

*Handbook  
for  
Graduate  
Students*

*Department of Psychology  
University of Southern California  
2015*

This handbook sets forth policies and standards of the Department of Psychology and the Graduate School of the University of Southern California. Graduate students are expected to be familiar with the material presented here, as well as the regulations of the Graduate School presented in more detail in the **USC Catalogue 2015-2016** and in the *Graduate Student Handbook* published by the Graduate School. **Please note that not all policies and standards of the Graduate School are covered in this handbook.** Thus, students must also be familiar with the regulations in the *USC Catalogue*. Appropriate course selection and the general understanding of deadlines, filing of Graduate School forms, etc., are the student's responsibility.

Department of Psychology  
University of Southern California  
2015

HANDBOOK OF REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES  
FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY

<b><u>A.</u></b>	<b><u>Introduction</u></b> .....	4
<b><u>B.</u></b>	<b><u>Residence and Time Limits</u></b> .....	4
<b><u>C.</u></b>	<b><u>Course Requirements</u></b> .....	6
<b><u>D.</u></b>	<b><u>First-Year Screening Procedure</u></b> .....	8
<b><u>E.</u></b>	<b><u>Second Year Research Requirement</u></b> .....	9
<b><u>F.</u></b>	<b><u>Assisting in Teaching and Research</u></b> .....	10
<b><u>G.</u></b>	<b><u>Probation and Termination</u></b> .....	10
<b><u>H.</u></b>	<b><u>Funding</u></b> .....	12
<b><u>I.</u></b>	<b><u>Course Registration for Qualifying Exam</u></b> .....	12
<b><u>J.</u></b>	<b><u>Guidance Committee</u></b> .....	12
<b><u>K.</u></b>	<b><u>Qualifying Examination</u></b> .....	14
<b><u>L.</u></b>	<b><u>Admission to Candidacy</u></b> .....	16
<b><u>M.</u></b>	<b><u>Dissertation Committee</u></b> .....	16
<b><u>N.</u></b>	<b><u>Dissertation Registration</u></b> .....	17
<b><u>O.</u></b>	<b><u>Dissertation and Defense of Dissertation</u></b> .....	17
<b>APPENDIX II.</b>	<b>University Policy on Code of Ethics</b> .....	30

## REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY

### A. Introduction

1. Ph.D. degree requirements can be found in the USC Catalogue for your year of admission.
2. Any potential conflict in requirements between the Graduate School guidelines and this handbook should be brought to the attention of departmental staff.
3. This handbook specifies requirements for the class that enters this academic year. Any students admitted after that date may be subject to different requirements as will be specified in updates of the handbook.
4. At the end of each academic year, areas will provide a brief narrative and a quantitative rating (1 = Satisfactory; 2 = Some Concern; and 3 = Serious Concern) of each student's progress in the program.

### B. Residence and Time Limits

1. The equivalent of three years graduate status at USC or elsewhere is minimally required in all Ph.D. programs by the Graduate School. Students in Clinical Science (Child & Family, General Adult, and Clinical-Aging) must minimally spend three years full time on campus plus one full year of internship at a departmentally approved facility.
2. At least 24 units (exclusive of 794, dissertation) are required at the University of Southern California. Whether a transfer student is required to take more than 24 units at this university depends on the evaluation made by his/her guidance committee regarding the relation of previous work to department courses.
3. All degree candidates in Psychology are expected to be full-time students. The Graduate School considers that eight semester units constitute a minimum load for a full-time graduate student, 12 units a normal load, and 16 units a maximum load.
  - a. All first-year students are required to take at least eight semester units during each of the first three semesters because of the screening procedure described in Sections D and E. It is expected that the other half of the student's time will be spent on research.
  - b. If at any time individual circumstances lead a student to consider carrying a reduced academic load, he/she is responsible for clearing in advance the deviation from regular procedure with his/her advisor or guidance committee.

4. A leave of absence may be taken under exceptional circumstances by requesting it by petition the semester before the leave is to be taken. The petition should be addressed to the head of the student's specialty area and should describe the basis for the request and, if possible, the expected time of return. It should have the endorsement (signature) of the student's advisor or chair of his/her guidance committee. Approval or rejection of requests is determined by the faculty of the specialty area. If approved, the head of the area adds his/her signature to the request. It is to be noted specifically that approval of such a request does not free the student from the Graduate School regulations concerning time limits for completion of the degree.

The student must submit the request to the Department Chair or Director of Graduate Studies. Approval by this official indicates that the leave is formally granted and will be recorded on the student's transcript.

A student who does not return to enrolled status at the end of an approved period of leave is no longer considered to be pursuing an advanced degree. Further, students who fail to apply for a leave of absence or for whom a leave has been denied, but who fail to remain continuously enrolled as defined by the Graduate School, will also be considered to be no longer pursuing an advanced degree. To be readmitted to graduate studies, students must officially apply for readmission as specified in the Graduate School regulations.

Request for a leave of absence is not required of Clinical Science (Child Family, General Adult or Clinical-Aging) students who, with the approval of their guidance committee, leave the campus to complete their internship requirement. They are considered as being active in the program. However, all such students must be officially enrolled.

5. The Graduate School requires that a student complete the degree within eight years of the date from the start of graduate work at the University of Southern California. In the case of students who have earned an applicable Master's degree within five years prior to admission to the doctoral program, the Graduate School requires that the Ph.D. degree be completed within six years. The Psychology Department expects the Ph.D. degree to be completed within five years for non-clinical students. Clinical students are expected to complete their degree within six years, including the year of internship.
  - a. Extensions beyond the eight years require submission of a petition to the department and are granted only for very compelling reasons. (This is one reason why students are asked to clear reduced academic loads with their guidance committees and to request department approval of a leave of absence.)
  - b. In the very rare case that permission is granted to extend beyond eight years, under no circumstances will the time for completion be extended beyond 10 years from the date of the beginning of graduate work.

### C. Course Requirements

1. The equivalent of 60 semester units (including 794) is the minimum university requirement for the Ph.D. degree. Additional courses may be required, depending on a student's background and goals.
2. All students must take a minimum of 36 substantive units, at least 24 of which must be in the Department of Psychology. Research, thesis or dissertation courses (590, 594, 790, 794) do not qualify as substantive units. A minimum of eight units (two courses) must be taken in Category A (see below). Courses outside of Psychology cannot be substituted to fulfill these required courses.
3. The other 16 units (four courses) taken in the Department of Psychology must meet a distribution requirement. The courses must be taken from Categories B and C, with at least one course from Category B and one course from Category C. Courses outside of Psychology cannot be substituted to fulfill these requirements. The courses in these categories are listed below.

#### COURSES THAT FULFILL DEPARTMENT-WIDE CORE REQUIREMENTS

##### Category A. *Statistics and Research Design*

Courses that belong to this category include:

- 500 An Overview of Quantitative Methods in Psychology
- 501 Statistics in Psychological Research
- 502 Analysis of Variance and Experimental Design
- 503 Regression and the General Linear Model
- 504 Research Design
- 520 Fundamentals of Psychological Measurement
- 524 Research Design in Developmental Psychology
- 575 Multivariate Analysis of Behavioral Data
- 577 Analysis of Covariance Structures
- 578 Workshop in Quantitative Methods
- 616 Research Techniques for Non-Experimental Social Science
- 621 Seminar in Quantitative Psychology
- 622 Decision Analysis and Behavioral Decision Theory

Category B. *Biological Bases of Behavior* (physiological psychology, comparative psychology, neuropsychology, sensation and perception, psycho-pharmacology, behavior genetics) and *Cognitive-Affective Bases of Behavior* (learning, thinking, motivation, problem-solving). Courses that belong to this category include:

- 506 Learning and Cognition
- 510 Visual Cognition
- 540 Cognitive Neuroscience
- 544 Psychophysiology

545 Neuropsychology  
 546 Current Topics in Cognitive Neuroscience  
 547 Functional Neuroanatomy  
 551 Decision Neuroscience  
 555 Introduction to Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging  
 576 Psycholinguistics  
 586 Advanced Psycholinguistics  
 606 Seminar in Learning and Memory  
 607 Seminar in Behavioral Neuroscience  
 676 Seminar in Psycholinguistics

Category C. *Social Bases of Behavior* (social psychology, group processes, organizational and systems theory) and *Individual Differences* (personality theory, human development, abnormal psychology). Courses that belong to this category include:

512 Seminar in Social Psychology  
 514 Psychopathology  
 \*515 Clinical Assessment  
 533 Cognitive Development in Children  
 538 Origins of Human Nature  
 534 Social and Emotional Development in Children  
 \*595 Practicum in Clinical Psychology  
 612 Seminar in Advanced Social Psychology  
 \*619 Psychological Intervention  
 660 Seminar in Clinical Psychology  
 680 Seminar in Psychopathology  
 \*695 Advanced Practicum in Clinical Psychology

\*Courses marked with an asterisk may only be taken by students in the Clinical, Clinical-Aging, Child & Family Clinical programs.

4. In addition to these department-wide core requirements, each specialty area/program within the department has other requirements. These area/program requirements are described in the appendix to this handbook.
5. Students from specialty areas other than Clinical, Clinical-Aging, and Child & Family Clinical may take no more than three clinical courses. Those taken must be from 514 and 660 unless approval is received from the clinical faculty to enroll in a course not on this list.
6. Students who enter the Ph.D. program having taken appropriate graduate courses elsewhere may petition the Chair of the Psychology Department for a waiver of one or more core-course requirements.

7. Students may petition to the Director of Graduate Studies to have 599s fulfill categories A, B and C.

#### **D. First-Year Screening Procedure**

1. The Graduate School requires that a screening procedure be used with each student before more than 24 units has been taken at the university. (Students must submit petitions to request exceptions.)
2. The Department of Psychology meets this requirement in the following way. Students are screened at the end of their first year. The evaluation is based on performance in courses and on research performance.
  - a. The course evaluation is based on performance in the courses taken during the first two semesters at USC. During that time, students must have taken a minimum of 16 units (four courses), with at least three of those courses being substantive courses from the core lists given earlier.
  - b. Each specialty area evaluates the research performance of its students at the end of the first year. The head of the specialty area must notify the students no later than August 15 of the summer following completion of the first academic year about whether they have met the first-year research requirement. The area/program research requirements are included with other area/program requirements in the appendix to this handbook.
  - c. The outcome of the first-year screening process falls into one of three categories:
    - (1) clear pass (approved to continue),
    - (2) approved to continue for a terminal M.A. degree (but not for the Ph.D.), or
    - (3) dismissal from the graduate program.
  - d. To obtain a clear pass in the first-year screening, a student must have made good progress in research (as judged by the faculty of the specialty area) and obtained a B (3.00) average and no more than one C in the courses taken during the first year. Cumulative GPA for the year is based on all courses taken. When a student does not meet the standards for a clear pass, the student will have failed the first year screening. The faculty of the student's specialty area then will make a recommendation to the faculty about whether the student should be approved to continue for a terminal M.A. degree or be dismissed from the graduate program. This recommendation must be communicated in writing to the student and to the Chair of the department no later than August 15 of the summer following completion of the first academic year. All such cases will ultimately be decided by ballot of the Psychology faculty no later than the first faculty meeting in September. A majority of the members present at the meeting is required to decide the issue.
3. In very rare cases, the faculty may decide that extenuating circumstances obviate what would otherwise be a fail. All such cases will ultimately be decided by ballot of the Psychology faculty, with a majority of the members present required to carry the



exception. With such a vote a student may be permitted to continue beyond the first year with a grade-point average below B (3.00). It should be noted, however, that the Graduate School requires that a minimum grade-point average for all graduate work attempted at the university must be 3.00 before a degree can be granted. Thus, a grade-point average that falls below a 3.00 during a given semester will be considered a strong indicator that the student is not in a position to succeed in the program. Nevertheless, in very rare extenuating circumstances, permission to register following any semester in which the GPA has dropped below this level will require petition from the student's research advisor. The Director of Graduate Studies will meet with the research advisor, the student, and the Department Chair to determine if the petition should be forwarded to the Graduate School for consideration. Students who transfer credits must achieve this minimum both on all graduate residence units and on all combined residence units and units taken elsewhere for graduate credit.

### **E. Second Year Research Requirement**

1. The Department of Psychology has an additional screening procedure involving judgment of the student's research competence. During the first two years of graduate study at USC, each student works with a faculty member on a program of research that culminates in a written report. This report must be a Master's thesis or a research report of comparable scope and quality. The student's performance in planning, conducting, and reporting the study provides the basis of a second-year screening.
  - a. The second year project must be *approved* by the evaluation committee by the end (date classes end) of the fourth semester in residence.
  - b. The following evaluations are used:
    - (1) Satisfactory for M.A. level and approved to proceed toward the Ph.D. Generally for this rating, the research report must meet the standard of "acceptable for publication" with reference to:
      - (a) conception and implementation of project
      - (b) quality of report
    - (2) Satisfactory for M.A. level, but not approved to continue for Ph.D.
    - (3) Unsatisfactory for M.A. level
  - c. Responsibility for this screening lies with members of the student's screening committee, most often composed of faculty from within the student's specialty area. [This is generally the area into which the student was accepted for graduate training.] The committee consists of three tenure-track members of the department who review the paper.
  - d. To pass the second year screening, that is, to be permitted to proceed toward the Ph.D., the three committee members must approve the work. The department form for reporting the outcome of this screening procedure and a final, committee- approved copy of the research report must be provided to the research advisor, i.e., the chair of the screening committee, and to the Graduate Student Advisor prior to the last day of classes of the student's fourth semester.

- e. Course credit (590) may be obtained for this research, at the student's and advisor's option. For those who do not already have an M.A. degree, the department urges registering for 594ab (rather than 590) and submitting the report as a Master's thesis.
  - f. Such a research project done at USC is required of all students, regardless of prior graduate work at another institution.
  - g. A file of the completed sign-off sheets and the approved research papers presented in fulfilling this requirement is kept by the department. A photocopy of the approved research paper is acceptable for this purpose.
  - h. Faculty evaluation of the student's second-year research project will be reported at the faculty meeting held during September of the student's third year.
  - i. In the fall of their third year, students are required to present their second-year projects or another research project as part of a departmental poster session typically held after the first faculty meeting in the fall.
2. 24-Unit Screening.

A student's success in passing the 24-unit screening (see D.2.) commits the department to supervising her/him to completion of the second-year research project or M.A. thesis (provided she/he can complete all requirements, including the writing of an acceptable report within the time limits of the department and the Graduate School).

## **F. Assisting in Teaching and Research**

- 1. In addition to formal course work, the Department of Psychology considers that experiences as a research assistant and teaching assistant can be valuable parts of graduate students' training and should be strongly encouraged for all students.
- 2. As a teaching assistant, students participate in various teaching functions of the department, such as preparing examinations, scoring them, assisting in registration, and actual instruction (within the limits set by the University in connection with the responsibility of instructors for their classes).
- 3. As a research assistant, students can gain invaluable experience in carrying out research projects, from conceptualization and research design, to implementation, analysis and write-up.

## **G. Probation and Termination**

- 1. To be in good standing in the Ph.D. program in Psychology, a student at any level of training must maintain a 3.0 average in course work and carry no more than one IN (incomplete) on his/her record. Also, in progressing through the program, a student must meet a number of deadlines (in connection with 24-unit screening, research screening, the qualifying examinations, and completion of the dissertation). In addition, a student must

act in a manner which does not violate the ethical and professional standards of the American Psychological Association.

2. A student on probation is defined as one who is in any of the following categories:
  - a. whose GPA falls below 3.0 at any time;
  - b. who has more than one IN on her/his record at any time;
  - c. who is placed on probation as a result of the 24-unit screening process;
  - d. who has one grade of C or worse in a course in his/her specialty area;
  - e. whose second year research report has not been submitted and judged acceptable by the end (date classes end) of the fourth semester in residence;
  - f. who has not successfully completed the Ph.D. qualifying examination by the end (date classes end) of the seventh semester in residence (some areas have earlier deadlines; check specific area requirements);
  - g. who has not completed the Ph.D. dissertation within the time specified by the Graduate School (8 years).
  
3. Probation formally begins with written notification of the student by the specialty area faculty or department administrator. Notification shall include a statement of the reason for probation, probationary conditions, and duration of probation.
  
4. A student may return from probation to good standing in the following ways, with each remedy corresponding to the list in G.2, above.
  - a. the student must bring the GPA up to 3.0 within one semester;
  - b. replace the IN with at least a B (not a B-) or better within one semester;
  - c. meet the requirements of probation as specified by the specialty area faculty;
  - d. repeat the course, earning at least a B (not a B-) or better, within one year;
  - e. turn in second year project and have it approved by the time of the final faculty meeting in the fall.
  - f. take and pass the qualifying examination by the end (date classes end) of the eighth semester in residence;
  - g. complete the dissertation within one semester;
  
5. Relation of probation to funding. Being on probation may put your funding at risk.
  
6. Termination of graduate student status. A student will be dropped from the program for any of the following reasons:
  - a. failure to return from probation to good standing as described earlier in G.4;
  - b. earning two grades of C or worse in courses in specialty area;
  - c. acting in a manner which, in the opinion of the faculty (2/3 vote) violates the ethical and professional standards of the APA and for which a warning or probationary period is either inappropriate or impossible;
  - d. failure to return from leave of absence by the date specified.

7. Petition for readmission. A student who has been dropped from the program may petition for readmission if the petition is endorsed by a specialty-area faculty member who is willing to take responsibility for chairing the student's guidance committee.

The petition will be reviewed by and voted upon by the full-time faculty of the specialty area. [Unanimous approval (with no abstentions) is needed for readmission.]

## H. Funding

1. The department tries to support as many students as possible and to match students with placements on the basis of training needs. Students should not expect to be supported simply as a matter of course. For example, Graduate School fellowships require that the student maintain full-time status and good standing in the program.
2. Students in good standing will be given priority over students on probation in providing financial support. Each specialty area faculty decides the standing of the student in making decisions. Among other such factors are how many years the student has been in the program, whether a student has the qualifications for serving as a teaching assistant in a particular course, and how well the student has carried out previous assignments.
3. Unless service is needed by the department, the general principle is that support is not provided beyond the fifth year.

## I. Course Registration for Qualifying Exam

Once students have sufficient units for graduation, they are encouraged to enroll in GRSC 800 while preparing for their quals. One unit constitutes full time enrollment. GRSC 800 may be taken for 3 semesters if necessary. Students should not repeatedly enroll in 8 units of 790.

## J. Guidance Committee

1. After completing the second year project, students and their advisors should discuss future research directions for the student. Together they should be thinking about the input the student will need from other faculty to guide them in these research directions. This should lead to the formation of the student's guidance committee which will help the student in formulating their qualifying examination and dissertation proposal. Forming the guidance committee requires obtaining a form (see the Graduate School website: [www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool](http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool)), obtaining signatures from all those who agree to be on the committee, and turning in the signed form to the Graduate Advisor. The Graduate Advisor then submits the signed form to the Graduate School for approval. The guidance committee should be approved about a year before the student takes the qualifying examination, but *no later than six months before the qualifying exam*.

2. The committee must have at least four faculty members from within the department and one member from outside the department.
  - a. At least two members of the committee must be from the specialty area that accepted the student into the graduate program. This usually includes the chair of the student's guidance committee.
  - b. There must be at least one Psychology Department representative from an area other than the student's specialty area.
  - c. The fourth member can be filled by faculty members with the following affiliations: faculty from the student's area, faculty from another area in psychology, faculty members with a joint appointment in psychology (see the Department's website), faculty from other USC departments, or faculty from other universities. These members can also be persons with non-tenure track (NTT) faculty appointments, approved by the chair of the committee, who make sense for the student's study. If the fourth member is NTT or from outside the Psychology Department, the student's advisor must give approval.
  - d. The fifth member of the committee is considered the "outside" member. This individual must be a regular full-time member of the faculty of USC, hold the rank of Assistant Professor or above, and be from a Ph.D. granting department other than psychology. This member can have a joint appointment in Psychology so long as their primary appointment is outside psychology. Check with the Graduate Advisor.
  - e. At least three committee members must be tenure-track faculty with a primary appointment in the Psychology Department (see the core faculty list on the departmental website).
  - f. NTT faculty of exceptional standing may serve as chairs of guidance committees in the Psychology Department, upon the written request of the department chair and approval of the school dean. To serve as chair, the NTT member must have a primary appointment in the Psychology Department and must have a documented record of exceptional expertise and superior achievement in a field relevant to the student's project.
3. The Qualifying Exam has separate written and oral sections. These are completed sequentially. The written portion must be passed first and then the orals can be scheduled. See K. below for the content of each portion of the exam.
4. Two forms must be submitted concerning qualifying exams.
  - a. 6 months prior to submitting the written portion of their Qualifying Exam, students must submit their Appointment of Committee (AoC) form to the Dornsife Dean's Office for approval. This form establishes the guidance committee. The AoC form is available at the Graduate School website: [www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool](http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool) (click on Current Students, Guidelines, Forms and Requests, then [Forms for Qualifying Exams and Dissertation Defenses](#)).

- b. After passing the written portion of the exam, students have 60 days to schedule their oral exam meeting.
  - c. For changes in the membership of a guidance committee, it is necessary to complete a Change of Committee (CoC) form and turn it in to the Department Chair. This form is available at the Graduate School website (noted in 3.A.).
5. If the student and guidance committee chair are not able to form a complete committee, or if a former committee member is no longer available to serve, the Chair (with the advice of the Graduate Committee) will appoint members of the faculty to serve on that committee.

### **K. Qualifying Examination**

1. The student and advisor should begin planning for the qualifying examination following the completion of the second year project. To ensure completion of the doctoral degree in five years (six years for clinical students), the qualifying exam must be taken no later than at the *end of the seventh semester*. (Some areas may have earlier deadlines; see specific area requirements.)
2. Prior to taking the qualifying exam, the student must have met all departmental requirements with regard to courses and screening and must have the endorsement of his/her guidance committee to take the exam.
3. The qualifying examination is designed in part to test the student's expertise and readiness to undertake independent research. It also is a learning opportunity for students to gain critical skills and produce scholarly products that contribute to students' records of accomplishment. The examination thus meets a variety of goals in students' training.
4. Specialty areas within the department have considerable latitude in structuring qualifying examinations. The material provided in the Appendix for each specialty area should be consulted to determine what specific protocols for examination have been approved by the given area.
5. The written portion of the Qualifying Exam generally follows one of three models:
  - a. The student submits one or two papers of publishable quality that represent work conducted since the second year project (depending on area and guidance committee requirements).
  - b. The student provides an analysis of literature that is pertinent to the research that is being planned for the dissertation. This may become or be the basis of the introduction to the dissertation.
  - c. The student is provided with questions formulated by his or her guidance committee, each being on a different subject. For each question, the student writes a well-referenced response over a period that might range up to five days.

6. We strongly recommend that students submit the written portion of the Qualifying Exam to committee members *by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the seventh semester.*
7. The written section of the exam is first submitted to the full Committee and evaluated on the Departmental Evaluation Form by each member. Committee members provide this feedback to students within 2 weeks of receiving the written exam. Only one failing vote is permitted in order for students to pass. The Committee Chair is responsible for summarizing these evaluations and sharing them with the student.
  - a. If students fail the written portion of their exam, they can resubmit it one time to their committee. A second failure removes students from the program.
  - b. When students pass the written section, they may move on to the oral portion of the exam. Students have 60 days to schedule their oral exam meeting once they pass the written portion.
8. The oral exam portion of the Qualifying Examination is focused on the dissertation proposal. After passing the written portion of the exam, students will submit a draft of their dissertation proposal to their committee and will meet individually with committee members in order to develop the final version of it. At the advisor's option, the dissertation proposal may be written up in the format of an NIH or NSF grant application.
  - a. The final version needs to be given to committee members 2 weeks prior to the scheduled orals. If students fail to do this, committee members can cancel the scheduled orals.
  - b. The oral exam is usually scheduled for 2 hours.
  - c. At the orals, students will present their proposed dissertation project. Committee members will evaluate the oral defense on the Departmental Evaluation Form. They will vote to pass or fail the orals, and no more than one dissenting vote enables a pass. The Committee Chair is responsible for summarizing these evaluations and presenting them to the students on the summary form.
  - d. Attendance of all guidance committee members is required at this meeting.
9. A pass for the written or oral portion of the exam cannot be made contingent upon other factors, such as the completion of additional course work or supplemental literature review. However, it is possible for the student to pass the orals with changes yet to be made to the dissertation proposal.
10. If the vote of the guidance committee is a pass, it also should decide on whether to retain the current composition of the committee as discussed in L1.
11. In the event that the oral examination is failed, the guidance committee may recommend to the Graduate School that the student be permitted to take the orals again. Requests for

exceptions to this time period must be approved by the department Chair. A student may not be permitted to take the oral portion of the qualifying examination more than twice.

12. The Graduate School form for reporting results of the exam should be returned by the committee chair to the graduate advisor immediately after the defense.
13. The retaking of a failed qualifying examination or any portion of a qualifying examination must take place *between one and six months from the date of the first examination*.

#### **L. Admission to Candidacy**

1. Admission to candidacy for a doctoral degree occurs only after a student has (a) passed departmental course and screening requirements, (b) completed at least 24 units at the University, and (c) passed the qualifying examination.
2. Admission to candidacy is by action of the Director of the Graduate School.
3. Notice of admission to candidacy is sent to the student by the Department of Psychology Chair.

#### **M. Dissertation Committee**

1. After the qualifying examination has been passed, the student must appoint a dissertation committee. At this point, the committee may be reduced to four members, with a ACoC form. The minimum composition of the final committee is: two members from Psychology from the student's area, one from Psychology from outside the student's area, and one member from an outside department. At least three members must be tenure-track faculty with a primary appointment in Psychology.
2. NTT faculty of exceptional standing may also serve as chairs of dissertation committees in the Psychology Department, upon the written request of the department chair and approval of the school dean. To serve as chair, the NTT member must have a primary appointment in the Psychology Department and must have a documented record of exceptional expertise and superior achievement in a field relevant to the student's project.
3. The composition of this committee is reported on the Aoc/CoC form.
4. At this time the student should see the graduate advisor to run a degree check and a STARS Report.



## **N. Dissertation Registration**

1. A student must register for dissertation (794) the semester after passing the qualifying examination and must be registered for dissertation every semester (excluding summer sessions) until degree requirements are completed.
2. Four units of registration in 794 (that is, 794a and 794b) comprise the minimum requirement. Under most circumstances these two registrations cover a time period of two semesters. For both registrations to occur in the same semester approval by the Graduate School is required.
3. Not more than eight units of credit for 794 may be received.
4. Clinical students may register for 691 (1 non-credit unit per semester) rather than 794 while on internship. Note: students must be registered for 691 or 794 during the semester when they actually take their final oral, unless they defend during the summer.

## **O. Dissertation and Defense of Dissertation**

1. At the time students schedule their dissertation defense meeting they must inform the Graduate Student Advisor. The student must go to the Graduate School Thesis Center site and set up their dissertation profile which will give committee members access to their online Approval to Submit. At least two weeks before the scheduled defense, the Graduate Student Advisor will post and distribute to all faculty and graduate students a notice of the meeting.
2. The candidate must submit a dissertation acceptable to her/his dissertation committee and to the Director of the Graduate School. The dissertation committee must approve the form of the dissertation as well as its content.
3. Generally the committee will require one of the following dissertation models:
  - a. The dissertation is prepared as a comprehensive treatise on the matter under investigation. It should include extended discussion of all background literature that seems pertinent to the research as well as the methods, results and discussion of the findings.
  - b. The dissertation is written in a form that would be suitable for a major publication. Pertinent background is cited and discussed as would be the case for a substantial journal article.
4. An oral defense of the dissertation is required of the candidate. It is conducted by the dissertation committee, and according to the Graduate School Handbook is open to the general university community, though only members of the dissertation committee have

the authority to recommend acceptance. It is expected that the dissertation committee will meet privately to make this determination.

5. Both the dissertation and the oral defense must have unanimous approval by the dissertation committee for satisfactory completion of the dissertation requirement. If the defense is satisfactory, the committee then signs the “Approval to Submit Defended and Final Copy of Dissertation” form. If additional work is required, the form must be signed only on full completion. Each committee member will have access to the electronic Approval to Submit set up by the student.
6. The Submission website provides a schedule of specific dates for completing the various requirements to qualify the student for the Ph.D. degree at Commencement in May or to receive the degree in August or December. For more information, go to the Graduate School website: [www.usc.edu/school/GraduateSchool](http://www.usc.edu/school/GraduateSchool) (click on Current Students, Thesis & Dissertation...).
7. The dissertation must be written in APA style. In other words, dissertations must be prepared according to the manuscript submission guidelines specified in the current version of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

**APPENDIX I.**

**Specialty Area Requirements**

## REQUIREMENTS OF THE CLINICAL SCIENCE PROGRAM

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### **I. AREA A. Statistics and Research Design**

Three courses in research methodology and techniques of statistical analysis are required, which should include PSYC 504 (Research Design) and PSYC 500 (Overview of Quantitative Methods in Psychology). At least two statistics courses are to be taken in the Psychology Department. One approved course outside the Department is PM 511A (Data Analysis A).

#### **II. AREA B. Biological and Cognitive-Affective Bases of Behavior**

Breadth requirements in the following content areas are required and can be met through the courses listed<sup>1</sup>:

- *Biological aspects of behavior*, to be met through PSYC 544 (Psychophysiology), or PSYC 540 (Cognitive Neuroscience)
- *History and systems of psychology*, to be met through PSYC 508 (Historical Foundations of Psychology) or PSYC 599 (History and Philosophy of Psychology)
- *Cognitive and affective aspects of behavior*, to be met through PSYC 506 (Learning and Cognition) and the affective aspects requirement is also met through infusion in other classes.

#### **III. AREA C. Social Bases of Behavior and Individual Differences**

- One of the following courses is required for breadth in social aspects of behavior, PSYC 512 (Seminar in Social Psychology), or PSYC 612 (Seminar in Advanced Social Psychology).

#### IV. Clinical Sequence Courses

Eight clinical psychology core courses also fall into Area C by the Department's classification:

PSYC 514 (Psychopathology)

PSYC 515 (Psychological Assessment)

PSYC 595a,b (Practicum in Clinical Psychology, which must be taken for two semesters)

PSYC 695 (Advanced Practicum in Clinical Psychology, which must be taken for four semesters)

PSYC 660 or PSYC 680 (Clinical Seminars)

Students are to take two clinical seminars (660, Seminar in Clinical Psychology or 680, Seminar in Psychopathology). For students in the child-family or clinical-aging specialties, a specialty area course can substitute for one of the two clinical seminars.

## **V. Additional Track Requirements**

### **A. Child and Family Track:**

Students must complete all courses required by the clinical area, enroll in the Child and Family di-prac, plus enroll in 3 additional course requirements, which can be met through:

- One or more seminars on a child or family related topic. This course can focus on diagnostic and assessment issues, intervention, or policy. If a course other than PSYC 660 or 680, this course will substitute for one of the two 660 or 680 courses required by the clinical science program.
- One or more courses in Developmental Psychology, with the following recommendations: PSYC 533 (Cognitive Development in Children), PSYC 534 (Social and Emotional Development in Children), and PSYC 675, (Seminar in Experimental Child Psychology) or a special topic seminar,
- One course outside the department on a topic related to child development, child psychopathology and treatment, learning disabilities, family systems, or children, adolescents, families, and social policy. Relevant coursework typically is available in Social Work, Education, Sociology, or Law. To obtain approval for specific courses, a petition to the clinical area faculty will be needed including your advisor's approval and a copy of the course syllabus.

### **B. Clinical-Aging Track**

Students must complete all courses required by the clinical area, enroll in the PSYC 695 didactic-practicum on psychotherapy with older adults, and 3 additional courses from Psychology or from GERO, and perhaps more based on the specific requirements of a fellowship or traineeship that a student may hold. These courses include:

- An overview or broad introduction to adult development and aging, either in Psychology or Gerontology (GERO 520, Life Span Developmental Psychology is one example)
- PSYC 524 (Developmental Design) or an equivalent course covering longitudinal research design and data analysis (in addition to PSYC 504)
- Another course on some other aspect of aging in PSYC, GERO, or another department, e.g., biology of aging, neuroscience of aging, epidemiology or social policy. This course should be discussed with the student's advisor.

## **VI. Other Research and Clinical Requirements**

For further details about research milestones, competencies and requirements, and for clinical requirements, please read the Clinical Science Handbook. A summary and sign-off sheet itemizing all requirements is attached. This sheet should be examined at least once per year by the student and her/his advisor.

**CLINICAL AREA REQUIREMENTS**

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF ENTRY TO PROGRAM: \_\_\_\_\_

RESEARCH MILESTONES	DATE COMPLETED	*Target dates
Submit and defend 1 <sup>st</sup> year proposal with 3-person committee		Year 1, 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester (April 30)
Meet with 3-person master's committee		Year 2, 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester (March 15??)
Submit/defend final 2 <sup>nd</sup> year/master's project		Year 2, 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester (last day of classes)
Present at departmental poster display		Year 3, 1 <sup>st</sup> semester (September or October)
Submit 1-2 page prospectus on each part of the qualifying exam to committee chair		Year 3, 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester (May 30)
Complete first half of quals		Summer prior to year 4 or during 1 <sup>st</sup> semester year 4 (deadline = December 10)
Complete quals		Year 4, 1 <sup>st</sup> semester (deadline = last day of classes)
Dissertation oral		Year 5 or Year 6
Internship		Year 6 or Year 7**

\*Papers need to be submitted to the committee two week before a scheduled meeting; There sometimes are extenuating circumstances and good reasons leading to extensions of these target dates. These target dates should be discussed with your research advisor.

\*\*Doing internship during the 7<sup>th</sup> year sometimes is recommended and can be done with pre-arranged funding and by permission of research advisor and clinical area faculty

CLINICAL PRODUCTS	DATE COMPLETED	Target dates
		Year 1, 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester
Intervention case summary and theory of change paper (done in PSYC 695)		Year 2, 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester
Intervention case summary and theory of change paper (done in PSYC 695)		Year 3, 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester

BREADTH REQUIREMENTS	General way of fulfilling	What done and when
Techniques of Data Analysis (3 courses required)	Overview of Quantitative Methods (PSYC 500); Statistics in Psychological Research (PSYC 501); Analysis of Variance and Experimental Design (PSYC 502); Regression and the General Linear Model (PSYC 503); Research Design in Developmental Psychology (PSYC 524); Multivariate Analysis of Behavioral Data (PSYC 575); Analysis of Covariance Structures (PSYC 577); Seminar in Quantitative Psychology (PSYC 621); Data Analysis (PM 511A)	
Biological Aspects of Behavior (1 course required)	Psychophysiology (PSYC 544) Cognitive Neuroscience PSYC 540)	
Cognitive Aspects of Behavior (1 course required)	Learning and Cognition (PSYC 506)	
Affective Aspects of Behavior (1 course	Psychophysiology (PSYC 544) or Cognitive	

required)	Neuroscience (PSYC 540) plus Social Psychology (either PSYC 512 or 612) plus Psychopathology (PSYC 514)	
Social Aspects of Behavior (1 course required)	Seminar in Social Psychology (PSYC 512); Advanced Seminar in Social Psychology (PSYC 612)	
History and Systems of Psychology (1 course)	Historical Foundations of Psychology (PSYC 508/599)	
BREADTH REQ—Cont.	General way of fulfilling	What done and when
Psychological Measurement (1 course required)	Psychological Assessment (PSYC 515 & PSYC 595b)	
Research Methodology (1 course and mentoring in lab)	Research Design (PSYC 504)	
Individual Differences in Behavior (2 courses required)	Psychological Assessment (PSYC 515); Psychopathology (PSYC 514)	
Human Development (1 semesters required)	Infusion in all clinical area courses plus enrollment in at least one Advanced Clinical Practicum in Older Adults or Child/Family (PSYC 695)	
Dysfunctional Behavior or Psychopathology (1 course required)	Psychopathology (PSYC 514)	
Professional Standards and Ethics	PSYC 595a; Infusion in required clinical courses and Brown bag and CE series	
Theories and Methods of Assessment and Diagnosis (2 courses requires)	Psychological Assessment (PSYC 515); Interviewing Clinical Practicum (PSYC 595a); Psychopathology (PSYC 514)	
Theories and Methods of Effective Intervention (619 and 4 semesters of 695 required)	Psychological Intervention (PSYC 619); Advanced Clinical Practicum (PSYC 695)	
Theories and Methods of Consultation	Psychological Intervention (PSYC 619); Brown bag series;	
Theories and Methods of Supervision	Infusion in PSYC 595 and 695 classes	
Theories and Methods of Evaluating the Efficacy of Interventions (619 and 4 semesters of 695 required)	Psychological Intervention (PSYC 619); Advanced Clinical Practicum (PSYC 695)	
Issues of Cultural and Individual Diversity	Integration through coursework; Applied in clinical work and research	
Attitudes essential for life-long learning, scholarly inquiry, and Professional Problem-Solving	Completion of quals and other research requirements; attendance at brown bag professional development seminars and distinguished scholar series;	

**TO BE SIGNED PRIOR TO QUALS:**

Signature of Research Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of DCT/Associate DCT: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

## REQUIREMENTS OF BRAIN & COGNITIVE SCIENCES PROGRAM

The Brain and Cognitive Sciences area of the Psychology Department is composed of five interest subareas: cognitive science, cognitive neuroscience, behavioral neuroscience, clinical neuroscience and behavioral genetics. In addition to the Psychology Department requirements, all students in the Brain and Cognitive Sciences area are required to take Statistical Methods (Psychology 500 or 501) and either 502 or 503. The Brain and Cognitive Sciences area also recommends students take Functional Neuroanatomy (Psychology 547).

Beyond this there are no formal course requirements; course loads are worked out individually for each student in consultation with his or her faculty advisor.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the most important aspect of training is research. Generally, a student is admitted with the sponsorship of an advisor, i.e., faculty member, whose research most closely matches the expressed interests of the student. This pairing is subject to mutual satisfaction, and may be altered by the student or the advisor. However, it is not possible for a student to advance without sponsorship by a faculty member in the Brain and Cognitive Sciences area.

Consistent with this emphasis on research, students will be evaluated regarding their research performance at the end of the first year. For this evaluation, students must produce a written report of their first year research activities. The collaborative research relation between student and advisor is designed to facilitate the fulfillment of this requirement. This report is reviewed by the advisor and at least two other faculty members in the BCS area. A faculty member from another departmental area can be added as a reviewer as needed or desirable. This report is due July 15<sup>th</sup> and must be acceptable in order for the student to continue in the program. The area head will convey the outcome of this review to the department by August 15.

For evaluation of research progress in subsequent years, see the guidelines of the department concerning the second-year research requirement, preliminary examination, qualifying examination, and dissertation defense.



## REQUIREMENTS OF DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

The major requirements of the developmental program are that students take required statistics and developmental courses, that they be continuously enrolled in at least 8 units of graduate work for the first three years of study, and that they be actively involved in research. Courses from which students are expected to choose a program of study in the first two years of graduate study are listed below. There is latitude for substitution of some courses depending on availability and student requirements, but normally every student will take 533 and 534.

### Course Requirements

In addition to meeting departmental distribution requirements, students in the developmental psychology specialization are required to take 500, 501 and one additional statistics course selected from 502, 503 and 575. The following specific courses are also required, and should be completed in the first two years:

533, 534, Cognitive Development, and Social Development, are the core courses for the Developmental area. They should be taken in the first two years. Take them in any order. Sometimes one or both of these courses are not completed until the third year of study because the courses were not offered in certain years (e.g., due to faculty leaves).

In addition to the courses outlined above, the area recommends that students take two advanced seminars in the Psychology Department. Other recommended courses are 504, Research Design, and/or 524, Research Design in Developmental Psychology. Classes should be selected in consultation with your advisor.

### RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

There are first year, second year and dissertation research requirements that are very similar to the requirements of the Psychology program as a whole, with some slight modifications.

#### First Year Research Evaluation

Each student or trainee must complete a first year research proposal by May 15 of the academic year they entered the graduate program. The paper must be in the form of a 'grant style' proposal for the second year project. Students are expected to work closely with their advisor in planning the research proposal. Advisors may comment on earlier drafts of the proposal. However, all written versions of the proposal, including the final one, should be substantially the student's own work. The proposal will be reviewed by the advisor and two other faculty members (either within the area or outside the area). The student will schedule an oral examination by these faculty members generally within one month of the May 15 deadline for the proposal, and no later than July 1. This allows enough time for the student to make requested revisions, so that

the faculty of the area can determine whether the student has passed first year research screening by the departmental deadline of August 15.

Students should plan to become involved in research as early as possible in their first year. It is expected that students and trainees will devote 20 hours or more per week to research. At least half of the evaluation of every graduate student is based on performance in research. In developing their research proposals students are expected to take the initiative in setting up meetings with the research advisor, discussing potential research projects, and organizing a list of readings. In addition to working on the first year proposal, students should become actively involved in research, including designing and running a pilot study, contributing to a faculty member's ongoing research project, or coming up with creative ways to analyze an existing database.

### Second Year Research Evaluation

As indicated in the description of the first year research evaluation, the second year project will typically be based on the first year research proposal. In the second year, each student develops a significant program of research and completes a research project. The second year research report should be of publishable quality or potentially publishable with revisions. It should involve collection of original data or creative analysis of existing data. The student must pass an oral exam on the second year project conducted by the advisor and two other faculty readers by the last day of classes of their fourth semester at USC. It is recommended that students revise the second year project further and submit it for publication. It may also be submitted for a Master's degree (see Graduate School guidelines for the Master's degree).

### Qualifying Examination and Dissertation

These aspects of the program follow the general Psychology Department guidelines.

## REQUIREMENTS OF QUANTITATIVE PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

*1. Course Requirements:*

Students in the Quantitative Methods (QM) area must take and pass a minimum of six (6) QM courses from the A list. Students who do not meet this requirement by the end of 5 years will be dismissed from the QM area. [Note: This assumes only one QM class per semester for 3 years. QM students should be taking at least one of these courses every semester until finishing their Qualifying Exam (see below). It is possible to substitute one quantitative course from another department with the approval of both the student's main advisor and the area head. If the student's faculty advisor also serves as area head, a different QM faculty member will be required.]

*2. 2nd year project:*

Same as the rest of the Department: A written document must be approved by the evaluation committee by the last day of classes of the student's 4th semester (usually Spring). If not completed by this date, the student will be placed on probation. The student must then have the project approved by the final faculty meeting of the 4th semester. Students who do not meet this requirement will be dismissed from the program.

*3. Qualifying Exam (QE) Timing:* The Qualifying Exam must be completed by the end of the 7th semester (usually Fall of the 4th year). If the QE is not completed, the student will be placed on probation and must complete by the end of the 8th semester (usually Spring of the 4th year.)

*4. Qualifying Exam Format:* The format of the QE is intended to be flexible, but the QE must be both written and oral. The format of the QE must be approved by both the guidance committee and the area head in advance of the deadlines above. [Once again, if the student's faculty advisor also serves as area head, a different QM faculty member will be required.] Suggestions for the written QE include any one of the following options: (1) Two quantitative papers authored by the student (multiple authors are acceptable if the student is first author) which are considered suitable for submission for publication (or published), (2) a timed closed book/notes test (usually

several hours), (3) Written responses to questions posed by the committee (usually several days). Other options may also be considered by the guidance committee. The oral exam will be reviewed by five faculty members, but must consist of at least two QM faculty members, and one faculty member outside of QM. Normally the oral exam will focus on a defense of the dissertation proposal, but may also include questions about any portion of the written exam.

*5. Student Evaluation and Progress:* This will be the same as to the clinical evaluation

## REQUIREMENTS OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

### Course Requirements

The 36 substantive units required by the department (see C.2) must conform to the following requirements:

3 courses from AREA A; one of these must be 616, which is to be taken during the first or second year of study.

1 course from AREA B.

4 courses from AREA C, which must include 512 taken in the first year, and three 600-level content seminars in social psychology (i.e. 612, which is taught by a different professor with a different topic each semester.)

1 course in an area outside social psychology that is relevant to their research program and chosen with the consent of the advisor.

### First Year Research Evaluation

In the spring semester all first year students will select an advisor by January 15. In conjunction with her/his advisor the student will write a project statement and a list of goals for the semester.

By the first day of spring final examinations the student will have prepared a written summary of her/his progress in achieving the proposed goals. The student and the advisor will then evaluate the amount and quality of the work completed during the semester.

**APPENDIX II.**

**University Policy on Code of Ethics**

For details on USC Code of Ethics policy, please visit the USC website:

<http://policies.usc.edu/>