leave requests must be submitted in writing to the Graduate Program Director with supporting documentation. See the Graduate School Advisor's Handbook for complete procedures at <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/>

A student who seeks a leave of absence should first discuss the possibility with their mentor and the Graduate Program Director. To request a leave, the student must submit:

(1) A letter requesting 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 their 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.

Leaves may be taken into account to apply for exceptions to the 8-year degree completion rule (6 years for MA students) when there are extenuating circumstances but require special justification and must be approved by the Psychology Graduate Program Committee and the Dean of the Graduate School.

7. Work Related Policies

Types of Graduate Assistantships

PhD students typically receive job appointments as Research Assistants (RAs), Teaching Assistants (TAs), or Assistant Instructors (AIs) for up to five years, though students should check their offer letters for specific details. MA students also sometimes receive such appointments, but funding is not guaranteed.

Research Assistants (RA)

RAs work in faculty research labs, assisting with data collection, analysis, literature reviews, manuscript preparation, and other research activities. RA assignments are typically 20 hours per week and provide valuable research training. Sometimes, students may be hired as RAs in other departments, such as UTEP's Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research and Planning (CIERP).

Teaching Assistants (TA)

TAs assist faculty with courses by grading, holding office hours, proctoring exams, and other tasks that support course management. TA assignments help students develop teaching skills and pedagogical knowledge essential for academic careers.

Assistant Instructors (AI)

AIs teach their own sections of undergraduate courses with faculty oversight and mentoring. AI positions provide comprehensive teaching experience including course planning, lecturing, assessment design, and grade management. AI positions are typically assigned to advanced students who have completed the requirements for at least 18 credit hours of graduate study and demonstrated teaching ability (e.g., having led a section of 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.

Appointment Criteria and Procedures

Graduate assistantship appointments are made based on:

- Academic performance and progress toward degree
- Departmental needs and available funding
- Student's professional development goals and career plans
- Faculty recommendations and mentoring needs
- Demonstration of professional responsibility

TA and RA assignments are considered learning experiences for graduate students. Although the Department may take students' specific interests and goals into account when making these assignments, 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.

PhD students are not guaranteed job appointments during summers. Some faculty can hire RAs on grant-funded projects over the summer. In addition, some AI and TA positions may be available during the summer. 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. Applications for summer AI and TA positions will be announced by the Graduate Programming Director each Spring.

TA Responsibilities

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 must 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. TAs should keep a log of

their hours to ensure that they are not spending more than 20 hours per week (on average) on TA work. A student who is exceeding 20 hours per week should discuss issue with the instructor 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 and fill out the TA Expectations form which should be emailed out to students once TA Appointments have been made.

4. During the semester, TAs are required to check their email each business day for messages from the instructors of the assigned classes and must respond within 1 business day 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, should contact 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. Instructors will be surveyed at the end of each semester to provide feedback on TAs.

AI Assignment Considerations and Incentives

The department recognizes that teaching experience is valuable for career development, particularly for students pursuing academic positions. Considerations for AI assignments:

- Students interested in academic careers are encouraged to develop course preparations and complete formal AI training
- All AIs for PSYC 1303 Statistical Methods must first serve successfully as a TA for that course.
- Volunteering to serve as AI can be viewed as departmental service in recommendation letters
- Priority for summer teaching positions may be given to students who serve as AIs during the academic year

If incentives do not yield needed AIs, the department may require advanced students (post-master's) to teach rather than serve as TAs if they are funded by the department. In such cases:

- Entering students are made aware of the possibility of AI assignment
- Assignments are made with consideration of timing to allow preparation
- Assignments are rotated to avoid assigning non-volunteers as AIs in multiple consecutive semesters

Enrollment Requirements

Students with assistantships must:

- Enroll full-time
- Make satisfactory academic progress (minimum 3.0 GPA)
- Not receive two grades of C or lower in Psychology courses

International students should consult the Office of International Programs at <https://www.utep.edu/oip/> regarding enrollment requirements for visa compliance.

Work Hours and Responsibilities

Graduate assistantships are typically 20 hours per week (0.50 FTE appointment) during the 9-month academic period from September 1st through May 31st. Students must:

- Complete assigned duties professionally and on time
- Maintain regular communication with supervisors
- Attend required training sessions and meetings
- Keep accurate records of work hours
- Balance work responsibilities with coursework and research progress
- Maintain professional standards in all interactions

Students experiencing difficulty balancing responsibilities should consult their supervisor, mentor, and Graduate Program Director promptly.

Leave Policies for Graduate Student Employees

When graduate students are employed as TAs, AIs, or RAs, they are entitled to:

- University holidays as specified in the academic calendar
- Reasonable time off for illness (notify supervisor promptly)
 - Note that for illness lasting more than a few days, it may be necessary to involve CASS and/or HR. The student should consult with the GPC director in these instances.
- Absences for university-sponsored activities (conferences, research travel with advance approval)
- Jury duty leave as required by law
- Bereavement leave for immediate family members

Graduate students and mentors should discuss expectations for availability for research activities during regular semesters and breaks (e.g., winter break, summer).

Graduate assistants do not accrue vacation days. Planned absences should be discussed with supervisors well in advance. For information on medical leave, FMLA, and other extended leaves, consult Human Resources policies at <https://www.utep.edu/hr/> and the Graduate School Advisor's Handbook.

Outside Employment

Outside employment is highly discouraged due to the substantial time commitment required for graduate study, research, and assistantship duties. Students who are considering outside employment should consult with their mentor before accepting any position to discuss potential impacts on academic progress and degree completion.

International students must consult the Office of International Programs before accepting any outside employment to ensure visa compliance. F-1 and J-1 visa holders have specific restrictions on employment.

AI Training and Development

Students assigned as AIs must:

- Complete teaching orientation before the semester begins
- Attend teaching development workshops offered by the department and university
- Meet regularly with faculty course coordinators for guidance and feedback
- Undergo teaching observations with constructive feedback
- Develop and maintain professional course materials and syllabi
- All Assistant Instructors for PSYC 1303 Statistical Methods must first serve successfully as a Teaching Assistant for that course before being assigned as an AI

Department Resources for Graduate Assistants

Graduate assistants have access to:

- Office space (may be shared) in the Psychology Building or elsewhere
- Department computers and printers for work-related tasks
- Photocopying/scanning and office supplies for work purposes
- Library resources and research databases
- Professional development opportunities and workshops
- Mailboxes in the department office (check regularly)

Graduate students typically receive access to the department office and lab spaces via swipe access or keys. Keys must be requested by the faculty mentor. The department office (Psychology Building, Room 109) is open Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM. Contact the office at psychology@utep.edu or 915-747-5551 for questions about resource access.

Building Security

Graduate students are responsible for turning keys in to the Key Shop upon graduating or leaving the program. Under no circumstances should a graduate student lend or give their key/keycard 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 always 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.

8. Funding, Travel, and Awards

Departmental Funding

The Psychology Department provides funding support through:

- Graduate assistantships (RA, TA, AI positions with stipends)
- Summer research funding (limited availability, competitive)
- Research awards for expenses (limited availability, competitive)
- Research expense support through faculty grants

Funding decisions are made by the Graduate Program Committee based on merit, departmental needs, and available resources.

Graduate School Funding

The Graduate School offers a number of funding opportunities for graduate students
<https://www.utep.edu/graduate/funding/internal-funding.html>

Tuition and Fees

In-State Tuition Waiver

Students with assistantship appointments are eligible for in-state tuition rates even if they are not Texas residents. This significant benefit applies only to semesters when the student holds an active assistantship appointment.

The in-state tuition waiver is now automatically processed by the department and the Graduate School for students with assistantships. Students do not need to submit a separate waiver form each semester.

If you have questions about your tuition waiver status, contact the Graduate Program Director or the Graduate School at <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/current-students/tuition.html>

Health Insurance

Students with assistantships receive health insurance through the Student Health Insurance Program (SHIP) at no cost. Coverage includes:

- Medical care through Student Health and Wellness Center
- Emergency services and hospitalization
- Prescription medications
- Mental health and counseling services
- Preventive care

Important details:

- Students must opt in to coverage—students should check their UTEP email account for instructions
- Coverage typically begins in October for Fall appointments and February for Spring appointments
- Coverage continues during summer if student held assistantship during academic year
- Students may purchase enhanced coverage or dependent coverage at their own expense
- Contact Student Health and Wellness Center for coverage details:
<https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/shwc/>

External Funding Opportunities

Students are strongly encouraged to seek external funding through national fellowships and grants. Successful fellowship applications enhance CVs and provide experience with grant writing. Opportunities include:

- NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP): <https://www.nsfgrfp.org/>

- Major 3-year fellowship for graduate research, apply in first or second year
- Support for students committed to diversity in higher education
- American Psychological Association (APA) grants and awards: <https://www.apa.org/about/awards/>
 - Dissertation research awards, minority fellowships, and more
- Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) grants: <https://spsp.org/>
 - Student research grants for social psychology research
- American Psychology-Law Society (AP-LS) grants: <https://ap-ls.org/awards/>
 - Dissertation awards and research grants in legal psychology
- Health Psychology Division (APA Division 38) awards: <https://www.health-psych.org/>
 - Student research awards and travel grants

The Graduate School maintains a comprehensive list of fellowship opportunities at <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/current-students/funding-opportunities.html>

University Funding Programs

Graduate School Awards

UTEP Graduate School offers several funding programs with annual application cycles:

- Dodson Research Grants: Financial support for thesis and dissertation research expenses (equipment, materials, participant compensation, etc.)
- Travel Awards: Funding for presenting research at professional conferences
- Graduate Research Assistant Summer Program: Support for summer research activities when assistantships are unavailable

Application deadlines and requirements are posted at <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/current-students/funding-opportunities.html>. Students should check regularly and apply early.

College of Liberal Arts Awards

The College of Liberal Arts occasionally offers additional funding opportunities. Check with the college and monitor department announcements for current programs and deadlines.

Conference Travel Support

Students presenting research at professional conferences may request travel funding from multiple sources:

- Department travel funds: Apply through Graduate Program Director well in advance of conference
- Graduate School travel awards: Apply through Graduate School website
- Faculty research grants: Discuss with mentor about grant-funded travel
- Professional organizations: Many offer student travel awards (apply through organization websites)

Priority for departmental travel funding is given to:

- Students presenting accepted papers or posters (not just attending)
- Students who have not recently received travel funding
- Students presenting at major national conferences in their area

Apply for travel funding at least 6-8 weeks before the conference. Last-minute requests cannot always be accommodated.

Departmental Awards and Recognition

The Psychology Department recognizes student achievements through annual awards:

- Best Master's Thesis Award: Recognizes exceptional thesis research and scholarship
- Best Doctoral Dissertation Award: Recognizes outstanding dissertation contributions to the field
- Best Research Publication Award: Recognizes students with first-author publications in high-quality peer-reviewed journals
- Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award: Recognizes excellence in TA duties and student support
- Outstanding Assistant Instructor Award: Recognizes exceptional teaching and course management

Nomination procedures and criteria:

- 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 for Best Thesis and Best Dissertation in Psychology awards are usually made in early Fall of the academic year for theses and dissertation defended during the preceding academic year
- Nominations for Best Research Publication, Outstanding TA, and Outstanding AI may be made by any faculty member or graduate student

- Applications and nomination forms are announced in spring semester by the Awards Committee
- Awards are presented at the end of the academic year

Incentives for Graduate Student Publications

The department recognizes the importance of scholarly publication. When assigning summer AI positions or allocating departmental travel awards, special consideration is given to students meeting the following criteria (in priority order):

- First-author publication published or accepted for publication during the prior 12 months
- Secondary-author publication published or accepted for publication during the prior 12 months
- Submitted first-author publication with faculty co-author during the prior 12 months
- Publications from previous years in the program (though not within the prior 12 months)

Financial Aid and Emergency Funding

Students may be eligible for additional financial assistance:

- Federal student loans: Apply through FAFSA at <https://studentaid.gov/>
- Federal work-study: Available to eligible students
- Emergency loans: Short-term assistance for unexpected financial crises
- Emergency grants: Available through Dean of Students Office for urgent needs

Contact the Office of Student Financial Aid for information and applications:

- Website: <https://www.utep.edu/financialaid/>
- Phone: 915-747-5204
- Location: Academic Services Building, Room 120

9. University Resources

UTEP provides comprehensive resources to support graduate student success, wellbeing, and professional development. Students are encouraged to take full advantage of these services.

Academic Support Services

- Graduate School
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/>

- Services: Policies, procedures, forms, professional development workshops, graduate education information
- Location: Administration Building, Room 216
- Phone: 915-747-5491
- Email: gradschool@utep.edu
- University Library
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/library/>
 - Services: Research databases, interlibrary loan, research consultations, study spaces, special collections
 - Graduate students have access to subject librarians for research assistance
- Technology Support
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/>
 - Services: Computer support, software access, email assistance, technical troubleshooting
 - Phone: 915-747-4357 (HELP)
- Office of Research and Sponsored Projects
 - Website: <https://research.utep.edu/>
 - Services: Grant support, IRB, research compliance, CITI training, research integrity
- Writing Center
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/uwc/>
 - Services: Writing consultations, workshops, assistance with academic writing
 - Available to graduate students for thesis/dissertation writing

Student Health and Wellness Services

- Dean of Students Office
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students-office/>
 - Services: Student advocacy, emergency assistance, student conduct, crisis support
 - Student Outreach and Support (SoS) Program available for student concerns

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/>
 - Services: Free confidential counseling, crisis intervention, group therapy, workshops
 - Individual and couples counseling available
 - Phone: 915-747-5302
 - Location: Union Building West, Room 202
- Student Health and Wellness Center
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/shwc/>
 - Services: Medical care, health education, wellness programs, immunizations
 - Covered by student health insurance for assistantship holders
- Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS)
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>
 - Services: Disability accommodations, support services, adaptive technology
 - Email: cass@utep.edu
 - Phone: 915-747-5148
 - Location: Union Building East, Room 106
- Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment (BITA) Team
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/bita/>
 - Services: Assessments and response for students, faculty, and staff who are potentially a danger to themselves or others, or are in need of services
 - Phone: 915-747-5648 (for emergencies, dial 911)

International Student Support

- Office of International Programs (OIP)
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/oip/>
 - Services: Immigration advising, visa services, cultural programming, international student orientation
 - Required check-in for all international students

- Phone: 915-747-5664

Professional Development and Career Services

- Graduate Student Assembly (GSA)
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/current-students/graduate-student-assembly.html>
 - Services: Student advocacy, professional development programming, networking events, graduate student community
- Career Center
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/careers/>
 - Services: Career counseling, job search support, resume/CV assistance, interview preparation, career fairs
 - Graduate-specific career advising available
- Graduate School Professional Development
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/current-students/professional-development.html>
 - Services: Workshops on teaching, research, writing, grant writing, career preparation, presentation skills

Financial and Administrative Services

- Office of Student Financial Aid
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/financialaid/>
 - Services: Financial aid, scholarships, loans, FAFSA assistance
 - Phone: 915-747-5204
- Student Business Services
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/sbs/>
 - Services: Tuition payment, billing, refunds, payment plans
- Parking and Transportation
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/parking/>
 - Services: Parking permits, campus shuttle (Miner Express), transit information
 - Graduate students can purchase discounted parking permits

- Human Resources
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/hr/>
 - Services: Employment information, benefits, payroll inquiries
 - Relevant for graduate assistants

Additional Support Services

- Title IX
 - Services: Protects students, employees, applicants for admission and employment, and other persons from all forms of sex discrimination including sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, and acts of sexual violence
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/titleix/>
- Military and Veteran Student Affairs
 - Services: Support for veteran students, GI Bill certification, veteran resources
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/mssc/>
- Student Engagement and Leadership Center
 - Services: Student organizations, leadership development, volunteer opportunities
 - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/selc/>

For a complete directory of university resources, visit <https://www.utep.edu/resources/>

Professional Organizations

Students are strongly encouraged to join professional organizations in their areas of interest. Membership benefits include:

- Access to journals and publications
- Conference registration discounts
- Networking opportunities
- Student travel awards and grants
- Career development resources
- Mentoring programs

Relevant organizations:

- American Psychological Association (APA): <https://www.apa.org/>

- Many students join divisions relevant to their concentration (e.g., Division 38 Health Psychology, Division 41 American Psychology-Law Society)
- Association for Psychological Science (APS): <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/>
- Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP): <https://spsp.org/>
- Cognitive Neuroscience Society: <https://www.cogneurosociety.org/>
- Society for Neuroscience: <https://www.sfn.org/>
- Psychonomic Society: <https://www.psychonomic.org/>
- Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM): <https://www.sbm.org/>

Many organizations offer student memberships at substantially reduced rates. Students should join organizations early in their graduate careers to maximize benefits.

10. Appendices

Appendix A: Important Contacts

Department of Psychology:

- Main Office: Psychology Building, Room 109
- Phone: 915-747-5551
- Email: psychology@utep.edu
- Website: <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/psychology/>
- Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Graduate Program:

- Graduate Program Director: Dr. Jennifer Eno Louden
 - Email: jlenolouden@utep.edu
- Graduate Student Resources: <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/psychology/for-current-grads/>

Graduate School:

- Office: Administration Building, Room 216
- Phone: 915-747-5491
- Email: gradschool@utep.edu
- Website: <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/>

College of Liberal Arts:

- Dean's Office: Liberal Arts Building, Room 100
- Website: <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/>

Appendix B: Key Forms and Deadlines

All current forms are available at:

- Department forms: SharePoint site
<https://minersutep.sharepoint.com/sites/PsychologyGraduatePrograms/SitePages/CollabHome.aspx>
- Graduate School forms: <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/forms.html>

Key Forms:

- PhD Milestone Agreement: https://www.utep.edu/graduate/_Files/docs/admission-and-enrollment/milestones/gpsy_milestones.pdf
- Individual Development Plan (IDP): Available on department SharePoint site
- First Year Project Notification: Available on department SharePoint site
- Thesis Proposal Form: Available on department SharePoint site
- Dissertation Proposal Form: Available on department SharePoint site
- Application for Advanced Standing Credit: Available from Graduate School
- Application for Candidacy: <https://forms.utep.edu/> (electronic submission)
- Application for Graduation: <https://forms.utep.edu/> (electronic submission)
- Temporary Membership in Graduate Faculty:
https://www.utep.edu/graduate/_files/docs/application-for-temporary-membership-in-the-graduate-faculty.pdf

Important Annual Deadlines (approximate - check academic calendar for exact dates):

- Late September: Fall semester census date for tuition waiver submission
- October 1: Typical start date for assistantship health insurance coverage
- November 1: Common deadline for external fellowship applications (NSF GRFP, etc.)
- Late January: Spring semester begins
- Late February: Spring semester census date for tuition waiver submission
- March-April: Annual review (IDP) meetings
- April: Department awards nominations
- May: Graduate School funding applications (Dodson grants, travel awards, summer support)

Appendix C: Graduate Certificate in Quantitative Methods in Psychology

Complete information available at: <https://catalog.utep.edu/grad/college-of-liberal-arts/psychology/quantitative-methods-psychology-graduate-certificate/>

Overview

This certificate provides advanced training in quantitative methods, experimental design, and statistical techniques for careers in academic, basic, or applied research settings.

Requirements

Total: 18 credit hours plus supplemental requirement and quantitative talk

Required Courses (6 hours):

- PSYC 6010: Quantitative Cert Suppl Req (must enroll semester of department presentation)
- PSYC 6307: Applied Correlation & Regression Methods
- PSYC 6308: Experimental Design/Analysis of Variance

Elective Courses (12 hours - select 4 courses):

Psychology Statistics Electives (select three):

- PSYC 6302: Structural Equation Modeling
- PSYC 6303: Seminar in Meta-Analysis
- PSYC 6304: Categorical Data Analysis
- PSYC 6323: Psychometrics
- PSYC 6335: Research Design/Data Analysis
- PSYC 6313: Multilevel Modeling

Graduate Level Statistics Electives (select one):

- MATH or STAT graduate courses in statistics, analysis, or related topics
- Additional PSYC statistics courses from above list

Quantitative Talk Requirement

Students must present a 15-20 minute talk (plus Q&A) at the Psychology department colloquium that:

- Introduces research topic and relevance
- Describes an advanced quantitative technique and its application
- Presents method, results, and implications
- Demonstrates understanding of quantitative concepts

Students must:

- Receive approval from quantitative committee (Dr. Morera) before scheduling
- Coordinate with colloquium scheduler (Dr. Ivanova) within 2 weeks of semester start
- Significantly extend beyond coursework presentations

Supplemental Requirement

Apply learned quantitative techniques in an external setting for at least one semester. Options include:

- Serving as AI for PSYC 1303 (Introductory Statistics) or PSYC 4317 (Advanced Statistics)
- Serving as TA for advanced statistics courses
- Conducting formal program evaluation
- Employment/internship with primary duties in data analysis

For non-teaching/TA options, submit 1-page proposal to committee before starting, and 1-page summary with supervisor signature after completion.

Completion

After completing all requirements:

- Confirm completion with Dr. Morera
- Complete Graduate School certificate eForm: <https://www.utep.edu/graduate/forms.html>
- Select 'Liberal Arts' college and 'Quantitative Methods in Psychology' certificate

Contact: Dr. Morera (quantitative committee chairperson)

Appendix D: Graduate Certificate in Clinical Psychology

Complete information available at: <https://catalog.utep.edu/grad/college-of-liberal-arts/psychology/clinical-psychology-graduate-certificate/>

Overview

This certificate provides advanced training in clinical psychology.

Requirements

Total: 12 credit hours

Required Courses (12 hours):

- PSYC 5309 Seminar in Psychopathology
- PSYC 5322 Theories/Methods Psychotherapy
- PSYC 6318 Seminar in Psych Assessment
- PSYC 5360 Clinical Internship *

*Can be substituted by practicum, clinical internship, etc. from related field of study

Appendix E: Concentration-Specific Requirements

Detailed concentration requirements and degree plans are available on the department website at <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/psychology/for-current-grads/> and on the department SharePoint site. Students should review their concentration-specific degree plan regularly with their mentor and Graduate Program Director.

General concentration requirements (see degree plans on SharePoint for complete details):

Behavioral Neuroscience

- Concentration courses focused on neurobiological mechanisms of behavior
- Research in addiction, behavioral regulation, or related topics
- Specific course requirements listed on concentration degree plan

Bilingualism, Language and Cognition

- Concentration courses in language processing, bilingualism, and cognition
- Research in bilingual language processing, memory, or cognitive processes
- Specific course requirements listed on concentration degree plan

Health Psychology

- Concentration courses in health psychology and behavioral medicine
- Typical courses: PSYC 5340 Health Psychology, PSYC 5341 Behavioral Medicine, and electives
- Research in health behavior, chronic illness adaptation, or related topics

Legal Psychology

- Concentration courses in psychology and law
- Typical courses: Psychology and Law, Forensic Assessment, Jury Decision Making, Eyewitness Testimony, and electives
- Field placement requirement in legal or forensic setting
- Research in legal decision-making, criminal justice, or related topics

Social Psychology

- Concentration courses in social and personality psychology
- Typical courses: Advanced Social Psychology, Advanced Personality Psychology, and electives

- Research in social cognition, interpersonal processes, or related topics

Appendix F: Requirements for Legal Psychology Comprehensive Exam

Overview: The Legal Psychology Comprehensive Exam (“Exam”) is meant to serve as a milestone in the doctoral program that ensures students have satisfactorily mastered relevant psychological and psycholegal content and prepares students for dissertation-level research. The content of the finished Exam should be a publication-quality review article of a psycholegal topic. Ideally, the Exam should serve as a stepping stone to the dissertation proposal, so it is highly recommended that students select a topic that overlaps with their planned dissertation research.

Timing: The Exam should be proposed (see below) after completion of the thesis and completed before the dissertation proposal. It is acceptable for students to advance to dissertation before completing the Exam, but no student may schedule a dissertation proposal before their Exam is accepted by their committee. Students who enter the program with a master's degree and have their thesis accepted by the department should begin thinking about their Comprehensive Exam during their first year in the program with the goal that it should be completed after most of their coursework is completed and before they move on to the dissertation stage.

Process:

1. **Committee formation.** The committee will be composed of (a) the student’s primary Legal Psychology mentor and (b) at least one other member of the Legal Psychology faculty. An additional faculty member from outside the Legal area or Psychology Department may be added to the committee if relevant subject matter expertise is needed. It is suggested that the committee members are likely members of the dissertation committee.
2. **Proposal.**
 - a. **Written document.** Students should prepare a description of the intended project (no more than 2 pages) plus a reading list including the major references that will be included in the final product. The project description should specify (1) the topic (2) the format and (3) the intended outlet(s) of the end product.
 1. **Topic.** The topic must be relevant to the overlap between psychology and the criminal justice/legal system. The proposal document must give enough detail about the topic to communicate how the end product will (a) demonstrate the student’s expertise in the topic (b) fill a gap in the extant literature and (c) have relevance for criminal justice policy, practice, and/or the legal system. The written document should also specify the overarching goals of the paper as related to the topic and any research questions, if applicable. It is acceptable for prior work done by the student to serve as a starting point for the Exam (e.g., class paper) but the final Exam must be exclusively the student's original work and must fulfil all of the criteria here and be approved by the committee.

2. **Format.** Most Exams will take the form of a narrative review, though other formats are possible (e.g., grant proposal). A narrative review can cover a policy or theoretical issue and should be consistent with published examples from high quality journals such as *Psychology*, *Public Policy*, and *Law*. Students with expertise in legal scholarship may wish to write a law review; if the project takes this form, it must be done in accordance with accepted standards of high-quality legal journals. Other options, such as systematic reviews or meta-analyses are possible, though these must meet the relevant best practices (e.g., Cochrane Reviews, including preregistration of the review and protocol) to increase the likelihood that the end product will be publishable. As such, students are advised to consult with their mentor to ensure that the project they propose is able to be completed in a reasonable timeframe.

3. **Outlet.** Students should identify the primary outlet(s) they plan to target with their project. The proposal document should include a description of publication criteria for the outlet(s), such as page limits, content requirements and any other relevant information regarding the types of work published by the outlet. If the student is planning on submitting a grant proposal, the agency and requirements of the agency should be specified. The student is also encouraged to have at least 2 backup outlets in mind as publishing in the first choice is rare. However, it is important to be keeping submission requirements in mind when drafting a publication, so identification of a potential outlet is necessary.

4. **Length.** Although there is no required minimum or maximum, brief proposals are not appropriate for the Exam. For example, a grant proposal should be comprehensive, like one to federal agencies such as NSF and NIH.

- b. **Timing.** The proposal document must be sent to the committee 10 business days before the proposal presentation.
- c. **Presentation.** The student will prepare a presentation of their intended project to be delivered to the Legal area faculty and graduate students to solicit feedback. The presentation should take approximately 10 minutes with approximately 20 minutes allotted for discussion and feedback.
- d. **Evaluation.** The committee, with input from the Legal area faculty, will approve the proposal or suggest modifications.

3. End product.

- a. **Written document.** The product for this stage is the final paper or grant proposal proposed in the prior stage. It is expected that the document will be written exclusively by the student with minimal guidance from the committee. The student can ask for oral feedback from the committee during the writing process, but specific feedback on the document is not allowed until it is turned in to the committee. If the document is a journal article, it should be formatted according to the intended journal's requirements and should include a cover letter to be used with submission to the relevant journal. If students are seeking to do a grant proposal instead of a manuscript, it should be a comprehensive-style proposal like those to federal agencies and it should follow the standards of the agency.

1. **Timing.** The written document must be sent to the committee 10 business days before the comps defense.

- b. **Presentation.** The student will present their Exam in two mini-lectures (15-20 minutes). First, a presentation at the Legal Area meeting in front of the committee and the other Legal Area faculty and students. This defense is where the committee will evaluate the presentation and other members of the legal area have the opportunity to provide additional feedback. Second, the student will give a similar mini-lecture at the departmental colloquium to showcase their research to a broader audience. The presentation should focus on big picture ideas from the written document, synthesis of the major sections, implications to the field, and a short summary of what the student learned during the process.
- c. **Evaluation.** The committee will assess the presentation and paper and can accept either component or require revisions. The presentation and paper will be evaluated on the student's demonstration of expertise in the content area, synthesis of information, ability to inform policy implications, and overall quality. If the presentation is deemed unacceptable by the committee, the student will be asked to present again within 30 days (not counting official UTEP holidays). If revisions are required to the paper, the student will complete the revision within 30 days (not counting official UTEP holidays) along with a cover letter describing the revisions to the committee.
- d. **Authorship.** Students and their mentors should consult the APA guidelines for authorship determinations (<https://www.apa.org/science/leadership/students/authorship-paper>) for guidance on authorship. Depending on how much feedback the committee has on the paper, it may be appropriate for one or more committee members to be authors on the manuscript. If a paper requires minimal revision before it is journal ready, it is appropriate that the student may be sole author. If there are extensive comments from the committee, it may be appropriate for the mentor or other committee member to receive authorship. Students should consult with their mentor to discuss these issues.

Example papers:

Najdowski, C. J. (2011). Stereotype threat in criminal interrogations: Why innocent Black suspects are at risk for confessing falsely. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 17(4), 562-591.

Feingold, Z. R. (2021). The stigma of incarceration experience: A systematic review. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 27(4), 550-569.

Reed, K. & Bornstein, B.H. (2018). Objection! Psychological perspectives on jurors' perceptions of in court attorney objections. *South Dakota Law Review*, 63, 1-43.

Skeem, J. L., Manchak, S., & Peterson, J. K. (2011). Correctional policy for offenders with mental illness: Creating a new paradigm for recidivism reduction. *Law and Human Behavior*, 35(2), 110–126.

Appendix G: 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. 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 degree.

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. The letter usually includes a link to the university's New Student Guide (<https://www.utep.edu/graduate/current-students/new-student-guide.html>). The Guide includes important information about UTEP graduate programs. Incoming students should read it immediately after being accepted into the Psychology Graduate Program. Another useful source of information is the UTEP Resource Page for students (<https://www.utep.edu/resources/students.html>).

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 15 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).

Getting Your UTEP ID Card

You can obtain your UTEP Student ID card at the Mike Loya Administrative Services Building. 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.

Getting Appointed

Students who have not previously been employed at UTEP must 'on-board' 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 'on-boarding' procedure, you must complete three steps:

- Provide Information to the Administrative Assistant
- Paperwork for Criminal Background Check
- Application for Employment

Before the start of the fall term, the Administrative Assistant will contact you through your UTEP email to obtain information and start the Criminal Background check process. You will be asked to provide information like your name and residential address. If you are from out of town and know where you will be staying, please provide the residential address of your destination. After completing this, you will receive an email with the form for the Criminal Background Check. Once you have completed this form, the rest of the process will be automated, and you will begin to receive emails from Human Resources (HR). As soon as you are able, you must also take (A) your Social Security card and (B) your driver's license or passport to the HR department. Note: you will **NOT** be able to receive a job appointment until all these documents have been cleared by HR. 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. International students should also contact the Office of International Programs in order to obtain the proper Visa documentation.

The staff at HR will 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 and receive health insurance. 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.

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 (<https://www.utep.edu/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:

- The Graduate School typically has a day-long orientation meeting for all new graduate students. This meeting is typically scheduled a week before Fall classes begin.
- 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.

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 Director to find out. Your mentor will be a valuable source of information and guidance as you get started in graduate school.

Registering for Your Fall Courses

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 → Browse Classes → Select "PSYC- Psychology" as subject

You should discuss the courses you will take during your first semester with your mentor and consult with the Graduate Programming Director as needed. Most graduate students usually take a statistics course (typically PSYC 6307 Applied Correlation and Regression Methods) in their first semester. If you feel that your knowledge of undergraduate statistics is rusty you may want to take an undergraduate statistics course 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 Program Director know as soon as possible. The Director will send you the paperwork forms you will need to fill out in order to apply for Transfer Credits. Ideally, the paperwork should be completed and submitted to the Graduate Program Director before you enter the graduate program in the fall. More details about Transfer Credits and Thesis Waivers are provided in Section 2 of this handbook.

Leveling Requirements

If you were not a Psychology major as an undergraduate, you must complete the required "Leveling Classes" in Psychology before you are fully admitted to the graduate program. Leveling classes are undergraduate courses that provide a basic background in Psychology and prepare you for graduate work. Please see the earlier section in this handbook on leveling courses. If you were a Psychology major as an undergraduate, you do not need to take Leveling courses.

Financial Notes for Incoming Students

- The in-state tuition waiver is automatically processed by the department and the Graduate School for students with assistantships. You do not need to submit a separate waiver form each semester.

- 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.
- Students with assistantships receive health insurance through the Student Health Insurance Program (SHIP) at no cost. You must opt in to the health insurance.
- Your first paycheck of the year will be on October 1st, which is pay for the month of September (pay is for the previous month, not in advance)
- Payday is the first of the month unless this date falls on a holiday, in which case payday will be the previous day
- Paychecks will be directly deposited into the bank account that you designated when you filled out your employment form

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:

- Your mentor
- The Psychology Department Administrative Assistant
- The Graduate Program Director (Dr. Jennifer Eno Loudon, jlenolouden@utep.edu)