

**NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**  
**STATEMENT OF POLICIES FOR THE GRADUATE PROGRAM**

**ADMISSIONS**

Application deadline and materials

The Department of Psychology offers graduate work leading to the Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. To be considered for the fall semester all material should be on file in the department by **January 15th**. Students will be admitted to graduate study on the basis of their potential for achievement in research, scholarship, and teaching. The most promising applicants will be accepted. Because the number of students that the department can successfully accommodate is limited, it will not always be possible to admit all qualified applicants.

The minimum application consists of the following (with minimum acceptable values):

- 1) A completed Graduate School application (<http://gradschool.nmsu.edu/apply/>)
- 2) Complete transcripts of all college work (minimum 3.0 GPA)
- 3) Scores on the Graduate Record Exam General test. Applicants to the M.A. program are most likely to be considered with minimum scores of 155 Verbal, 156 Quantitative, and 4.5 Analytical Writing. Applicants to the Ph.D. program are most likely to be considered with minimum scores of 158 Verbal, 159 Quantitative, and 4.5 Analytical Writing. Scores on the GRE Psychology test are not required.
- 4) Three (3) letters of recommendation from professors, employers, or others qualified to evaluate your potential for graduate work (Uploaded through application process).
- 5) A letter explaining your research interests and experience, career goals, and an indication of the faculty members whose work is of particular interest to you (Uploaded through application process). Our program uses an apprenticeship model in that students learn how to conduct original research by collaborating closely with their advisor. Thus, a close match between the research interests of the student and his/her advisor is a critical factor in our admission decisions.
- 6) A curriculum vitae or resume.
- 7) A writing sample (e.g., a paper the student wrote for a course, a senior thesis or a master's thesis uploaded through application process). Ideally, the sample should demonstrate the student's ability to write clearly about psychological research.

## Important Notes about the Admissions Process

- Students with Bachelor Degrees should apply for admittance to the Master' s program even if their ultimate goal is a Ph.D. Students who earn their M. A. at New Mexico State University will be considered for admission to the doctoral program after the oral defense of their thesis. Following a recommendation from the student' s committee, admission is determined by a vote of the entire faculty.
- Students with a Masters degree in experimental psychology from other institutions or from another department at NMSU may apply for admittance to the Ph.D. program. The NMSU Graduate School requires doctoral students to pass a qualifying exam prior to being formally admitted into a doctoral program. See below for more information about the qualifying exam.

## Admissions criteria

- Only applicants with completed application packets will be reviewed.
- Applicants whose GRE scores do not meet or exceed the specified minimum values can be considered for admission in the case of extenuating circumstances (e.g., non-native English speakers).
- The relative importance of different qualifications relevant to admission is listed below (e.g., low, medium, or high importance)
  - GRE scores -- high
  - Research experience – medium
  - Work experience – low
  - GPA – high
  - Letters of recommendation – high
  - Interview – medium
  - Statement of goals and objectives – high
  - Undergraduate psychology preparation – medium
  - Applicant's interests - high
  - Writing sample – high

- All students are assigned a faculty advisor when admitted to the program. Students must have a faculty advisor in order to remain in the program.

## **Review of Progress toward Degree**

### Timing

The Psychology Department faculty reviews the progress of each full-time psychology graduate student at the end of each spring semester. The Graduate Committee reviews the progress of any students identified by a faculty member who may need more immediate review at the end of the fall semester. The fall review follows-up on any actions or recommendations made in a student's spring evaluation letter. Similarly, the spring review follows-up on any actions or recommendations made after the fall review. The primary data reviewed include:

- 1) The student's research performance,
- 2) The student's performance in classes,
- 3) The student's progress towards their degree,
- 4) The student's performance as a teaching or research assistant, if applicable, and
- 5) The student's attendance at weekly lab meetings, colloquia, and other department activities.

These criteria for success in the graduate program are based on the philosophy that a graduate student's education is based not simply on coursework, but on research, assistantship work, participation in PSY590 (Research Seminar), participation in lab meetings, and attendance at departmental colloquia. In other words, maintaining a minimum grade point average does not constitute sufficient performance for a favorable evaluation by the faculty.

### Self-evaluation

Students will complete a self-evaluation form that the faculty may consult in conducting the spring evaluation. In addition, at the end of each semester, all M.A. students will provide the Graduate Committee with a description of all research-related tasks they have completed during the term. These reviews are an important source of feedback to the student concerning the perception of their work by the faculty.

## Evaluation letters

Shortly after the spring and fall evaluation meetings, students will receive a letter summarizing their evaluation. Normally, this letter is drafted by the student's advisor and co-signed by the Graduate Director and Department Head. If a student disagrees with the evaluation, the student can request modifications before a final version is placed in the student's file. (Note that the faculty are not required to agree with or accept the student's position and may choose not to modify the feedback to the student.) In addition, the faculty to decide whether a student will be allowed to continue in the graduate program may use the evaluation. The evaluation also serves as crucial input in making decisions concerning the level of financial support that the department will extend to the student for the following academic year.

## Goals for Timely Degree Completion

Milestone	We expect you to complete the milestone by the end of...	You will be making only borderline progress if you complete the milestone by the end of...	You will be dismissed from the program if you fail to complete the milestone by the end of...
Approved thesis proposal	3 semesters after entering	4 semesters after entering	5 semesters after entering
M.A.	4 semesters after entering	5 semesters after entering	6 semesters after entering
Comps	2 semesters after M.A./passing qualifying exam	3 semesters after M.A./passing qualifying exam	4 semesters after M.A./passing qualifying exam
Approved Dissertation Proposal	2 semesters after completing Comps	3 semesters after completing Comps	4 semesters after completing Comps

- 1) Semesters refer to fall and spring semesters, only. Summers are not included in the timeline. For example, a student who entered the program in fall '07 and defended his or her thesis in August '09 would have met the “acceptable completion” criterion.
- 2) Students who fail to meet the deadlines in the middle column for any milestone will receive a letter from the Graduate Committee notifying the student that he or she is making unsatisfactory progress toward the degree.
- 3) Deadlines may be modified in situations deemed to be truly exceptional by the faculty of the Department of Psychology.

### Changing advisors

Our program uses an apprenticeship model; students learn how to conduct original research by collaborating closely with their advisor. Thus, a close match between the research interests of the student and his/her advisor is a critical factor in our admission decisions. Barring extenuating circumstances, students should expect to work with their assigned advisor throughout their degree progress. Possible extenuating circumstances that may merit changing advisors are

- 1) A substantial change in the student’s research interests

- 2) The addition of a new faculty member to the department whose research interests are a better match for those of the student than his/her current advisor
- 3) Extreme or persistent interpersonal conflicts between the student and his/her current advisor
- 4) The student's current advisor resigns his/her status as advisor

## Ethical Guidelines

All graduate students affiliated with the Department of Psychology are expected to behave in accordance with current APA ethical guidelines (see <http://www.apa.org/ethics/>). Any substantiated breach of APA ethical guidelines may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

## Assistantship Assignments

### Eligibility

To be considered for in-state tuition, all graduate students who are U.S. citizens must establish NM state residency. First year students who are employed at least 10 hrs./week will automatically receive the resident tuition rate during the first 12 months. Please note that the graduate school does not grant this waiver for domestic students beyond the 12 months. International students receive the resident tuition rate throughout their degree program as long as they receive at least a 10 hour assistantship.

### Basic information

- a) The Director of Graduate Studies makes assistantship assignments every semester.
- b) All assistantships funded by the State General fund are teaching assistantships (T.A.s). The level of work for this funding is usually either 10 or 20 hours per week. Your performance in your assignments is important in determining the likelihood of your future financial support.
- c) In addition to the positions based on State General funding, faculty members may have funding from grants and contracts supported by government agencies or by industry. For the most part, the faculty members who have the grants or contracts select research assistants based on their skills and prior performance.

As with State General funding, these positions are usually either 10 or 20 hours per week.

#### Your Responsibilities for Graduate Teaching Assistantships

- a) Assistantships start the week before classes and end when final grades are turned in (usually the Tuesday after finals week). You must be present the week before classes start, and make arrangements with your instructor about the day grades are due.
- b) Note that faculty must maintain grades and papers for years after the class has been taught. Make sure to maintain any spreadsheets or other graded material, just in case.
- c) Contact the instructor to whom you've been assigned at least one week before classes start. Note that each instructor may have different uses for their teaching assistants. For labs, TAs may teach the whole section(s), prepare lectures and grade papers. For courses, some TAs may be asked to grade papers only, while other TAs may be required to attend the classes, proctor exams, and grade papers. Some instructors may even ask their TAs to teach some of their classes when they are sick or away on business. Be aware that the assignment can vary widely among faculty and it is up to you to make sure you perform whatever tasks are requested.
- d) Throughout the semester, contact the instructor at least once a week with status and other information. Unless the faculty member approves your early leave, you are expected to stay on campus through the day that grades are turned in (usually the Tuesday after the last final). You must also inform your supervisor whenever you plan to go out-of-town (when, where, how to contact you). If the faculty member needs your help for those days, you are expected to be there to help them.
- e) Respond promptly to any e-mail or phone contact from the instructor.
- f) Proctor exams as necessary, arriving to class at least 5-10 minutes early.
- g) Grade exams/papers as quickly as possible. You need to look at the instructor's syllabus and plan your time around grading these exams (or any other activity that the instructor/research faculty requests). Your own classes do not come first. Use good time management to make sure your own classes are covered but

they cannot be used as an excuse for either not showing up for your duties or not completing your TA assignments.

- h) Have reasonable office hours and be available to undergraduates. Interact with undergraduates in a professional manner and respond to their requests promptly.
- i) Be accurate when entering grades into a spreadsheet and keep grade records up-to-date. Ask someone else or a fellow graduate student to check your work if you have any doubts.
- j) Treat students' exams and assignments with respect. Do not eat, drink or smoke near your papers. They should come back clean with only your graded marks on them.
- k) If more than one T.A. is assigned to an instructor (ex, PSY201 or PSY310), work with other graduate T.A.s to get the job done.
- l) Offer any assistance to the instructor if you see some place where help might be needed. Strive to go beyond what the instructor requires.

#### Evaluation of Graduate Teaching Assistants

Supervisors of graduate teaching assistants will use the department's Teaching Assistant Evaluation Form (available on the department's website) to communicate the instructor's expectations for his/her teaching assistant at the beginning of the term and to document the assistant's performance in those tasks. The instructor and T.A. should meet early in the term to discuss the instructor's expectations. The instructor and T.A. should meet at the end of the term to complete the rating portion of the form. Both the T.A. and the instructor should complete the ratings and discuss any discrepancies in the ratings. The final version of the instructor's ratings will be added to the T.A.s permanent file and may be discussed by Psychology Department faculty at the annual evaluation of spring graduate students. Should the T.A. choose to do so, he/she may use the evaluations to document teaching effectiveness (e.g., when applying for jobs, awards, or fellowships).

### **MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

The department considers the master's degree to be a legitimate terminal goal for many students; most students who earn a master's degree in the program successfully find employment in a degree-relevant job. The master's degree is in general experimental psychology with possible emphases in

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engineering psychology, cognitive psychology, social psychology, biopsychology, or developmental psychology. The program is designed to provide graduates with the tools and knowledge necessary for further training at the doctoral level or for employment in industry or government.

## I. Degree Requirements

Students must take a minimum of 36 credit hours with at least 15 credit hours in Psychology and at least 15 credit hours in courses numbered 500 or above. These requirements are verified by the STAR audit system. We recommend you check your STAR audit at least once/semester to verify that courses are appearing as they should. If necessary, exceptions to the requirements below can be made on your audit using the Degree-Audit Exception form available from the graduate school. Students are also required to

1. Complete a first year project (4-6 credits of PSY598 First-Year Project)
2. Complete the core course corresponding to the student's area of study (see below for eligible courses)
3. Complete two additional content courses (see below for eligible courses)
4. Complete the required statistics sequence: PSY507, PSY508, and PSY509
5. Complete a research thesis (6 credits of PSY599 Thesis).

These requirements are summarized in the Revised PSY MA Map, available on [psychology.nmsu.edu](http://psychology.nmsu.edu).

No practical experience is required. Also, there is no non-thesis option.

Completion time: two to three years

A minimum of 36 credit hours, including the hours earned in quantitative and substantive skills is required.

### **Eligible coursework**

Core Courses: The following three courses will fulfill the core course requirement for both the M.A. and the Ph.D. program

- PSY 524, Cognitive Psychology
- PSY 527, Social Psychology
- PSY 547, Engineering Psychology

**Note:** For both the M.A. and the Ph.D. programs, once a student fulfills the core requirement, the remaining two core courses can be considered content courses (i.e., students can enroll in either or both of them to fulfill the content course requirement).

All other courses are in one of the following three categories:

<b>Content</b>	<b>Stat</b>	<b>Methods</b>
PSY501, Psycholinguistics	PSY507	PSY510, Computer Methodology
PSY520, Learning Theory & Methodology	PSY508	PSY523, Methods in Cognitive Psychology
PSY522, Sensation & Perception Theory & Methodology	PSY509	PSY529, Methods in Social Psychology
PSY525, Behavioral Neuroscience		PSY548, Methods in Engineering Psychology
PSY530, HCI		PSY550, Teaching of Psych
PSY531, Human Memory		
PSY535, Developmental Psychology		
PSY540, History & Systems of Psychology		
PSY543, Cognitive Neuroscience		
PSY625, Seminar in Cognitive Science		

\*Grandfather clause: Students enrolled in the M.A. or Ph.D. program prior to Fall 2016 can choose either the previous requirements or these requirements. However, either set of requirements must be chosen as a whole; specific elements of the two sets of requirements may not be mixed.

\*\*PSY570, Special Topics may be considered content, stat, or methods depending on the specific content of the course.

## II. First-Year Project

1. Overview: During the first year after admission into the Master's program, students will complete a research project under the supervision of their advisor. In most cases, the instructor for the course will be the student's academic advisor. Another faculty member may supervise the research, and in that case, should be listed as the instructor for the course.

2. Topic of Project: Advisors are encouraged to steer their first-year students toward first-year project topics that might be publishable. The student's eventual Master's project may be on the same topic as the first-year project but it does not have to be on the same topic.

3. Registration:

Fall Semester: Students must sign up for up to 2 credits in PSY 598 and may use the S/U option. PSY 598 requires an "ADD/DROP" form available in the Psychology Department office. Your advisor must sign this form.

Spring Semester: Students must sign up for 2 credits in PSY 598 and must use the letter grade option. At the end of the semester, students will present a summary of their research project to the faculty.

4. Required Products: A preliminary written literature review and method will be due during the fall semester final exam week. The document will be reviewed by the student's faculty advisor and by one additional Psychology Department faculty member selected by the student and his/her advisor. The project is subject to the approval of the faculty advisor. The outside reader will largely provide feedback on the student's writing (e.g., whether the document makes sense to someone who may not know the research area). The outside reader may also make comments on the design of the project, but the student and advisor are not required to make any changes. The feedback from the faculty advisor and outside reader may be provided in whatever fashion they prefer (e.g., conversation, email, written on the document).

In the spring, each student will give an approximately 10-minute talk on his/her first-year project during the weekly lab meeting (i.e., PSY 590). The student will be given primarily formative feedback on the talk, from his/her faculty advisor and from any other faculty members who wish to give feedback.

A complete APA-style manuscript will be due on the last business day in April and should be of a depth and length that is appropriate to submit to a journal. The document will be reviewed by the student's faculty advisor and by one additional Psychology Department

faculty member selected by the student and his/her advisor. Ideally, the outside reader in the spring semester will be different from the fall outside reader. The outside reader will largely provide feedback on the student's writing but may also provide feedback on other aspects of the project. The feedback from the faculty advisor and outside reader may be provided in whatever fashion they prefer.

During the spring semester final exam week, the student will submit to his/her faculty advisor a summer research plan indicating the research activities in which the student will be engaged over the summer.

5. Evaluation: The student's faculty advisor will submit a final grade for PSY 598 based on his/her evaluation of the student's APA-style manuscript and the student's performance throughout the first-year project.

### III. Master's Thesis

1. Overview: The Psychology faculty believes that the thesis provides master's level students with the opportunity both to develop their skills as independent researchers and to demonstrate those skills. However, the thesis should not serve as the only means by which students acquire research skill. Rather, the faculty strongly urges graduate students to be involved in research from their first day on campus, and recommend that students view the thesis as a part of an on-going involvement in research, not as a rare event of outsized importance.

2. Advisory Committee: A Master's Thesis in our department is a written description of original research conducted by the student. The student's advisory committee must approve this research before it is conducted. The student, in consultation with his or her advisor, will form an advisory committee. The advisory committee will consist of at least four members -- three faculty members from Psychology and one from an outside department. Generally, two of the three Psychology members will be from within the student's area and the third will be from another area in the department. The committee member from the outside department will serve as the Dean's representative on the committee. In consultation with the committee chair, students should select as their Dean's Rep a faculty member who can

offer content-relevant insights. The Dean's representative and the committee chair must have appointments to the graduate faculty. Students who have declared a minor must have at least one representative from the minor area on their committee. The representative of the minor area can also serve as the *Dean's* representative. If appropriate, the advisory committee may also have a member from off campus (in addition to the required four members described above), as long as that person has earned at least a Master's or equivalent degree. Each graduate student will submit the names of his/her advisory committee members and a justification for selecting each committee member to the department head using the Department of Psychology Graduate Student Committee Composition Form. Subsequent changes in the committee must be submitted and justified in writing and must be agreed to by the advisor as well as the department head.

3. Master's Thesis Proposal Meeting: The student will obtain this approval at a Master's Thesis Proposal Meeting attended by the student, his/her advisor, and the student's advisory committee. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the proposed research and to suggest whatever changes in it that is deemed necessary to make it a worthwhile scientific effort. This objective is more easily met if the proposal document is in final M.A. thesis form except for the Results, Discussion, and Conclusions. Students should discuss the proposed research with their advisor and, if necessary, their advisory committee prior to writing the M.A. proposal document. The approval of the committee and any required changes in the project should be documented using the department's Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Approval Form.

4. PSY 599 Credit Requirements: Six credit hours of PSY 599 are required for your M.A. degree. Students can take as many credit hours of PSY 599 as they wish but only six credits may be counted toward the required 36 credits.

5. Final Examination (Master's Orals)

A. Prerequisites:

- a. Minimum average GPA of 3.0 in all courses taken for graduate credit at NMSU and/or other institutions.
- b. Completed all coursework for the M.A. degree.

- c. Enrolled in the semester in which the final examination is taken and enrolled in at least 3 credits of PSY599.
- B. Submit completed Committee for Final Examination to Graduate School two weeks before the examination is taken. This form specifies your major and minor (if any) areas, the examination date, site, etc., and the faculty who will compose your examination committee.
- C. The department encourages students to present orally an early version of their completed thesis research to their committee or to the department prior to writing the final document and defending it.
- D. The committee chair, or a majority of committee members, will approve of the thesis document prior to scheduling an oral defense.

NOTES:

A. To demonstrate professional-level proficiency, students must receive a grade of "B-" or better in courses taken to satisfy any degree requirements. If the student receives a grade of "C+" or lower, those credits cannot be applied to the degree. If the student receives a grade of "C+" or below in PSY 507, 508, or 509, the student has the option to retake that course or take the ASTAT equivalent. The equivalents for PSY 507, 508, and 509 are ASTAT 505, 506, and 507, respectively.

B. At least 50% of your total M.A. hours must be in psychology. Also, at least half of the minimum credits required for the M.A. degree, exclusive of research credits, must be taken with other than a single professor.

C. Students should file a "Department of Psychology Graduate Student Committee Composition" form no later than after the completion of 12 credits of graduate work.

D. Students should participate PSY590 each semester they are in-residence. Students can opt to register for one credit of PSY590. Research seminar meets once each week and is an opportunity for students to improve their ability to give and critically analyze a research presentation. Both of these skills will be crucial to your success.

## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

### **I. Admission to the Doctoral Program/ Qualifying Examination**

The NMSU Graduate School requires all students pass a qualifying examination prior to admission into the Ph.D. program.

For students who have obtained their M.A. degree in Psychology at NMSU:

The Master's Oral Examination can serve as the Qualifying Examination for admission to the Ph.D. program. In order to be considered for admission into the Ph.D. program, the student must submit to the chair of the graduate committee within four weeks of passing the Master's Oral Examination: a CV, an unofficial transcript, and a one page description of the student's plans/goals for Ph.D. program, including a brief description of the student's research program(s).

The admission decision will be made by the full faculty via either a secret ballot vote in person at a faculty meeting or via a confidential email vote to the department head. Faculty members may vote a) admit, b) do not admit, or c) abstain. All faculty members, including the department head and the student's advisor, have an equal vote. The vote will not be finalized until there are two or fewer abstentions.

Votes will be based on: results of the admission vote of the student's M.A. committee members, willingness of the current advisor to continue advising the student or the willingness of a new advisor to do so, quality of the thesis document/defense, materials submitted by the student (as listed above), and the student's performance and professionalism in the graduate program. The student will be admitted into the Ph.D. program based on a simple majority "admit" vote. In the case of a tie, discussion must be continued until the tie is resolved.

For students who have obtained their M.A. degree at another university or in another discipline:

The Psychology Department Graduate Committee, in collaboration with the student's own doctoral committee, shall decide upon the nature of the Qualifying Examination. A student who has not completed a masters thesis that is considered adequate (e.g., a non-empirical thesis) may be required to do a master's thesis at NMSU.

In the case of students whose master's theses are considered inadequate, the department recommends that the form of the qualifying exam be the first year project required of all new incoming graduate students. However, in some circumstances, the student's committee, with the approval of the graduate committee and the department head, may use a different method of exam. Also, the qualifying exam may include additional coursework at New Mexico State University.

The qualifying exam must be completed within a student's first semester at NMSU.

If a student fails the exam or does not complete it within the first year, the student needs to complete a make-up exam by the end of the fall semester of his/her second year. The student's advisor, the director of graduate studies, the department head, and an independent faculty member (someone who is not working with the student) will attend the make-up exam. The student must receive a passing score from the examiners before being allowed to continue in the program.

## II. Degree Requirements

- The core course corresponding to the student's area of study (see below for eligible courses)
- 3 additional content courses (see below for eligible courses)
- Required statistics sequence: PSY507, PSY508, and PSY509
- 6 additional credits in statistics/methods (see list of eligible psychology courses below).

Note: The additional required statistics/methods courses may be fulfilled by coursework in psychology or in another qualifying department (e.g., Applied Statistics). A ST505, A ST506, and A ST507 courses may not be used to fulfill this requirement because they correspond to PSY507, PSY508, and PSY509.

- At least 18 credits of PSY700 (Doctoral Dissertation).
- Residency Requirement. The minimum residence requirement for the doctoral degree includes at least two regular full-time enrollment semesters at New Mexico State University.

Total Credit Hours for the Ph.D.



The Graduate School requires doctoral students to complete a minimum of 18 credits of PSY700 (Doctoral Dissertation). Beyond that, there are no fixed credit hour requirements for the doctoral degree. However, a student should expect to accumulate a minimum of 40 to 70 credits beyond the M.A. degree requirements, including dissertation credit, to obtain approval of his/her Ph.D. program of study by the Graduate School.

### Eligible coursework

Core Courses: The following three courses will fulfill the core course requirement for both the M.A. and the Ph.D. program

- PSY 524, Cognitive Psychology
- PSY 527, Social Psychology
- PSY 547, Engineering Psychology

**Note:** For both the M.A. and the Ph.D. programs, once a student fulfills the core requirement, the remaining two core courses can be considered content courses (i.e., students can enroll in either or both of them to fulfill the content course requirement).

All other courses are in one of the following three categories:

Content	Stat	Methods
PSY501, Psycholinguistics	PSY507	PSY510, Computer Methodology
PSY520, Learning Theory & Methodology	PSY508	PSY523, Methods in Cognitive Psychology
PSY522, Sensation & Perception Theory & Methodology	PSY509	PSY529, Methods in Social Psychology
PSY525, Behavioral Neuroscience		PSY548, Methods in Engineering Psychology
PSY530, HCI		PSY550, Teaching of Psych
PSY531, Human Memory		
PSY535, Developmental Psychology		
PSY540, History & Systems of Psychology		
PSY543, Cognitive Neuroscience		

\*Grandfather clause: Students enrolled in the M.A. or Ph.D. program prior to Fall 2016 can choose either the previous requirements or these requirements. However, either set of requirements must be chosen as a whole; specific elements of the two sets of requirements may not be mixed.

\*\*PSY570, Special Topics may be considered content, stat, or methods depending on the specific content of the course.

#### Research Seminar (PSY590)

Students should participate PSY590 each semester they are in-residence. Students can opt to register for one credit of PSY590. Research seminar meets once each week and is an opportunity for students to improve their ability to give and critically analyze a research presentation. Both of these skills will be crucial to your success.

#### Work-related training requirement:

Students in the Ph.D. program must either:

1. Complete an internship of at least 3 months duration OR
2. Teach at least one 3-credit undergraduate course independently. Students must complete one of the following training programs prior to teaching:
  - a. PSY 550 (Teaching of Psychology)
  - b. Thirty-six hours of teaching-related training at the NMSU Teaching Academy (e.g., the Teaching Scholars course) completed during the twelve months prior to teaching
  - c. Complete the Preparing Future Faculty program or the Scientific Teaching Fellowship
  - d. Complete another training program that has been approved by the Graduate Committee (e.g., team-teach with a faculty member).
  - e. At least one month prior to the first class meeting, student instructors must submit their course syllabus and required textbook(s) to be approved by the Graduate Committee. Student instructors who do not obtain this approval may not be allowed to teach the course.
  - f. After approximately six weeks of instruction, a faculty member will conduct a midterm course evaluation using the NMSU Teaching Council's

recommendations (available at [teaching.nmsu.edu](http://teaching.nmsu.edu)). Results of the midterm evaluation will be shared with the instructor, the Graduate Committee, the student's advisor, and the Department Head.

### III. The Doctoral Committee

The student, in consultation with his or her advisor, will form an advisory committee (also referred to as the doctoral committee and the graduate committee below). The committee will consist of five members who have appointments to the graduate faculty. The committee must have at least three members from the Psychology Department and one from outside of the department who will serve as the Dean's representative. If appropriate, one or more subject matter experts from another department may serve in place of one or more Psych faculty members. (Note that this requirement of five committee members exceeds the minimum set by the Graduate School, which only requires four.) In consultation with the committee chair, students should select as their Dean's Rep a faculty member who can offer content-relevant insights. Students who have declared a minor must have at least one representative from the minor area on their committee. The representative of the minor area can also serve as the Dean's representative. If appropriate, the advisory committee may also have a member from off campus (in addition to the required five members described above), as long as that person has earned at least a Ph.D. or equivalent degree. Each graduate student will submit the names of his/her advisory committee members and a justification for selecting each committee member to the department head using the Department of Psychology Graduate Student Committee Composition Form. Subsequent changes in the committee must be submitted and justified in writing and must be agreed to by the advisor as well as the department head.

### IV. Comprehensive Examination

This is an inclusive evaluation of the student's mastery of the field of concentration. The examination includes both written and oral sections. The exact content is to be determined by the advisory committee in consultation with the student. Admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree requires adequate performance on the comprehensive examination.

1. Overview: Students identify 4 broad research areas and compile a preliminary reference list for each area. This list consists of key papers that represent the students' specific interests within each area. The committee agrees on 4 questions (one/area) and students answer each question using whatever readings are necessary. Answers are limited to a total of 50 pages (not counting references) and students have 6 months from receipt of the questions to complete the exam. Students are responsible for providing each committee member with a HARD copy of their completed responses, unless the committee member specifically requests an electronic copy. Students then orally defend their answers approximately two weeks after completing the written portion of the exam.

2. Format: Written exam and oral defense

3. Required meetings: A proposal meeting and an oral defense.

The proposal meeting should be scheduled for one hour. At the proposal meeting, the student presents his/her committee with the preliminary reference list and the committee begins to discuss possible questions (with the student's input if desired by the committee).

The oral defense should be scheduled for two hours and will be held approximately 2 weeks after completion of the written exam. The contents of the oral exam will be primarily focused on the student's answers and the papers included on the student's final reference list.

4. Timing: Consistent with the timeline included in the department's graduate program policy statement, students are expected to complete the comprehensive exams within 2 semesters after defending their M.A. thesis or completion of their qualifying exam (see the timeline for more information). Thus, students should hold a comps proposal meeting within one semester of defending or completion of the qualifying exam. After the comps proposal meeting with the student, the committee has 2 weeks to finalize the questions. The written portion of the exam must be finished within 6 months after receiving the questions from the committee. Failure to complete the written portion of the exam within 6 months will result in failure of the comprehensive exam. An oral defense will be held approximately 2 weeks after successful completion of the written exam.

5. Contents: Students identify 4 broad research areas, one of which should be their primary area of expertise and one of which should be quantitative, methodological, or philosophical in nature. The areas should be larger than one type of task, one person's work, or one theory. Examples of topics that are appropriately broad are motion perception, attitudes & behavior, and prospective memory. Students compile a preliminary reference list for each area consisting of key papers that represent the students' specific interests within each area. Students will include a final reference list with each answer. Everything included on the final reference list is eligible for examination/discussion during the oral defense.

6. Questions: Four questions (one/area) will be written collaboratively by the student's committee based on the student's preliminary reference list. All members of the committee must agree on the four questions prior to delivering the questions to the student. The questions should both test student's knowledge of the area and provoke reading and thought that will enhance the student's research productivity. The committee may elect to involve the student in the question-writing process (e.g., the student suggests a question and the committee revises it).

7. Assessment: The committee decides whether or not the student passes the exam after the oral defense (i.e., the student is given no feedback after the written portion of the exam). If two or more members of the committee vote that the student did not pass the exam, then the student must repeat the corresponding portion of the exam. For example, if the committee rules that the student's written answers were satisfactory but his/her oral defense was unsatisfactory, the student must repeat the oral defense. Students may be required to repeat the written portion, the oral defense, or both.

8. Ground rules for written portion of exam: The written portion of the exam is "take-home" and "open-book." Students are expected to read whatever literature is necessary to provide thoughtful and comprehensive answers to each question, regardless of whether the papers were included on their "interest list." Students may consult with their advisor and/or committee for clarification of the questions but otherwise may not discuss their ideas, readings, or answers with any faculty members (at NMSU or otherwise). Answers to all four

questions are limited to a total of 50 pages (e.g., approximately 12 pages/question) not including the final reference lists.

9. Stopping the clock: Students may ask permission from the Graduate Committee to stop the 6-month completion clock in the event of extraordinary circumstances. Requests should be in writing, should detail the nature of the extraordinary circumstances, and should list a specific date on which the 6-month clock will resume. Requests will be granted at the discretion of the Graduate Committee.

10. Expiration date: Beginning with oral defenses held in Spring 2015, if more than 4 years have elapsed since the date of passing oral defense of the comprehensive exam, the student will be required to take another comprehensive exam before admission to the dissertation defense meeting.

#### V. Application and Advancement to Candidacy

A student who has completed 12 credit hours of graduate work beyond the M.A. degree, successfully completed the Qualifying Exam, and who has been admitted to the doctoral program in psychology should file an application for admission to candidacy for the doctorate before registering for additional work. The application, called "Program of Study and Committee for Graduate Students Pursuing the Doctorate" requires both the advisor's and the Department Head's approval before it is filed with the Graduate School. It should be noted that this program of study is a plan, not necessarily reality. A corrected version is to be filed in the semester of graduation. However, any change in the composition of the student's graduate committee must be approved by the student, all committee members, the Department Head, and the Graduate School.

A student will be formally advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. upon the successful completion of the comprehensive examination, the recommendation of the student's doctoral committee, and the approval of the graduate dean.

#### VI. Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Meeting

A doctoral dissertation in our department is a written description of original research conducted by the student. The student's dissertation committee must approve a dissertation proposal document before it is conducted. This approval is obtained at a Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Meeting attended by the student, his/her advisor, and the student's dissertation committee. The approval of the committee and any required changes in the project should be documented using the department's Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Approval Form.

At least one week before the meeting, the student shall present a written description of the research proposal to each member of the advisory committee. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the merit or lack thereof of the proposed research and to suggest whatever changes in it that are deemed necessary to make it a worthwhile scientific effort. This objective is more easily met if the proposal document is in final Ph.D. dissertation form save for the Results, Discussion, and Conclusions. It is presumed that the student will have discussed the proposed research with his/her dissertation committee prior to writing the Ph.D. proposal document.

## VII. Doctoral Dissertation and Final Examination

1. Any student advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. must register for three credits of dissertation (PSY 700) each regular semester until the Graduate School has approved the dissertation.
2. Dissertation Preparation should total at least 18 credits of PSY 700.
3. Students may not enroll in PSY700 until after successful completion of the qualifying exam.
4. The Department encourages students to orally present an early version of their completed dissertation research to their committee or to the Department prior to writing the final document and defending it.
5. The committee chair, or a majority of committee members, will approve of the dissertation document prior to scheduling an oral defense.
6. Not later than 14 working days before the date of the final examination, the candidate must personally deliver a final copy of the dissertation to each member of the final examination committee.

7. Following the final examination and approval by the dissertation committee, a copy of the dissertation is presented to the graduate editor at least ten working days before graduation.
8. The final examination must be completed at least two weeks before the date set for the commencement exercises at which the student expects to obtain the degree.

### **GRADUATE MINOR IN PSYCHOLOGY (effective Fall '12)**

Students may earn a minor in psychology at the M.A. or Ph.D. level by completing three of the following nine courses (i.e., 9 credits) at least one which must be the basic course from one of our three programs, viz. cognitive, engineering, or social psychology.

PSY 520, Learning Theory and Methodology

PSY 522, Sensation and Perception Theory and Methodology

PSY 524, Cognitive Psychology

PSY 525, Biopsychology

PSY 527, Social Psychology

PSY 535, Developmental Psychology

PSY 540, History and Systems of Psychology

PSY 543, Cognitive Neuroscience

PSY 547, Engineering Psychology