

# GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

---

Psychological Science Master's Program

Department of Psychology and Philosophy

Texas Woman's University

## General Overview

The Master's degree program in Psychological Science will provide students with exceptional student-focused research training in a variety of areas of psychological science such as developmental, cognitive, social, and physiological psychology. Through one-on-one mentoring, students will develop a deep understanding of the scientific basis of human psychology and will develop marketable research skills.

The program will prepare graduates for direct entry into the workforce as behavioral scientists or analysts in a wide variety of settings including private industry companies, junior colleges, federal and local governments, and academic and private research labs. Graduates will also be well-positioned for entry into doctoral programs in psychology.

## Program Guidelines

These guidelines are general and you must keep yourself informed about program, departmental, graduate school, and university deadlines and regulations. It is your responsibility to be familiar with graduate school publications, forms, and the graduate catalogue. If you have questions, see a member of the Faculty in the Psychological Science program. Waivers and exceptions to program requirements will only be granted by program faculty in extenuating circumstances.

## Residence Requirements

While no specific residence requirements exist for the Master's degree, the student should plan to pursue as much full-time resident study as is possible in the degree program. Students in the Psychological Science Master's program may be enrolled either part time (3-8 hours) or full time (9-12+ hours). Residency does affect tuition; if students wish to petition for change of residency status, they should contact the Office of the Registrar (940-898-3036; [registrar@twu.edu](mailto:registrar@twu.edu); [www.twu.edu/registrar/forms.asp](http://www.twu.edu/registrar/forms.asp)).

Leaves of absence may occasionally be granted after written request to the Director of the Psychological Science Program. Except for official leaves of absence, graduate students must be continuously enrolled for all fall and spring semesters from admission to graduation. Summer enrollment is optional, but strongly recommended for timely completion of the program.

## Grade Requirements

A student must maintain a cumulative 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale. Students who do not maintain a 3.0 cumulative G.P.A. will be placed on probation and will have one semester to raise the cumulative G.P.A. to 3.0. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the program. In any circumstance, if a grade of C or less is earned in a course, the student will be required to meet with her/his program committee. The program committee and the student shall determine appropriate steps for remediation. A student who earns a second grade of C or lower will be dismissed from the Master's program. Even if the student has retaken the course in which the first C was earned, s/he will still be dismissed from the program if another grade of C or lower is earned in a course. Courses with the grade of C or lower will not count toward the M.S. requirements.

## Time Limits

All requirements for the Master's degree (including transfer credits) must be completed within a period of six consecutive calendar years from the date Master's credit was first earned (exclusive of official leaves-of-absence). The Graduate School specifies that courses over six years old may not be counted towards the degree. The six-year limit includes transfer work.

## Academic Rigor

Rigorous scholarship is a fundamental component of the Master's program in Psychological Science. It is the student's responsibility to maintain rigorous scholarship, as defined by the following four criteria:

1. Expectation of the highest academic standards:
  - a. Students must take responsibility for their own learning.
  - b. Students must master the skills and knowledge bases as specified in coursework, the program, department, university, and external standards.
  - c. Students' oral and written English communication must be at a professional level.
  - d. Students must demonstrate critical integration and application of knowledge.
2. Receptivity to ongoing critique of academic skills:
  - a. Students must maintain an open and receptive attitude toward both positive and negative critique and evaluation.
  - b. Students must demonstrate an ability and willingness to integrate critique into future work.
3. Active involvement in scholarship and research:
  - a. Students must initiate projects (e.g., thesis) on topics selected with guidance from their research advisor.
  - b. Students must actively and continuously manage their research projects.
4. Respect for and compliance with deadlines:
  - a. Students must complete tasks on time in courses, in the program, in the department, and at the university level.

- b. Students must responsibly meet deadlines in courses, the program, the department, and the university.

## **Impairment, Incompetence, and Ethical Misconduct**

The overarching goal of the Psychological Science program is to prepare professional scientists to assume roles as responsible, competent members of the community. In addition to technical competence, students are expected to maintain high standards of professional and ethical behavior in their interactions with students, peers, supervisors, staff, and faculty. Students are expected to demonstrate honesty, appropriate professional attitudes and behavior, openness to differences, and academic integrity. The program, department, and university have procedures for identifying and addressing impairment, incompetence, and/or ethical violations that occur in the course of graduate education in the Psychological Science program. Students may be remediated or dismissed from the program and the university for impairment, incompetence, or ethical violations.

Each student must read and sign the **Policy Statement on Student Impairment, Incompetence, and Ethical Misconduct** (see Appendix A) prior to attending the Psychological Science program.

*Failure to read, sign, and return the Policy Statement on Student Impairment, Incompetence, and Ethical Misconduct to the Director of your program prior to the first day of classes for the semester of your admission will be considered grounds for dismissal from the program.*

## **Coursework**

See Appendix B for required coursework for the M.S. in Psychological Science. Your faculty advisor can help you plan the best sequence of courses for your degree, as most courses are offered every semester.

## **Academic Advisor**

Upon admission to the Master's program, you will be appointed an academic advisor from the faculty of the Psychological Science program. Your advisor will help you plan and execute your program of study. While one faculty member will be appointed as your academic advisor, you are encouraged to seek out any faculty member for advising, career planning, and general concerns during your tenure in the program.

## **Degree Plan**

Before the end of your first semester, you should submit a degree plan to your faculty advisor. Your advisor or the Director of the Master's Program will meet with you to aid you in preparation of the degree plan. Then you will need to submit the degree plan to the Program Director for approval. After approval by Program Director, the degree plan is sent to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and then to the Graduate School for final approval, after which a copy is placed in your file. It is your responsibility to assure that your degree plan has been

submitted and moved through the appropriate channels prior to deadlines set by the Program Faculty and graduate school.

A student's official degree plan should be filed as soon as possible so as to protect the student from changes in the degree requirements. The degree plan is the student's official binding document, not the catalog under which you were accepted; therefore, all coursework is determined by the degree plan and not by the catalogs. After acceptance, a degree plan may be changed by submitting requests on the Change in Degree Program form. The form can be found on the TWU Graduate School website. <http://www.twu.edu/gradschool/forms/>

## **Transfer Credits**

Transfer credit will be considered on a course-by-course basis by the Program Faculty. Careful documentation of the course(s) (e.g., course descriptions from graduate catalogues, syllabi, textbooks) for which students seek transfer credit must be submitted to the core faculty through the program. Courses that may have been taken at any one of a number of universities that are included in the North Texas Federation of universities (University of North Texas, Texas A&M-Commerce) generally transfer "automatically" but require completion of departmental forms and review by the program committee.

Students who enter the Master's program with graduate non-degree coursework in Psychology from TWU will be given credit for all courses that overlap. All other graduate coursework earned at other institutions must be submitted to the core faculty for approval; typically, no more than 10 credit hours of graduate coursework from other institutions will be approved for transfer credit.

Request for transfer consideration should be accompanied by a completed program Transfer Request Form. These forms can be requested from the Program Director.

## **Registration**

Consult your Schedule of Classes each semester for a comprehensive description outlining registration procedures, deadlines, and fees. As many classes fill quickly, students are strongly encouraged to register as soon as possible. The class schedule is available on-line and can be accessed through the TWU homepage: <http://www.twu.edu>. On-line schedules are available before registration opens each semester. Any changes to the posted schedule of classes will be sent via the program's listserv.

Some courses require pre-registration and are usually listed with a special note in the Schedule of Classes. Other questions can be addressed to your advisor.

All registration is conducted on-line through the Pioneer Portal.

## **Provisional Status**

The faculty will meet to determine if a student can advance from provisional to unconditional acceptance status after students have completed their first 12 credit hours of study. It is the

responsibility of the Program Faculty to determine a change of status in the student's admission status.

## **Graduate Assistantships**

The University provides a limited number of teaching, research, and clinical assistantships for qualified graduate students. Stipends vary according to assignment and educational level of the applicant. Assistantships are competitive, and doctoral students typically have priority over master's students in this process.

Applications may be secured from the Department of Psychology-Philosophy or the Graduate School. Application and supporting documents, including official transcripts, verification of graduate status, and letters of reference, must be filed with the head of the academic component for review and recommendation. All applications and recommendations from the head of the academic component should be on file with the Dean of the Graduate School no later than June 1 for the succeeding academic year.

All graduate assistants must register for PSY 6981 during their first semester serving as an assistant. A graduate student on scholastic probation may not hold an assistantship. A person with a full-time position may not hold a graduate teaching assistantship, but may hold a graduate research assistantship. Fulfillment of the requirements of a master's degree is generally necessary for consideration as a teaching assistant.

Graduate assistants must be enrolled for 9-12 hours each semester. A student holding an assistantship at TWU may not hold an assistantship at any other college or university concurrently. A student may hold only one assistantship at TWU at any time.

## **University Policies, Academic Review and Appeal Procedures**

University policies, definitions, and appeal/grievance procedures regarding student conduct, academic dishonesty, non-discrimination, and sexual harassment are available in the TWU Student Handbook. Student responsibilities, academic review and appeals, and grade requirements are available in the Graduate Catalog available on-line:

<http://catalog.twu.edu/graduate/>

## **Annual Review**

Each Master's student's progress is formally reviewed by the faculty once per year. The review process includes monitoring program progress check points and the quality of student work, including professionalism and ethics. Each student may receive a copy of the annual review summary. Students are encouraged to discuss feedback with their faculty advisor. The Program Faculty is also available to meet with students should the students have questions.

## **Thesis**

A graduate student's responsibility includes recommending the membership of the thesis committee. Before first registration for thesis, the student must choose a director/chair of her/his

thesis and request the participation of each faculty member whom the student wants to serve on the thesis committee.

At least three members are required for a thesis committee. The committee consists of three voting members with a minimum of two members of the committee representing the student's major discipline (in this case, at least two members must be Psychological Science program faculty). Some faculty members require a statistics expert to be placed on the committee for quantitative research.

Unless otherwise approved by the Director of the Psychological Science program, the Chair of the thesis committee will be a member of the Psychological Science Faculty. In the unusual case in which the student's research interests most closely parallel those of a departmental faculty member not on the Psychological Science program faculty, the outside faculty member may be chosen as the thesis chair. To finalize the choice of the thesis Chair, the student must gain approval from each committee member and receive final approval of the committee members from the Program Director.

Only an officially registered student may hold meetings with faculty concerning the preparation of a thesis. Registration for thesis in one term is good for that term only, and does not extend to the next term.

If necessary, changes in committee membership can be made. A request for a change in committee membership can be made by the student or the faculty on the committee. The request is submitted to the committee Chair and the change would be reflected on the proposal page if the change was made prior to the proposal or at the time of the thesis defense.

## **PROCEDURES FOR THESIS**

1. Selection of a topic, a Chair, and a committee.
  - a. The first step is to decide on a topic area. While you are not required to have the details finalized, a good working idea of a research question is essential.
  - b. Your Chair is the person with whom you will be working most closely. The Chair will guide and mentor you in your research efforts. In considering your choice of a Chair, examine the following:
    - i. Is the faculty member someone with whom you feel comfortable?
    - ii. Is the faculty member someone who has expertise in your area of interest?
    - iii. Is the faculty member available to chair your work? You will need to approach the faculty member who you wish to be your Chair and make a request to work with that person. Since faculty members are limited in the number of students s/he can chair, this factor may be a consideration.
  - c. Your Chair will work with you to develop and to refine your research ideas and will read and edit numerous drafts of your work.
  - d. Your committee members are responsible to review your work at only two points in time: at your proposal defense and the final defense.
2. Develop a proposal.

- a. You will work in collaboration with your Chair until your proposal is ready. Your Chair may take 10-14 days to edit each draft of your proposal.
  - b. Students will need to obtain a copy of the Graduate School guidelines for preparation of thesis from the webpage maintained by the TWU Graduate School.
  - c. References and text citations will need to be in APA style.
3. When you and your Chair determine that you are ready, you will schedule a **PROPOSAL MEETING** with the entire committee.
  - a. Proposal meetings are scheduled for one hour.
  - b. All committee members and the Chair of the Department must have your manuscript 14 days prior to the scheduled meeting. If committee members do not have your manuscript 14 days before the scheduled defense, the meeting may be canceled.
  - c. You will need to prepare a 10-minute presentation of your proposed research. Distribution of a brief handout with an outline of your presentation is appreciated by committee members. The remaining 50 minutes of the meeting are devoted to questions, requested changes, and feedback from the committee members.
  - d. Be sure to have the appropriate paperwork with you. A **signature page** is required for the proposal defense and **can be completed on-line** on TWU's website, under Graduate School, Forms. Please complete the relevant portions of this document on-line, **print** the form, and **bring it with you** to your meeting.
4. Following a successful proposal defense, you will submit a Prospectus for the Dean of the Graduate School and an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) application. This process is also done under the direction of your Chair, and is usually ready for submission at the same time as your proposal.
5. Once you have received approval from your committee, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or IACUC and the Graduate School, you may begin to collect data. You may not collect data until this point.
6. Collect, analyze, and write up your data in your Results and Discussion sections.
7. When you and your Chair determine that you are ready, schedule a **FINAL DEFENSE** with the entire committee.
  - a. Defenses are scheduled for one hour.
  - b. All committee members and the Chair of the Department should have your manuscript 10-14 days prior to the scheduled meeting. If committee members do not have your manuscript one week before the scheduled defense, the meeting may be canceled.
  - c. You will need to prepare a 10-minute presentation of your completed research.
  - d. Distribution of a brief handout with an outline of your presentation is appreciated by committee members.

- e. The remaining 50 minutes of the meeting are devoted to questions from the committee members. Be prepared to present the results of the study and their implications.
  - f. Be sure to have the appropriate paperwork with you. A **signature page on bond paper** and the **certificate of final exam** are required. These forms can be **found and completed on TWU's website**, under Graduate School, Form. Please complete the relevant portions of these documents on-line, print the forms, and bring them with you to the defense.
8. Following a successful final defense, you will make any changes required by your committee. You will need to get final approval on these changes from your Chair. At this point, you will need to be sure that the document is in the final form required by the Graduate School. You must have your signature page signed by members of your committee and the Department Chair.

### Filing Prospectus

Following the successful oral proposal and obtaining the required signatures from your committee and Department Chair, the student should file a prospectus with the Dean of the Graduate School. The prospectus must be no longer than 10 pages, and should include the following:

1. tentative title
2. purpose and rationale for the study
3. statement of the problem
4. proposed procedures, and any other information deemed necessary by the committee

### Institutional Review Board (IRB)

If human participants are used in your research, approval must be obtained from the IRB. You are required to submit the required forms (available on the IRB website) in accordance with IRB schedules. Your faculty advisor and the Chair of the Department must review these forms prior to being submitted to the IRB. The IRB will send a notice of approval to the Graduate Office and your major professor. Your major professor will be notified if more information is needed before approval can be given. **YOUR PROPOSAL WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED IN THE GRADUATE OFFICE UNTIL THIS IRB APPROVAL IS RECEIVED.**

Once the proposal and IRB approval are filed in the Graduate Office, work on the research may proceed.

### Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

If you are using animal models, then protocols for animal use must be submitted to the IACUC. Information regarding submission guidelines can be obtained from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) located on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of ACT. Please obtain the necessary documentation from the ORSP and speak with your mentor regarding the animal use approval process.

### Additional Considerations

Proposals and defenses are typically not scheduled during finals week, breaks between semesters, holidays, or other university closings. Faculty are often not available during summer.

Students will need to anticipate plan for faculty to need 10-14 days to review, edit, and return drafts of any thesis documents.

The Chair of the Department typically needs 10-14 days to review and sign IRB, IACUC, prospectus, and thesis documents.

It is recommended that the final draft of the thesis document be completed at least one month prior to the Graduate School deadline for graduation.

Students may not schedule their proposal defense or final defense until the final draft of the document is approved by their Chair.

### Outline of a thesis

The Psychological Science program requires that the thesis document be written in APA format. While the TWU Graduate School specifies specific requirements for formatting and organizing a thesis document, each thesis will include the following sections:

1. Title Page
2. Signature Page
3. Abstract
4. Table of Content
5. List of Tables (if appropriate)
6. List of Figures (if appropriate)
7. Body
  - a. Introduction
  - b. Method
  - c. Results
  - d. Discussion
8. References
9. Appendices (as appropriate)

Information concerning appropriate prospectus and thesis manuscript style is found by consulting the *APA Publication Manual* and the *Guide to the Preparation and Processing of Dissertations, Theses, and Professional Papers* which is published by the Graduate School and accessible at <http://www.twu.edu/downloads/graduate-school/guidelines.pdf>

Any conflicts in the recommended style should be discussed with the Graduate School, although generally the TWU guidelines supersede APA style. Ultimately, the Graduate School accepts or rejects the prepared manuscript.

## Registration for Thesis

You must register for thesis each semester in which work is done on the paper. Ideally, the thesis should be completed within two semesters but students should be aware that doing so requires considerable focus and the ability to structure one's time carefully. Grades of "CR" (credit) will be given for the first semester. If the student does not complete the thesis in the second semester, a grade of "PR" (in progress) is given. The student receives a "CR" in the final semester of completion of the project.

## Final Copies

The appropriate number of copies of the thesis must be delivered to the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School no later than the filing date listed in the University Calendar found in the schedule of classes and available from the Graduate School. See the Graduate School guidelines for details. Details concerning the abstracts, microfilming, copyrighting, and associated fees are also available in the Graduate Office.

## Computer Services

You are required to obtain a student Pioneer Portal account at TWU.

Graduate students have access to use of the University's computer system through terminal locations on the Dallas, Houston, and Denton campuses.

A variety of statistical analysis packages, text-processing packages, and other special-purpose application packages are available for use.

## Graduation

Secure a copy of the **graduation deadlines** for the semester in which you intend to graduate and complete a graduation application. Information on deadlines and applications are available in the schedule of classes and on-line through the Office of the Registrar (Applications are completed through Pioneer Portal).

A candidate for graduation must pay fees for the diploma, academic regalia, and, if necessary, mailing of the diploma. The University will make every effort to keep these fees at a minimum, but they may vary from time to time. Detailed information about Degree Completion can be found on the Graduate School website: <http://www.twu.edu/gradschool/degree-completion/>

Appendix A:

## **Policy Statement on Student Impairment, Incompetence, and Ethical Misconduct**

*Please photocopy this Policy Statement on Student Impairment, Incompetence, and Ethical Misconduct for your files and return the signed original to the Director of your program prior to the first day of classes for the semester of your admission.*

### Objective

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the areas of competence and professional behavior expected of each student and the procedures for identifying and addressing impairment, incompetence, and/or ethical violations that occur in the course of graduate education in Psychological Science.

### Introduction

As described in the Graduate Student Handbook(s), the overarching goal of the Psychological Science program is to prepare professional scientists to assume roles as responsible, competent members of the community. In addition to technical competence, students are expected to maintain high standards of professional and ethical behavior in their interactions with students, peers, supervisors, staff, and faculty; including honesty, appropriate professional attitudes and behavior, openness to differences, and academic integrity. Specific goals and expected competencies cover the following areas:

1. Knowledge and application of the science of Psychology
2. Respect for and compliance with legal/ethical guidelines, as well as all program, departmental, and university policies, procedures, and deadlines.
3. It is the student's responsibility to maintain appropriate communication with the program and department, including required participation on email listservs. Other forms of communication, such as mailboxes, bulletin boards, student representatives, and faculty advisors should be consulted regularly.

Students are expected to be familiar with their respective program goals and to ensure that their academic and professional development plans are consistent with the achievement of these goals. This policy, in conjunction with the Graduate Student Handbook(s), describes the procedures used to monitor progress, to identify deficiencies, and to assist the student in remediation where possible, or to dismiss the student from the program when remediation is not possible. The faculty of the Psychological Science Program shall make any such determinations.

The Psychological Science Program at Texas Woman's University expects that students will be respectful of all individuals, including, but not limited to staff, peers, and faculty. It is expected that students and faculty will work to actively uphold a climate of respect for all concerned. Any form of physical or psychological abuse, harassment, intimidation, discrimination, or violence against persons or property will not be tolerated.

## Definitions

Impairment is defined as an interference in professional functioning that reflects a decline from previously adequate functioning, given the student's developmental level in training.

Impairment may be manifest in one or more of the following ways:

1. Difficulty in or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one's repertoire of professional behavior;
2. Difficulty in acquiring skills and reaching an accepted level of competency; or
3. Difficulty in controlling behavioral or emotional reactions that may affect professional functioning.

While it is a professional judgment as to when a student's behavior becomes impaired rather than problematic, a problem refers to a student's behaviors, attitudes, or characteristics, while of concern and perhaps requiring remediation, are not unexpected or excessive for professionals in training. Problems typically become identified as impairments when they include one or more of the following characteristics:

1. The student does not acknowledge, understand, or address the problem when it is identified.
2. The problem is not merely a reflection of a skill deficit that can be rectified by academic or didactic training.
3. The problem is not restricted to one area of professional functioning.
4. A disproportionate amount of attention by training personnel is required.
5. The student's behavior does not change as a function of feedback and/or time.

Incompetence is defined as a lack of ability, which may include either professional or interpersonal skill or academic deficiency. These are cases in which adequate competence has never been achieved and may not be possible to achieve. Students who have failed remediation for impairment are considered incompetent.

Ethical Misconduct is when the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association) or ethical principles of Texas Woman's University are not followed. All Psychological Science graduate students are expected to adhere to the current Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association) and the ethical standards put forth in the Texas Woman's University student handbooks. These codes are intended to provide general principles to guide decision-making in situations encountered by students and psychological professionals in their activities. These ethical codes protect the integrity of the academic and professional communities and the welfare of individuals and groups with whom psychological professionals work. It is the individual responsibility of each student to uphold the highest possible standards of ethical conduct.

## **Identification and Verification of Problems Requiring Remediation or Dismissal**

Impairment, incompetence, or ethical misconduct can be identified in a variety of ways. Formal evaluation of each student's progress takes place annually. Further, possible problems can be identified at any point in the student's academic career by a faculty member, staff member, supervisor, or by another student. Procedures for remediation and dismissal are detailed in the following sources:

1. Graduate Student Handbook(s) – Doctoral and Masters – within the Psychology Department.
2. Graduate Catalog – Published by Texas Woman's University and distributed via the Graduate School.
3. TWU Student Handbook – Published by the Texas Woman's University and distributed via the Office of Student Life.

**I have read and fully comprehend the Policy Statement on Student Impairment, Incompetence, and Ethical Misconduct, including the student dismissal policy.**

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Failure to sign and return this policy in accordance with the deadline (noted at the beginning) will be considered grounds for dismissal from the program.

## Appendix B: Master's Degree Curriculum and Courses

### Master of Science in Psychological Science

A minimum of 36 semester credit hours are required.

#### Required Courses (30 hours)

| <i>COURSE</i> | <i>TITLE</i>                                     | <i>CREDITS</i> |
|---------------|--|----------------|
| PSY 5304      | Advanced Psychological Statistics I              | 4              |
| PSY 5353      | Research Design                                  | 3              |
| PSY 6204      | Advanced Psychological Statistics II             | 4              |
| PSY 6613      | Advanced Developmental Psychology                | 3              |
| PSY 6103(4)*  | Cognition and Emotion                            | 3(4)*          |
| PSY 6774(3)*  | Foundations of Social Psychology and Personality | 4(3)*          |
| PSY 6133      | Advanced Behavioral Neuroscience                 | 3              |
| PSY 5983      | Thesis   | 3              |
| PSY 5993      | Thesis   | 3              |

#### Elective Courses (6 hours)

| <i>COURSE</i> | <i>TITLE</i>   | <i>CREDITS</i> |
|---------------|--|----------------|
| PSY 6663      | Philosophical and Historical Foundations of Psychology | 3              |
| PSY 6863      | Qualitative Research Methods & Program Evaluation      | 3              |
| PSY 6113      | Measurement & Psychometric Theory                      | 3              |
| PSY 5513      | Advanced Psychopathology                               | 3              |

Other advanced elective courses with permission of the Program Director

\* Indicates courses that are changing the number of credit hours awarded. Please see current course schedules for updated credit hours.