

GRADUATE HANDBOOK OF PROGRAM RULES AND REGULATIONS

For the PhD program in Psychology

Concentration Areas:

Biological Psychology

Clinical Science

Developmental Science

Industrial/Organizational Psychology

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
VIRGINIA TECH**

2021 – 2022

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This document summarizes procedures and regulations governing graduate work in the Department of Psychology at Virginia Tech. The material herein is a supplement to descriptions of University-level requirements described in the Graduate Catalog (http://graduateschool.vt.edu/graduate_catalog). Students should be familiar with the information in this handbook and the Graduate Catalog, and can address questions to the Department Chair, Director of the Graduate Program, or their area director.

Virginia Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status, or otherwise discriminate against employees or applicants who inquire about, discuss, or disclose their compensation or the compensation of other employees or applicants, or on any other basis protected by law. For inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies, contact the Office for Equity and Accessibility at 540-231-2010 or Virginia Tech, North End Center, Suite 2300 (0318), 300 Turner St. NW, Blacksburg, VA 24061.

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I. Welcome to the Department of Psychology <http://www.psyc.vt.edu>

II. Directory of Faculty, Staff, and Graduate Students <https://support.psyc.vt.edu/users>

III. Applications and Admissions

Department Procedures

1. <https://support.psyc.vt.edu/grads/program/admissions-and-funding>
2. <https://support.psyc.vt.edu/grads/program/application-procedures>

University Procedures <https://graduateschool.vt.edu/admissions.html>

The Department of Psychology subscribes to the “Resolution Regarding Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Graduate Students” as adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States; and to the statement adopted by the Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology which indicates that “An acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to solicit or accept another offer. Offers made after April 15 must include the proviso that the offer is void if acceptance of a previous offer from a department accepting this resolution is in force on that date.”

IV. Graduate Student Orientation

All new graduate students attend an orientation meeting with the Department Chair and the Director of the Graduate Program during the week before classes begin in the Fall semester (announced by email). Each PhD Area Director conducts additional orientation meetings with graduate students to discuss area-specific requirements. New students must also attend both a graduate teaching assistantship (GTA) workshop and an orientation sponsored by the Graduate School during the week before Fall classes begin.

V. Standards for the MS and PhD Student Advisory Committees (SAC)

A. Master of Science

1. The major advisor (Chair of Student Advisory Committee) must be a member of the Department of Psychology at Virginia Tech and have Graduate Program Faculty status.
2. The Student Advisory Committee (SAC) must have at least two members from the Psychology faculty with Graduate Program Faculty status, one of whom has chaired a Psychology thesis to completion. An experienced committee member will provide guidance to the major advisor who is chairing their first master’s SAC.
3. Graduate Program Faculty can serve as Chairs, Co-Chairs, or Members of graduate student advisory committees. Eligible faculty categories include the Tenured/Tenure-track, Clinical, Extension, Collegiate, Research, and Professor of Practice ranks as defined in the Virginia Tech Faculty Handbook. Note that individuals whose only appointment to the University is “Adjunct” are not considered Graduate Program faculty.

B. Doctor of Philosophy

1. The major advisor (Chair of SAC) must be a member of the Department of Psychology at Virginia Tech and have Graduate Program Faculty status.
2. The SAC must have a minimum of four members who hold Graduate Program Faculty status at Virginia Tech, at least three of whom are Psychology Department faculty. Note that individuals whose only appointment to the University is “Adjunct” are not considered Graduate Program faculty.
3. The SAC must have a chair who has directed a Psychology thesis to completion and one member who has directed a Psychology dissertation to completion, or two members who have directed Psychology dissertations to completion if the chair has not directed a Psychology thesis to

completion. An experienced committee member will provide guidance to the major advisor who is chairing their first doctoral SAC.

4. At least one member of the SAC must be affiliated with a different graduate training area than the student (i.e., Clinical Science, Developmental Science, Industrial/Organizational, or Biological) or with another department or program at Virginia Tech. Faculty in the Department of Psychology who are formally affiliated with more than one of the graduate training areas may be counted as a member of whichever area the student and SAC agree is appropriate to accomplish the goals of instilling breadth in the committee. Note that graduate training areas may have additional rules regarding the number of faculty who must be from the student's area.
5. Decisions regarding the final composition of the SAC should be made by the student in conjunction with the major advisor.
6. The SAC may have additional members without academic rank at Virginia Tech.

C. Expectations for Faculty Participation on SAC

It is the department's expectation that all faculty serving on SACs will participate actively in the academic development of students and in the direction of their research programs. There is no maximum number of committees on which faculty may serve, but faculty members should ensure that they do not accept memberships on advisory committees for which they are unable to fulfill the requirements. Performance of faculty in this important capacity will be part of regular faculty evaluations conducted by the Department Chair. The Director of the Graduate Program will share responsibility with the Department Chair for all aspects of SACs.

VI. Curriculum <https://support.psyc.vt.edu/grads/program/curriculum>

A. Core, Depth, and Breadth Curriculum

All students must meet the minimum requirements for the MS/PhD degree as described in the Graduate Catalog

(https://secure.graduateschool.vt.edu/graduate_catalog/policies.htm?policy=002d14432c654287012c6542e3430001) and at the Psychology Graduate Program Canvas site (<https://canvas.vt.edu/courses/52120/files/folder/Plan%20of%20Study?preview=17979114>).

It is the student's responsibility to meet both the department and university requirements for fulfilling the curriculum for the MS and PhD degrees. Careful planning is essential. To guide course planning, all students complete a Plan of Study for the MS, and a second Plan of Study for the PhD. Consult the Graduate Catalog for general University-level requirements. Psychology Department requirements are described below. Not all graduate courses are offered each semester or year. The current schedule for Psychology graduate courses through Spring 2026 can be found here:

<https://canvas.vt.edu/courses/52120/files/folder/Plan%20of%20Study/Graduate%20Curriculum%20Schedule>

It is important that entering students consult with their advisors in order to plan a program of study which will satisfy these guidelines.

Plan of Study (POS) instructions, FAQ, examples, templates, and the Psychology graduate curriculum schedule through Spring 2026 can all be found in the Plan of Study folder of the Psychology Graduate Program Canvas site: <https://canvas.vt.edu/courses/52120/files/folder/Plan%20of%20Study>.

Courses offered at the graduate level in the Department of Psychology:

PSYC 5114: Seminar in Industrial-Organizational Psychology
 PSYC 5284: Psychopathology
 PSYC 5294: Psychophysiology
 PSYC 5314: Psychological Perspectives in Social Psychology
 PSYC 5344: Cognitive Psychology
 PSYC 5374: Health Psychology
 PSYC 5404: Biological Bases of Behavior
 PSYC 5544: Cognitive Development
 PSYC 5554: Social Development
 PSYC 6014: Quantitative Topics in I/O Psychology
 PSYC 6254: Advanced Topics in Clinical Psychology; Clinical Psychological Assessment
 PSYC 6254: Advanced. Topics in Clinical Psychology: Neuropsychology
 PSYC 6264: Child Psychopathology
 PSYC 6924: Advanced Topics in Industrial Psychology
 PSYC 6934: Advanced Topics in Organizational Psychology
 PSYC 6944: Advanced Topics in Developmental Psychology
 PSYC 6954: Advanced Topics in Biological Psychology
 PSYC 6254: Advanced Topics in Clinical Psychology

Minimum grade requirement: Failure to attain at least a B- in a core course will require remediation.

Students who receive grades lower than a C- must retake the course, consistent with Graduate School Policy. A student receiving a C+, C, or C- in a core, depth or breadth course must remediate deficiencies in their performance to the satisfaction of the instructor. Remediation may involve attending some or all of the classes the next time the course is offered, re-taking tests, re-doing papers or other class assignments, or completing alternate assignments to demonstrate competence in the areas that were deficient. Tasks to be performed and criteria to be met are left to the discretion of the instructor but generally should approximate evidence of a level of competence consistent with the grade of B- or higher. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this process by contacting the instructor and creating a written contract for the work to be completed. The contract should be signed by both the student and the instructor and a copy should be forwarded to the Director of the Graduate Program. Normally remediation should occur in the semester following the one in which the deficient grade was received unless, at the instructor's request, the student must wait until the course is offered again. When the deficiency is remediated, the instructor will send a letter to the Director of the Graduate Program documenting that the remediation has occurred and the letter grade that the student's remediated performance has earned. The Director of the Graduate Program will inform the student and place a copy of the letter in the student's file.

All psychology graduate students must complete the Core, Breadth, and Depth curricula, as well as additional coursework.

Because entry-level graduate students come from diverse academic backgrounds, our graduate program provides a common foundation while also allowing individualized coursework. The department core curriculum provides training in research methods and statistics, the depth curriculum ensures rigorous

training within a student's specified area of expertise, and the breadth curriculum facilitates broader training in the more specialized areas of the doctoral graduate areas.

Core curriculum: At least three quantitative and research methods courses

- The two semester, two course sequence in research methods (PSYC 5315-5316). Note that currently the second course taken is not PSYC 5316 but rather STAT 5214-G (Advanced Methods in Regression).
- One or more additional courses in statistics, psychometrics, or advanced methodology. Students should consult their advisory committee in selecting these courses. Examples include:
 - HD 6514/6524 Advanced Research Methods (SEM), with lab
 - EDRE 6624 Measurement Theory
 - EDRE 6654 Multivariate Statistics for Applications to Educational Problems
 - EDRE 6694 Hierarchical Linear Modeling
 - EDRE 6754 Advanced Item Response Theory
 - EDRE 6974 Longitudinal Data Analysis
 - STAT 5444 Introduction to Bayesian Statistics

Depth curriculum: At least three graduate-level courses within the student's research concentration area that deepen their understanding of the theories, methodologies, and existing literatures pertaining to their defined area of interest. Students should consult their advisory committee and area-specific information described below in selecting their "depth" courses.

Breadth curriculum: At least three graduate-level courses outside of the student's research concentration (including but not limited to classes in the Department of Psychology), designed to educate students in domains of study that complement their research interests, and expand students' general knowledge of the field. Students should consult their advisory committee and area-specific information described below in selecting their "breadth" courses.

B. Additional coursework: Each of the department's four areas has additional course requirements that are specific to the area, described below.

i. Biological Psychology (BP):

<https://support.psyc.vt.edu/grads/program/biological-psychology/curriculum>

The training goal of the Biological Psychology (BP) graduate area is to ensure that students who achieve the doctoral degree are well-prepared for careers in psychological research. To this end, the curriculum is structured to educate students in quantitative methods/designs and philosophy of science (quantitative requirement), to educate students in domains of study that are specifically related to their areas of research interest (depth requirement), to educate students in domains of study that complement their research interests, and expand students' general knowledge of the field (breadth requirement).

Please note that courses can only be designated as "breadth" or "depth" as they relate to a given individual student's research interest (in other words, a single course can act as either for two different students). "Depth" is conceptually defined as a course that is specifically related to the student's primary area of research focus, whereas "breadth" is conceptually defined as a course that introduces the student to literatures, methodologies/analytic strategies, and/or theoretical frameworks that are substantively different from those representing their area of primary research focus.

In order to meet this training goal, each student is expected to formulate a plan of study with consultation from their faculty advisor and their advisory committee that satisfies the core (quantitative), depth, and breadth requirements. A few specific courses are required for all students, while still allowing BP students to exercise considerable freedom in composing plans of study that satisfy their intellectual and research needs. In addition to regular coursework, the BP area also meets on a regular basis at colloquia and brown bags throughout the Fall and Spring semesters to discuss various research topics. The schedule for these meetings is announced in advance, and participation in them is expected.

Core Requirement (quantitative research methods): See “General Curriculum” section above.

Depth Requirement: Two graduate-level courses within the student’s research concentration (5000- level; including but not limited to the Department of Psychology). A third depth course is taken as a Special Topics course (see Notes 1 and 2 below).

Breadth Requirement: Two graduate-level courses outside of the student’s research concentration (5000level; including but not limited to the Department of Psychology). A third breadth course is taken as a Special Topics course (see Notes 1 and 2 below).

Note 1: All students must take two graduate-level advanced topic courses, one as a breadth course, and one as a depth course (either Psyc 6944 or Psyc 6954). We offer graduate seminars every semester that encourage our students to explore specialized topics in greater depth. These topics are driven primarily by student interest, and do not necessarily repeat unless student demand is high. Thus, these topics evolve as the research interests of our faculty and students evolve. Examples of topics in the past include: Frontal Lobe Development (Bell); Emotion, Stress, and Health (Friedman).

Note 2: Departments that offer other courses that may be included in the plan of study to prepare for a research concentration include Biology, Chemistry, Human Development (including Gerontology), Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise, Industrial Systems Engineering (Human Factors), Philosophy, Sociology, Statistics, Women's Studies, Computer Science, and Veterinary Medicine. Also, although the Department does not offer a specialty in gerontology, students may additionally obtain a Graduate Certificate in Gerontology through the Center for Gerontology in the College of Human Resources and Education. This certificate is awarded only in conjunction with a masters or doctoral degree in a graduate program at Virginia Tech. It requires the student to take additional coursework in the field of aging and to participate in a practicum or field study. Furthermore, the thesis or dissertation must be on an issue in adult development and aging.

Additional Coursework Requirements

No additional coursework is required at this time

ii. Clinical Science:

<https://support.psyc.vt.edu/grads/program/clinical-science/curriculum-overview>

Core Requirement (quantitative research methods): See “General Curriculum” section above.

Depth Requirement, Clinical “Area of Emphasis”: All students complete three courses in a student’s area of emphasis. The courses can be within or outside the department and are tailored by the student and advisor to meet a student's interests and career goals.

Breadth Requirement: The Department curriculum requires graduate-level courses outside of the student's Depth/Clinical Area of Emphasis, and allows for additional required courses that are designed to educate students in domains of study that complement their research interests and expand students' general knowledge of the field at large. For Clinical Science PhD students, this requirement is met by completing *four* courses – *at least one course within each of these four domains:* Biological, Cognitive-Affective, Social, and Developmental. This breadth curriculum is consistent with guidelines from the American Psychological Association for discipline specific knowledge. Often this requirement can be met by completing a basic 5000-level course in one of these areas, such as the “Biological” and “Developmental” courses. However, other courses at the 5000- and 6000-level can be completed to meet a requirement in a domain. For example, a course in cognitive development can meet a requirement for a course in the developmental domain. However, one course can only meet a requirement for one domain. Specific courses should be decided by the student and her/his advisor. Preferably, the specific course should be consistent with the student's overall interests and career plans. In addition, currently history and systems of psychology and the study of individual and cultural diversity are infused throughout the area's and department's courses.

Biological (one of these)

PSYC 5294 - Psychophysiology

PSYC 5404 - Biological Bases of Behavior

PSYC 6254 – Advanced Topics in Clinical Psychology: Neuropsychology

PSYC 6954 – Advanced Topics in Clinical Psychology: Cognitive and Clinical Neuroscience

Cognitive-Affective (one of these)

PSYC 5274 - Personality Processes

PSYC 5344 - Cognitive Psychology

PSYC 5544 – Cognitive Development

Social (one of these)

PSYC 5314 - Psych Perspectives in Social Psychology

PSYC 5554 – Social Development

Developmental (one of these)

PSYC 5274 – Personality Processes

PSYC 5544 - Cognitive Development

PSYC 5554 - Social Development

PSYC 6944 - Advanced Topics in Developmental Psychology

HD 5224 –Child Development in the Family Context

HD 5005 – Theories in Human Development and Family Science

Additional Coursework Requirements:

Core Clinical Courses: All four of the following are required

PSYC 5284 Psychopathology (Adult)

PSYC 6264 Child Psychopathology

PSYC 6254 Clinical Psychological Assessment I (Adult)

PSYC 6254 Clinical Psychological Assessment II (Child)

PSYC 6254 Advanced Topics in Ethics

Practicum Sequence: All students complete a three-year sequence, which may include an externship.

Note: for licensing as a Clinical Psychologist, individual states may have requirements that go beyond the current curriculum.

Internship: Completion of an APA-accredited internship is required to earn the PhD in the Clinical Science area. While on internship, graduate students must remain enrolled and will be responsible for their associated tuition and fees. To help students while on internship, the Graduate School has developed the In Absentia request (<https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/what-you-need-to-graduate/forms.htm>) which allows the student to pay for 1 credit in the fall and spring semesters (no enrollment is needed for the summer). **Out of state graduate students are recommended to seek and begin the process of Virginia in-state residency as soon as possible to help offset costs for tuition and fees.**

iii. Developmental Science (DS):

<https://support.psyc.vt.edu/grads/program/developmental-science/curriculum>

The training goal of the Developmental Science (DS) graduate area is to ensure that students who achieve the doctoral degree are well-prepared for careers in psychological research. To this end, the curriculum is structured to educate students in quantitative methods/designs and philosophy of science (quantitative requirement), to educate students in domains of study that are specifically related to their areas of research interest (depth requirement), to educate students in domains of study that complement their research interests, and expand students' general knowledge of the field (breadth requirement).

Please note that courses can only be designated as “breadth” or “depth” as they relate to a given individual student’s research interest (in other words, a single course can act as either for two different students). “Depth” is conceptually defined as a course that is specifically related to the student’s primary area of research focus, whereas “breadth” is conceptually defined as a course that introduces the student to literatures, methodologies/analytic strategies, and/or theoretical frameworks that are substantively different from those representing their area of primary research focus.

In order to meet this training goal, each student is expected to formulate a plan of study with consultation from their faculty advisor and their advisory committee that satisfies the core (quantitative), depth, and breadth requirements. A few specific courses are required for all students, while still allowing DS students to exercise considerable freedom in composing plans of study that satisfy their intellectual and research needs. In addition to regular coursework, the DS area also meets on a regular basis throughout the Fall and Spring semesters to talk about current research projects, data analysis problems, design plans for new studies, etc. This is an informal meeting to get us all acquainted with each other’s research interests, provide students with an opportunity to present research to a group, and also as an occasional platform to discuss professional development issues (e.g., research ethics, authorship protocols, etc.).

Core Requirement (quantitative research methods): See “General Curriculum” section above.

Depth Requirement: Two graduate-level courses within the student’s research concentration (5000- level; including but not limited to the Department of Psychology). A third depth course is taken as a Special Topics course (see Notes 1 and 2 below).

Breadth Requirement: Two graduate-level courses outside of the student’s research concentration (5000level; including but not limited to the Department of Psychology). A third breadth course is taken as a Special Topics course (see Notes 1 and 2 below).

Note 1: All students must take two graduate-level advanced topic courses, one as a breadth course, and one as a depth course (either Psyc 6944 or Psyc 6954). We offer graduate seminars every semester that encourage our students to explore specialized topics in greater depth. These topics are driven primarily by student interest, and do not necessarily repeat unless student demand is high. Thus, these topics evolve as the research interests of our faculty and students evolve. Examples of topics in the past include: Developmental affective neuroscience, Emotion regulation (Bell), Cross-cultural development (Dunsmore), Risk and Resilience in Development (Kim-Spoon), and Social Learning in Typical and Atypical Infants and Young Children (Panneton).

Note 2: Departments that offer other courses that may be included in the plan of study to prepare for a research concentration include Biology, Chemistry, Human Development (including Gerontology), Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise, Industrial Systems Engineering (Human Factors), Philosophy, Sociology, Statistics, Women's Studies, Computer Science, and Veterinary Medicine. Also, although the Department does not offer a specialty in gerontology, students may additionally obtain a Graduate Certificate in Gerontology through the Center for Gerontology in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. This certificate is awarded only in conjunction with a masters or doctoral degree in a graduate program at Virginia Tech. It requires the student to take additional coursework in the field of aging and to participate in a practicum or field study. Furthermore, the thesis or dissertation must be on an issue in adult development and aging.

Additional Coursework Requirements

No additional coursework is required at this time.

iv. Industrial/Organizational Psychology (I/O):

<https://support.psyc.vt.edu/grads/program/industrial-organizational-psychology/curriculum>

The I/O curriculum conforms to the Guidelines for Education and Training at the Doctoral Level in Industrial-Organizational Psychology (<https://www.siop.org/Events-Education/Graduate-Training-Program/Guidelines-for-Education-and-Training>) and provides training in a number of areas including: Job analysis, Selection, Performance management, Training, Work motivation, Leadership, Organizational theory, and Organizational development.

Core Requirement (quantitative research methods): See “General Curriculum” section above.

Depth Requirement: In the I/O area, fulfillment of the Depth curriculum requirement is met within the completion of a set of courses described in “Additional Coursework Requirements” below.

Breadth Requirement: For I/O PhD students, this requirement is met by completing *one course in three of the following four domains*: Social Bases, Cognitive-Affective Bases, Developmental Bases, and Biological Bases. This requirement can be met by completing a foundation course (i.e., 5000-level) in an area, such as Social or Cognitive Psychology. However, other courses at the 5000- and 6000-level can be completed to meet a requirement in a domain. For example, a course in cognitive development can meet a requirement for a course in the developmental OR cognitive-affective area. Specific courses other than the foundation course to meet an area requirement should be decided by the student and her/his advisor.

Additional Coursework Requirements

Depth and additional coursework, beyond the department Core and Breadth requirements, include:

MS course requirements: All the following are required

PSYC 5114: Seminar in Industrial-Organizational Psychology
 5000 or 6000-level Quantitative course approved by area director
 PSYC 6014: Quantitative Topics in Industrial-Organizational Psychology -- OR --
 PSYC 6924: Advanced Topics in Industrial Psychology -- OR --
 PSYC 6934: Advanced Topics in Organizational Psychology

PhD course requirements: All the following (12 credits total) are required following the MS

PSYC 6014: Quantitative Topics in Industrial-Organizational Psychology, if NOT used to satisfy MS requirement
 PSYC 6924: Advanced Topics in Industrial Psychology, if NOT used to satisfy MS requirement
 PSYC 6934: Advanced Topics in Organizational Psychology (Repeat for 6 total credit hours if NOT used to satisfy MS)
 6000-level (3 credit hour) course approved by I-O Area Director

Electives: Two (6 credit hours) of quantitative courses approved by I-O Area Director

C. Waiving Core Courses and Transferring Depth, Breadth, and Additional Required Courses

Students who enter the PhD program after completing graduate level courses at another university may wish to request waivers of required courses. Requests for waivers should be made during the student's first semester of academic study, but may be considered later.

i. Waiving the Thesis Requirement

Students who have completed a Master's thesis in another Department of Psychology or related discipline and who wish to waive the thesis requirement at Virginia Tech should submit a letter requesting a waiver to their Area Director along with a signed copy of their thesis. Normally, requests for waivers of the thesis requirement should be made during the student's first semester in residence at Virginia Tech. Upon receipt of the student's request for a waiver and thesis, the Area Director will convene a committee to read and evaluate the adequacy of the thesis. The committee should be composed of three faculty at Virginia Tech who hold Graduate Program Faculty status and whose areas of expertise most closely match the topical and methodological area of the thesis. At least two of the committee members must be from the Department but they need not be from the student's current Area. Area Directors may or may not be members of the committee. The standard for granting a waiver of the thesis requirement will be the completion of a thesis comparable in quality to that typically completed by students who receive their MS within the Department. Members of the evaluating committee will submit their vote regarding the waiver of the thesis requirement to the Area Director. It is not required that the evaluating committee meet to discuss the adequacy of the thesis, although such a meeting may be scheduled at the request of any committee member or the Area Director.

If at least two committee members recommend waiver of the thesis requirement, the Area Director will send a letter to the Director of the Graduate Program documenting the membership of the evaluating committee and the final vote regarding the waiver of the thesis. The Director of the Graduate Program will then inform the student that the thesis requirement has been waived and will place a copy of this letter and the Area Director's letter in the student's file.

Note. A thesis submitted to an Area Director for waiver that was written in a foreign language must either be translated to English or the student must meet with the committee convened by the Area Director to explain the thesis. In either case, the student must present the thesis in English in sufficient detail for the committee to reach a decision regarding the quality and comparability of the document in relation to those completed in the Department. At least some of the thesis may need to be translated to aid in the evaluation process (e.g., the hypotheses, design, tables or results, etc.). The decision on whether to translate the thesis or meet with the committee to explain the document should be decided by the student in consultation with the committee members.

ii. Procedure for waiving a Core course

Comparability of the prior coursework to the Core courses in the Department is the primary criterion for granting a waiver. Students should first consult with the current instructor of the course they wish to waive and provide them with documentation of the completed course that will serve as basis for the waiver. Normally, this documentation would include copies of:

1. the transcript (unofficial is acceptable) showing a final grade of B or higher in the completed course;
2. the completed course syllabus, text, and reading lists;
3. tests, notes, projects, etc. from the completed course (if available).

This instructor then contacts the student by email or in writing. Although the instructor offers an informal opinion on the comparability of the completed course, the instructor does not make the decision on waiving a core course. If following the instructor's review the student wishes to pursue the waiver, they then would submit all of this documentation along with the instructor's email/letter to the Director of the Graduate Program. A separate request and set of documentation should be submitted for each requested Core course waiver.

The Director of the Graduate Program may submit the waiver request and documentation to be reviewed by an ad hoc committee of the Director and two faculty who regularly teach the department's research methods course sequence. This ad hoc committee of three will make the final decision on the request for a waiver of a Core course. The Director will notify the student of the final decision and also place a letter of notification in the student's file in the Department office. The student also must be sure to document the waived Core course as a transferred course on their Plan of Study document. Note that waived courses from another institution can count on a student's masters OR doctoral plan of study, but not both.

iii. Procedure for transferring other courses (Depth, Breadth, and Additional courses)

Only Core courses require a waiver review by the instructor and department committee. All other courses that a student wishes to transfer and count toward their area-specific (BP, CS, DS, I/O) requirements are handled within their specific graduate area.

To request a transfer of a course, the student should submit a request by email or in writing to their advisor that includes the following documentation:

1. the transcript (unofficial is acceptable) showing a final grade of B or higher in the completed course;
2. the completed course syllabus, text, and reading lists;
3. tests, notes, projects, etc. from the completed course (if available).

The advisor then corresponds with the Area Director regarding the nature of the student's request, and the advisor's recommendation regarding the transfer request. If needed, the Area Director can gather additional input from other faculty (e.g., faculty who teach similar or related courses) regarding the suitability or comparability of course content. The Area Director then makes the decision as to whether the course can be transferred and count toward the depth, breadth, or additional coursework requirement within the area. The Area Director notifies the student of this decision by email or letter, and places a letter of notification in the student's file in the Department office. The student also must be sure to document the transferred course on their Plan of Study document.

Note. If students transfer in some graduate classes, those credits can be used toward either the MS or PhD here at Virginia Tech, BUT NOT BOTH. Students should discuss with their advisors the nature of the classes and their particular situation in order to decide whether to use those classes on the MS or PhD Plan of Study.

D. Exceptions to Department-Level Requirements

Requests for exceptions to these department-level requirements should be made in writing to the Director of the Graduate Program in Psychology, who will then submit a recommendation to the Department Chair.

E. Changing Areas

Occasionally, as students grow and refine their research interests, they find that their interests are better served by a different Area than the one they were initially admitted to. If a student wants to switch areas after admission, they need to submit the following to the Area Director of the Area they want to change to: (a) their original application to our graduate program, (b) a personal statement describing the reason for the change in Area, (c) their most recent SAR and SAR evaluation letter, and (d) a letter of recommendation from a Psychology department faculty member who is willing to serve as the student's primary advisor. If the primary advisor is not in the Area the student wishes to switch to, an additional letter of recommendation from a faculty member in the Area who is willing to serve on the student's advisory committee is needed. If this happens after the student has completed the Masters' degree, and is preparing to apply for continuation, these materials may be incorporated into a continuation application to the Area that the student wishes to change to.

Area faculty will vote on the student's request. The Area's decision will be reported to the DGP, who will review the student's materials and make a recommendation to the Department Chair. In the event of a non-unanimous vote by Area faculty, the DGP will convene the Doctoral Admissions Committee (DAC) to review the student's request and will report the DAC's recommendation to the Department Chair. The Department Chair makes the final decision regarding the student's change in Area.

VII. Annual Evaluation of Graduate Students

The progress that each graduate student makes toward the degree will be evaluated annually in the beginning of the Spring Semester. The evaluation will be conducted by the student's Area Faculty in consultation with the Student's Advisory Committee (SAC). The results of the evaluation will be placed in the student's folder and the student will be informed by the Area Director of the results.

A. Evaluation and the Student Activity Report

As part of the annual evaluation in the Spring semester, students complete the Student Activity Report (SAR). In order to complete the SAR process, students (except those in their first year) must have an approved Plan of Study (POS) by the end of their second semester in the program. The SAR and POS instructions and document templates, as well as evaluation criteria specific to each Area, can be found in the Resources section of the Graduate Program Canvas site.

The following dimensions of student performance will be evaluated:

- A. Progress to Degree. Students in all Areas are expected to have successfully defended their master's thesis by the end of their fifth semester in the program. The preliminary exam is expected to have been successfully defended by the end of the seventh semester in the program. Students continue to be evaluated on progress to degree based on Area-specific guidelines following the successful completion of the preliminary exam. Students should also be aware of the consequences for failing to complete the degree within five years of completing the preliminary exam (see below).
- B. GPA. All graduate students are expected to maintain an overall GPA of at least 3.0.
- C. Research Participation. The graduate student is expected to become involved in a research project under the guidance of a faculty member and begin doing research by the Spring Semester of the first year. Factors that are to be considered in this component of the evaluation include research attitude and motivation, comprehension and understanding of research activity, and research execution and productivity. Each graduate Area provides more detailed expectations for success in this area.
- D. Professional Activity and Acceptance of Professional Responsibilities. A major component of evaluation in this area is performance in any paid assistantship positions or other professional roles assigned or assumed by the student (e.g., committee activities, external professional placements, etc.). Other representative activities that may be evaluated in this area include attendance at department-sponsored colloquia and symposia, participation at national, regional, or local meetings when possible, and generally availing oneself of appropriate resources that the department and the profession provide for continued development. Demonstration of professional behavior consistent with established standards of scientific and ethical conduct both in the laboratory and in practicum settings is expected. Each graduate Area provides more detailed expectations for success in this area.
- E. Practicum Evaluation (Clinical PhD students only): Satisfactory progress in clinical practicum also will be part of the annual evaluation for Clinical Science students. More detailed criteria on which clinical practica are evaluated is provided by the graduate Clinical Science area.

Students will receive a rating of Meets Expectations or Does Not Meet Expectations on each dimension. (Some graduate Areas may provide an Exceeds Expectations option on certain dimensions.) When students receive "Does Not Meet Expectations" in any given area, they will receive a remediation plan

from their Area faculty that must be satisfied within the timeline specified. Unless a different timeline is stated, completion of remediation will be assessed during the next annual SAR review. If this assessment shows that a student has not completed remediation, this will result in an automatic referral to the Doctoral Admissions Committee (DAC), which will review the student's materials and make a recommendation to the Department Chair regarding the student's continuation in the graduate program. Students completing a remediation plan must both complete remediation and meet criteria for their *current* year in order to receive a "Meets Expectations" rating in that area of evaluation on their next annual SAR evaluation. Students who receive a "Does Not Meet Expectations" evaluation in one or more areas will be considered lower priority for funding should the Department's budget be insufficient to fund all students. In all cases, students are expected to sign the final SAR evaluation form to acknowledge receiving the evaluation feedback. If students wish to respond to the evaluation or to provide more information relevant to the evaluation, they may do so on the SAR evaluation form.

B. Probation and Dismissal

In Good Standing: The student is considered to be In Good Standing if the student is enrolled in a program for three or more credits hours, is in regular contact with their Major Advisor, and has received a rating of Meets Expectations or higher in all domains evaluated on the most recent SAR.

Probation: Failure to meet expectations in any of the designated areas of evaluation on the SAR will lead to probationary status. Deficits to be remedied and the time period in which to do so will be specified on the SAR evaluation form. If deficits are not remedied within the time period specified in the SAR evaluation the student may be dismissed from the graduate program. If a student successfully remediates a deficiency within the specified time period, and a new deficit is noted on the next SAR, probationary status will start again (i.e., the original deficiency will not continue to "count against" the student after remediation).

Probationary status may also be assigned when a student has no contact with their Major Advisor and/or Area Director for a one semester period, unless previously agreed upon, as documented by the Major Advisor or on the SAR.

Finally, probationary status or immediate dismissal from the program may also be recommended outside of the annual evaluation cycle if the student performs below basic levels of professional conduct (e.g., dereliction of assistantship duties, unprofessional behavior) and/or commits an ethical violation.

Dismissal: Recommendations for dismissal of a student from graduate studies in Psychology due to failure to meet expectations in the annual evaluation will come from the student's Graduate Area Faculty at the end of the annual evaluation process in the Spring semester. Other recommendations for probation or dismissal may be brought by the Student Advisory Committee (SAC), or other faculty in the Department at any time. Such recommendations should be made directly to the Director of the Graduate Program, who will consult the student's Area Faculty, the SAC, the Doctoral Admissions Committee, and other appropriate sources before making a recommendation to the Department Chair. The Department Chair will then make a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Students will be sent notification in writing that they are being officially dismissed from the Psychology Department Graduate Program. In order to re-enter the Psychology Graduate Program, the student would need to re-apply to the program and be considered along with new applicants during the regular graduate recruitment cycle. The decision to be accepted back into the graduate program would be at the discretion of the faculty.

C. Leave of Absence and Completion of Doctorate

Leave of Absence: A student may request a ‘Leave of Absence’ to interrupt their graduate work for a variety of personal reasons. Examples include birth or adoption of a child, severe illness of an immediate family member, serious personal health condition, and unique opportunities that require the student to be away from the program and which further the student’s professional development. A ‘Leave of Absence’ can be for up to one year and will stop the progress-to-degree clock. Implications for assistantship funding should be discussed in advance with the Area Director and Department Chair, and may not be foreseeable at the time of requesting the Leave of Absence. The request for leave must be submitted in writing to the Director of the Graduate Program, following consultation with the Major Advisor and Area Director. The Major Advisor, Area Director, and Director of the Graduate Program may recommend the Leave of Absence to the Department Chair, who must approve the leave. At the end of the leave, the student may request permission for an extension of the leave in writing to the Director of the Graduate Program, following consultation with the Major Advisor and Area Director. The Department Chair must approve the extension. Please note that according to Graduate School policy, when students have not been registered for more than one calendar year, an Application for Readmission is required regardless of whether the student has been on a formal Leave of Absence. The Readmission process requires a review of the student's progress and of the Plan of Study to determine what changes, justification of old course work, committee changes or other conditions may be required for readmission to the degree. The required forms are at: <https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/what-you-need-to-graduate/forms.html>.

Please note that the Graduate School examines the POS of all students readmitted following an absence of one year or more (including those on formal Leave of Absence) and requires that any courses on the POS more than 5 years old be justified. Justification of courses can be accomplished in several ways but requires documentation and is not automatic (see https://graduateschool.vt.edu/content/dam/graduateschool_vt_edu/GAAPforms/Course_Justification_Request.pdf). In addition, the Department of Psychology expects that all requirements for the doctoral degree will be completed within five calendar years from the time the student passes the preliminary examination. This includes time spent on Leave of Absence or internship. Otherwise, the student will need to re-apply to the program. If accepted, the student’s research committee will require that a new preliminary examination be passed. Re-taking coursework or completing additional coursework may also be considered necessary given the current scientific state of the field.

Readmission Process

1. Contact your advisor or Area Director, who will bring your request for readmission to your area faculty for initial support. You may be asked to meet with your area faculty.
2. Reconstitute your Student Advisory Committee (SAC). It may make sense to request agreement from each member of your former SAC to continue to serve, or circumstances may call for replacing some members of your former SAC. See page 2 for more information about the SAC.
3. Your SAC will be available for consultation as you prepare the materials you’ll need to submit to the Graduate School and will do an initial review of the materials so that you’ll have a rationale for why courses may be re-certified or not. These materials include your Plan of Study and justification of old course work. If you have not been actively engaged in work that would keep you abreast of research then you may either need to retake some classes or engage in a prelim-like process. Materials may also include evidence for remaining current in the field, such as:

- Courses taken
 - Conferences attended
 - Continuing Education presentations or workshops attended
 - Projects worked on
 - Literature read, list of papers or selected papers
 - Journals subscribed to or read
4. Contact the Graduate School for readmission: https://secure.graduateschool.vt.edu/graduate_catalog/policies.htm?policy=002d14432c654287012c6542e3820092. When a student has not been registered for more than one calendar year, an Application for Readmission is required whether or not the student has been on a formal Leave of Absence (<https://graduateschool.vt.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/readmission.html>). The Readmission process requires a review of the student's progress and of the Plan of Study to determine what changes, justification of old course work, committee changes or other conditions may be required for readmission to the degree. The forms required for these processes are at: <https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/what-you-need-to-graduate/forms.html>. The minimum enrollment is 3 credits.
 5. The re-admission packet goes to the Area faculty for their consideration. The Area Director will report the Area's decision to the DGP.
 6. The DGP will review the materials and send them to the Department Chair for approval.

D. Graduate Student Appeals

A graduate student who believes that any work has been improperly evaluated, or believes that there has been unfair treatment, is expected to follow Department and University policies and procedures for appeal. These are described in this document in a subsequent section on student grievances, and in the University's Graduate Catalog. Graduate students are also encouraged to consult with the Graduate School ombudsperson (<http://www.graduate.ombudsman.vt.edu/index.html>), who can confidentially consult with students on avenues to resolve issues.

VIII. Path to the Masters and PhD

A. Role of MS Degree en Route to the PhD

Students are admitted to the Doctor of Philosophy degree program in the Department. However, the Department views the successful completion of a Master's thesis and associated courses as an important component *in route* to the doctorate. Accordingly, it does not offer a non-thesis MS degree. Moreover, all graduate students must demonstrate successful completion of the MS degree and be reviewed by their Area faculty and Department-level faculty (Director of the Graduate Program, and Department Chair) prior to beginning the preliminary examination process. For students who obtain their MS within the Department, this review and evaluation is accomplished by requesting permission to continue to the PhD in their Area and to initiate the preliminary examination (described below).

Graduate students who enter the Department with an MS from another Department of Psychology or related discipline are required to demonstrate successful completion of all requirements for the MS in psychology at Virginia Tech prior to receiving the Ph.D. Although they may complete these requirements any time prior to receiving the Ph.D., they must have the thesis requirement waived (described above) and be evaluated for readiness by their Area faculty prior to entering the preliminary exam process.

B. Required Steps toward the MS Degree

The University's Graduate Catalog offers a detailed explanation of University-level requirements. The following text delineates only Psychology Department additions and changes from the Graduate Catalog.

How to File the MS Plan of Study (see Core and Breadth Curriculum above): Instructions, examples, and document templates can be found in the Plan of Study folder under Files at the Graduate Program Canvas site: <https://canvas.vt.edu/courses/52120/files/folder/Plan%20of%20Study>

Prior to completing 15 credit hours, students are required to file a Plan of Study for the Master's Degree. Students should first read closely the Plan of Study Instructions found on the Canvas site. They should then consult their major advisor, committee members, and Area Director before composing a draft Plan of Study. After the draft is approved by the Graduate Program Director, students obtain the signatures of all members of their MS Student Advisory Committee, the Director of the Graduate Program in Psychology, and the Department Chair. Plans of Study often change prior to completion of the MS; in this case, students must complete a Change of Plan of Study form that is signed by the advisory committee members and the Department Chair. Failure to have an accurate Plan of Study entered on the University computer system will prevent scheduling a thesis defense. To avoid multiple Change forms being submitted (e.g., if several changes occur over time), typically students wait until early in the semester they plan to defend before submitting a single form.

How to Schedule the Final Examination for Defense of the Master's Thesis:

1. Students must submit an application for degree form to the Graduate School before the deadline for the semester the student plans to defend their thesis. Deadlines can be found here: <https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/what-you-need-to-graduate/deadlines-for-academic-progress.html>
2. Graduate School policies surrounding examinations can be found here: https://secure.graduateschool.vt.edu/graduate_catalog/policies.htm?policy=002d14432c654287012c6542e3630013
3. **YOU MUST USE THE PAPER FORMS** to schedule your masters' thesis defense and to submit the electronic thesis that will be stored by the University. Masters' students in direct-to-PhD graduate programs like ours are not recognized by the Graduate School's Electronic Signature System. These forms can be found in the Thesis_Dissertation Forms section (under Files) at the Psychology Graduate Program Canvas site.
4. You must schedule the defense of your Master's thesis with the Graduate School. This request should be made at least two weeks prior to the date of the examination.
5. The Graduate School will issue the examination card to your major advisor on the date of the examination. **STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE THE EXAM WITHOUT THE EXAMINATION CARD.** The major advisor returns the signed examination card to the Graduate School following the exam.
4. The following are guidelines for thesis and dissertation defenses. The chair of the committee will explain the structure and process of the defense to the audience. Typically, the defense will have the following three phases, modified as needed at the discretion of the committee chair.
 - a) The student will provide a presentation that is open to all members of the university community and wider public. There will be time for questions from the audience at the end of this presentation.
 - b) At a time deemed appropriate and at the discretion of the committee chair, the audience will be asked to leave the room so that the student and committee can complete further

questioning privately. c) At a time deemed appropriate by the committee chair, the student will be asked to leave the room so that the committee can deliberate. Once completed, the student will return alone to receive the outcome of the committee vote and other feedback.

PLEASE READ THE GRADUATE CATALOG REGARDING "PROCEDURES FOR GRADUATION." GRADUATE SCHOOL DEADLINES FOR ACADEMIC PROGRESS CAN BE FOUND HERE:

<https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/what-you-need-to-graduate/deadlines-for-academic-progress.html>

C. Applying for Continuation on to the PhD and Initiating the Preliminary Examination

As described above, after completion of the MS, continuation to the PhD in their Area and initiation of the Preliminary Examination requires that the student be evaluated by their Area faculty, the Director of the Graduate Program, and Department Chair. This process is invoked by the student.

1. Student provides an application packet to Area Director that contains:
 - A letter to the Area Director asking for continuation in the doctoral program. The letter should include a statement regarding future educational and research objectives, professional goals, and the name of the faculty member who will supervise the student's PhD work;
 - A copy of the final MS thesis;
 - A copy of the student's most recent annual evaluation (SAR) and, for Clinical Science students, the past year's practicum evaluations
 - A current curriculum vita (CV)
 - Unofficial transcript of Virginia Tech graduate coursework
2. Student requests that all MS thesis committee members send letters directly to the Area Director regarding their recommendations on the student's continuation in the doctoral program.
3. The Area Director will convene the Area faculty, who will evaluate the application and vote on continuation in the doctoral program. The Area Director will forward the application packet, the outcome of the vote, and a summary of any reasons for dissenting opinions to the Director of the Graduate Program in Psychology.
4. The Director of the Graduate Program will review the student's application and academic record for any of the following indicators of potentially deficient performance:
 - A dissenting vote on continuation from one or more of the Area faculty;
 - Unsatisfactory progress in one or more areas on the most recent annual evaluation;
 - Overall cumulative GPA less than 3.0.
5. If there are no indicators of deficient performance, the Director of the Graduate Program will give the application to the Department Chair for a final decision on continuation. If one or more indicators of deficient performance are present the Director of the Graduate Program will convene the Doctoral Admissions Committee (which includes the Director of the Graduate Program, the four Area Directors and a faculty representative of the student who may or may not be the student's advisor), who will review the application and vote on continuation. The Director of the Graduate Program will transmit the results of the vote to the Department Chair along with the application and summary of the Area vote.

6. The Department Chair will make the final decision regarding the request for continuation and notify the student, the Director of the Graduate Program, and the Area Director.

D. Required Steps toward the PhD Degree

The University's Graduate Catalog offers a detailed explanation of University-level requirements. The following text delineates only Psychology Department additions and changes from the Graduate Catalog.

How to File the PhD Plan of Study (see Core and Breadth Curriculum above): Instructions, examples, and document templates can be found in the Plan of Study folder under Files at the Graduate Program Canvas site: <https://canvas.vt.edu/courses/52120/files/folder/Plan%20of%20Study>.

Prior to completing 15 hours beyond the MS degree, and immediately following approval for continuation, the PhD candidate must file a Plan of Study for the PhD. Students should first read closely the Plan of Study Instructions found on the Canvas site. They should then consult their major advisor, committee members, and Area Director before composing a draft Plan of Study. After the draft is approved by the Graduate Program Director, students obtain the signatures of all committee members, the Director of the Graduate Program in Psychology, and the Department Chair. Plans of Study often change prior to completion of the PhD; in this case, students must complete a Change of Plan of Study form that is signed by the advisory committee members and the Department Chair. Failure to have an accurate Plan of Study entered on the University computer system will prevent scheduling a dissertation defense. To avoid multiple Change forms being submitted (e.g., if several changes occur over time), typically students wait until early in the semester they plan to defend before submitting a single form.

The Preliminary Examination:

All PhD candidates must take a Preliminary Examination. This examination requires that the student demonstrate competency in doctoral level material. The examination involves both written and oral components. The content and process of the exam varies by Area within the Department but the following requirements are consistent across Areas:

1. Before taking the Preliminary Examination, students must formally have approval to continue in the PhD program by the beginning of the semester in which they intend to take the Preliminary Examination.
2. A doctoral student must file a Plan of Study for the PhD before taking the preliminary examination.
3. The Preliminary Examination in the Department of Psychology is given by the PhD Student Advisory Committee.

How to Enter the Preliminary Examination:

1. After consulting with the Student Advisory Committee about the appropriate date, the student must submit a request for scheduling the actual date of the oral preliminary examination to the Graduate School's Electronic Signature Approval System. This request must be made at least two weeks prior to the date of the examination. Student Advisory Committee members will be notified by the electronic system and must approve the request for the exam. *All Student Advisory Committee members must have approved the request for the exam 48 hours prior to the scheduled time or the exam will be automatically cancelled.*

2. Notification of the exam being scheduled will be sent by the Graduate School by the day of the examination to the major advisor. STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE THE EXAM WITHOUT THIS NOTIFICATION. No later than 48 hours following the exam, the major advisor will log on to the Electronic Signature Approval System to report results, and the other Student Advisory Committee members will then be prompted to log on to confirm results.

The Final Examination (Dissertation):

All PhD students, in addition to submitting a written dissertation for consideration, must take a final oral examination in defense of their dissertation. This examination is given by the PhD Student Advisory Committee. The following steps should be taken:

1. Students must submit an application for degree form to the Graduate School before the deadline for the semester the student plans to defend their dissertation. Deadlines can be found here: <https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/what-you-need-to-graduate/deadlines-for-academic-progress.html>
2. After consulting with the Student Advisory Committee about the appropriate date, the student must submit a request for scheduling the actual date of the oral defense to the Graduate School's Electronic Signature Approval System. This request must be made at least two weeks prior to the date of the examination. Student Advisory Committee members will be notified by the electronic system and must approve the request for the exam. *All Student Advisory Committee members must have approved the request for the exam 48 hours prior to the scheduled time or the exam will be automatically cancelled.*
3. Notification of the defense (final examination) being scheduled will be sent by the Graduate School by the day of the examination to the major advisor. STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE THE EXAM WITHOUT THIS NOTIFICATION. No later than 48 hours following the defense, the major advisor will log on to the Electronic Signature Approval System to report results, and the other Student Advisory Committee members will then be prompted to log on to confirm results. The student will then need to submit the ETD (electronic thesis or dissertation) through the Electronic Signature Approval System within 2 weeks of the oral defense. The Student Advisory Committee will be prompted to log on to the Electronic Signature Approval System to approve the ETD.
4. The following are guidelines for thesis and dissertation defenses. The chair of the committee will explain the structure and process of the defense to the audience. Typically, the defense will have the following three phases, modified as needed at the discretion of the committee chair:
 - a) The student will provide a presentation that is open to all members of the university community and wider public. There will be time for questions from the audience at the end of this presentation.
 - b) At a time deemed appropriate and at the discretion of the committee chair, the audience will be asked to leave the room so that the student and committee can complete further questioning privately.
 - c) At a time deemed appropriate by the committee chair, the student will be asked to leave the room so that the committee can deliberate. Once completed, the student will return alone to receive the outcome of the committee vote and other feedback.

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<https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/what-you-need-to-graduate/deadlines-for-academic-progress.html>

IX. Grievance Procedures

Whenever a Psychology department graduate student believes that any work has been improperly evaluated, or believes that there has been unfair treatment, it is expected that the student will take up the questions directly with the faculty member involved. This may be the committee chair, another faculty member, or an instructor responsible for a course. If, after earnest inquiry, the matter is not reconciled, the graduate student will be expected to appeal the question to their Area Director. If the director is a party to the grievance, then the student should appeal the question to the Director of the Graduate Program, who will assume this responsibility. The Area Director or Director of the Graduate Program will choose two other faculty members to review the grievance and make a recommendation to the Department Chair who will make a decision on the matter (or to the College's Academic Dean, if the Department Chair is party to the grievance). A response in writing to the student from the Department Chair will be provided within one month of the student's appeal. A student can appeal the Department decision by entering the University Appeals Procedure, described in the Graduate Catalog:
https://secure.graduateschool.vt.edu/graduate_catalog/policies.htm?policy=002d14432c654287012c6542e372004e.

X. Unauthorized Use of Departmental Resources

Duplicating facilities, long distance telephone lines, internet access, supplies, and other resources are to be used only for official departmental business (e.g., when required as part of your GA/GTA/GRA assignment), and then only when specifically authorized by the Department Chair or your immediate faculty supervisor. Under no circumstances should departmentally issued door keys be duplicated or assigned to others.

Students may only use computer facilities for matters pertaining to the academic requirements of their graduate program. Any use of the computer for personal matters is considered a theft of government property and is punishable by law.

XI. Student Funding and Assistantships

Our goal, assuming availability of resources, is to provide students with academic year funding through assistantships for up to five years in the graduate program. There are three types of assistantships: Graduate Assistantship (GA), Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA), and Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA). Each type of assistantship comes with a specific set of job responsibilities that vary both across and within assistantship types. If the assistantship comes from the Department of Psychology, it will most likely be a GA or GTA and the student's responsibilities will be to assist the Department in meeting its educational goals. GRAs are most often offered to students by individual faculty members who have grants that fund the assistantship, but occasionally may come from other university resources. Occasionally, students may be offered an assistantship by another unit or department within the university.

For students funded by Department of Psychology GAs or GTAs, the salary is determined by level in the graduate program as follows:

Level 1: Students who have not completed the MS in Psychology and who have taken fewer than 24 hours at the graduate level.

Level 2: Students who have not completed the MS in Psychology and who have completed 24 or more hours at the graduate level.

Level 3: Students who have completed the MS in Psychology but who have not passed the preliminary examination.

Level 4: Students who have passed the preliminary examination.

Changes in Levels are only recognized at the beginning of the Fall Semester. Each Level is associated with a Step in the Graduate School's Graduate Assistant Monthly Stipend Compensation Table, which can be found on the Graduate School website. The dollar value associated with each Step is set by the Graduate School and typically increases with cost of living raises each year. Currently the Department has sufficient funding from the university to pay students at the highest end of Steps 8 – 11 for Levels 1 - 4, respectively. Department-based funding is not likely in a sixth or later year and, if offered, the rate of pay would be negotiated.

All students who accept graduate funding from the Department of Psychology are required to attend the GTA Training Workshop during the first year of funding. The GTA Training Workshop is conducted by the Graduate School during the week before fall semester classes begin.