

# HANDBOOK for DOCTORAL STUDENTS

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

FALL 2008

This handbook sets forth policies and standards of the Department of Psychology and the Graduate and Professional Programs (aka the Graduate School) of the University of Southern California for the doctoral degree. **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* and the *Graduate Student Handbook*. Appropriate course selection and the general understanding of deadlines, filing of Graduate School forms, etc., are the *student's responsibility*.

Updated August 20, 2008

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

A.	<u>Introduction</u>	3
B.	<u>Residence and Time Limits</u>	3
C.	<u>Course Requirements</u>	5
D.	<u>First-Year Screening Procedure</u>	7
E.	<u>Second Year Research Requirement</u>	8
F.	<u>Assisting in Teaching and Research</u>	10
G.	<u>Probation and Termination</u>	11
H.	<u>Guidance Committee</u>	12
I.	<u>Qualifying Examination</u>	14
J.	<u>Admission to Candidacy</u>	15
K.	<u>Dissertation Committee</u>	16
L.	<u>Dissertation Registration</u>	16
M.	<u>Dissertation and Defense of Dissertation</u>	16
<b>APPENDIX I.</b>	<b>Specialty Area Requirements</b>	18
<b>APPENDIX II.</b>	<b>University Policy on Code of Ethics</b>	32

## 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 (1-3) for each student on their progress in the program.

### B. Residence and Time Limits

1. The equivalent of three years graduate status at USC or elsewhere is required in all Ph.D. programs by the Graduate School. Students in Clinical Science (Child & Family, General Adult, and Clinical-Aging) must have, in addition, at least 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, even though they may do some work to finance their training either on or off campus. 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 entering students are required to take at least eight semester units each semester during the first year and a half because of the screening procedure (described in Sections C and D). It is expected that the other half of the student's time will be spent on research.
  - b. If at any time during this advanced work individual circumstances lead a student to consider carrying a reduced academic load, he/she is responsible for clearing the deviation from regular procedure with his/her guidance committee in advance.

4. A student who considers dropping out of the degree program temporarily is required to present a written request for a leave of absence. It 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 chair of the student's 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 Associate Chair of the department. Approval by this official means 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. The Graduate School requires that the Ph.D. degree be completed within six years in the case of students who have earned an applicable Master's degree within five years prior to admission to the doctoral program. The Psychology Department expects the Ph.D. degree to be completed within five years.
  - a. Extensions beyond that time require submission of a petition to the department and are granted only for 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 no case may the time for completion be extended beyond 10 years from the date of the beginning of graduate work.
  - c. Course credit is outlawed after 10 years.

### 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. (Registration in research and thesis or dissertation courses (590, 594, 790, 794) does not meet this requirement.) A minimum of eight units (two courses) must be taken in Category A (see below).
3. With the exception of students covered by #4 and #5 below, the other 16 units (four courses) taken in the Department of Psychology must meet a distribution requirement. The courses must be from Categories B and C, with at least one course from Category B and one course from Category C. The courses in these categories are listed below.
4. Students who entered the program in Fall 2006 or Fall 2007 and took both semesters of the Psychological Science sequence (599) are considered to have fulfilled the distribution requirement. A minimum of sixteen units (four other courses) must be taken in the Department of Psychology, but there are no distribution (BC Category) requirements for these courses. Students who took only one semester of Psychological Science are subject to the distributional requirements, but may substitute 599 for one of the BC distribution courses with approval of their advisor and the DGS.
5. Students in the quantitative psychology specialty area who did not take both semesters of the Psychological Science course sequence in Fall 2007-Spring 2008 may substitute one additional statistics/research design course for one of the four courses required from Categories B and C, provided they have at least one course from Category B and one course from Category C.

#### Category A. STATISTICS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Courses that belong to this category include:

- 501 Statistics in Psychological Research
- 502 Analysis of Variance and Experimental Design
- 503 Regression and the General Linear Model
- 504 Research Design
- 520 Test Analysis
- 524 Research Design in Developmental Psychology
- 575 Multivariate Analysis of Behavioral Data
- 577 Analysis of Covariance Structures
- 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, psychopharmacology, behavior genetics) and **COGNITIVE-AFFECTIVE BASES OF BEHAVIOR** (learning, thinking, motivation, problem-solving). Courses that belong to this category include:

506 Learning and Cognition  
 508 Historical Foundations of Psychology  
 510 Visual Cognition  
 516 Survey of Physiological Psychology  
 544 Psychophysiology  
 545 Neuropsychology  
 546 Current Topics in Cognitive Neuroscience  
 547 Functional Neuroanatomy  
 576 Psycholinguistics  
 585 Biological Basis of Learning and Behavior  
 586 Advanced Psycholinguistics  
 603 Introduction to Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging  
 606 Seminar in Learning and Memory  
 607 Seminar in Behavioral Neuroscience  
 610 Seminar in Information Processing in the Nervous System  
 663 Computational and Cognitive 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  
 524 Research Design in Developmental Psychology  
 531 Psychology of Adult Differentiation and Aging  
 533 Cognitive Development in Children  
 534 Social and Emotional Development in Children  
 535 Proseminar in Life-Span Developmental Psychology  
 580 Seminar in Aging  
 \*595 Practicum in Clinical Psychology  
 612 Seminar in Advanced Social Psychology

\*619 Psychological Intervention  
 620 Community Psychology  
 660 Seminar in Clinical Psychology  
 675 Seminar in Experimental Child 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.

6. In addition to these department-wide core requirements, each specialty area/program within the department has additional requirements. These area/program requirements are described in the appendix to this handbook.
7. 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.
8. 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.

#### 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. (Exceptions must petition.)
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 for the Ph.D.),
    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 faculty of the student's specialty area 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.
5. 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. Although by such a vote a student may be permitted to continue beyond the first year with a grade-point average below B (3.00), it is to be noted that the Graduate School regulation is that the minimum grade-point average for all graduate work attempted at the university must be 3.00 before a degree can be granted. Permission to register following any semester in which the GPA has dropped below this level will require petition from the student's research advisor, and is normally granted by the Graduate School. 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. Faculty evaluation of the student's second-year research project will be reported at the faculty meeting held during October of the student's third year. In order for this



to take place, the student must submit a final draft of the report to each member of the evaluation committee by September 15. Students in the Clinical area may have an earlier deadline -- see the Clinical program handbook.

- 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 departmental 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.] Initially, the committee consists of three members who review the paper. If all three approve, and if one of them agrees to serve as the student's research advisor, the student continues on toward the Ph.D. However, if either of these conditions is not met, a fourth department member joins the committee and evaluates the research report.
- d. To pass second year screening, the three committee members must approve the work. The department form for reporting the outcome of this screening procedure and a copy of the research report must be provided to the research advisor, i.e., the chair of the screening committee, prior to the screening meeting.
- 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 papers presented in meeting this requirement is kept by the department. A photo copy is acceptable for this purpose.
- h. In the fall of their third year, students are required to present their second-year projects as part of a departmental poster session.

2. The major screening process of the department actually occurs when students apply for admission to the program. A student who is accepted may take it for granted that faculty members in the area of specialization believe that she/he has the potential for earning a graduate degree. Because of the prior selection, most students pass 24-unit screening; it is anticipated that most of those who do will also pass research screening. In addition to these two steps, initial admission to an area of specialization implies evaluation throughout the student's participation in the graduate program of the department.
  - a. A student's success in passing 24-unit screening 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).
  - b. Similarly, approval of research permitting a student to go on for the Ph.D. commits the department to provide supervision as long as the person is continued in the program.

F. Assisting in Teaching and Research

1. In addition to formal course work, the Department of Psychology considers that experiences as research assistant and teaching assistant are essential parts of the training of all graduate students.
2. It requires that 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. Meeting this requirement usually involves having each graduate student work with a professor.
  - a. Only rarely are students allowed to pursue their own work largely undirected by a faculty member and then only when the need arises out of the student's own training requirements.
  - b. Even if a student receives a grant or fellowship that provides support without specific obligations, it is expected that the student will, in working with his/her major advisor, meet the departmental requirements of experience as both research and teaching assistant.

- c. In instances where a student receives an assistantship or readership requiring a certain number of hours per week of service in the department, the service for which reimbursement is provided may be used in meeting this requirement.
4. Supervision of this phase of the program is the responsibility of the chair of the guidance committee, i.e., research advisor.

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 time of the screening meeting in October of the third year;
  - f. who has not successfully completed the Ph.D. qualifying examination by the end (date classes end) of the tenth semester in residence;
  - g. who has not completed the Ph.D. dissertation within the time specified by the Graduate School;
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 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 a B or better, within one year;
  - e. turn in project and have it approved by the time of the December faculty meeting.

- f. take and pass the qualifying examination by the end (date classes end) of the eleventh semester in residence;
  - g. complete the dissertation within one semester;
5. Relation of probation to funding. 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. 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. Unless service is needed by the department, the general principle is that support is not provided beyond the fifth year.
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 in G.4 above;
  - 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. [Majority approval is needed for readmission.]

#### H. Guidance Committee

1. When the student is ready to prepare for the qualifying exam, a guidance committee is to be formed. The student should discuss possible composition of this committee with his/her research advisor, and then consult potential members to determine whether they will serve on the committee. The committee must have at least four faculty members from within the department (but see H.4 and H.5 below) and one member from outside the department.
2. At least two members of the committee must be from the specialty area that accepted the student into the graduate program.

3. There must be at least one representative from an area other than the student's specialty area.
4. The Graduate School regulation is that all members must be regular full-time USC faculty of the rank of Assistant Professor or above. Exception to this is sometimes made in the case of part-time faculty and research associates who otherwise qualify to serve on guidance committees, but only upon approval by the Director of the Graduate School on written request of the Chair of the department. Such a request must indicate why it is necessary or advisable to turn to someone who is not a regular faculty member. If such an exception is made, no more than one member of the committee may be other than a full-time regular faculty member. All members of the committee must hold doctoral degrees.
5. Faculty members who have secondary (joint) appointments in Psychology and another department may serve on the guidance committee, but not as chair without approval of the Chair of the department.
6. The "outside" member of the committee cannot have a joint appointment in the Department of Psychology. This individual must be a regular full-time member of the faculty of USC, holding the rank of Assistant Professor or above (exceptions as noted in H.4, above).
7. For students with prior graduate work at other schools, the guidance committee has the responsibility of evaluating transfer credits to ensure that the student has enough courses beyond the first-year level.
8. An Appointment of Committee (AoC) form must be submitted to the department two semesters prior to taking Quals. 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 and Forms, Qualifying...forms and Information).
9. When the student is prepared to take the qualifying exam, the composition of the guidance committee must be submitted to the Department of Psychology. The form for this is obtained from the Graduate School website (see H.8 above) and is titled "Request to Take Qualifying Exams."
10. For changes in the membership of a guidance committee, it is necessary to complete a Change of Committee (CoC) form. . This form is available at the Graduate School website (see H.8 above).
11. 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.

## I. Qualifying Examination

1. The form titled “Request to Take the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination” must be filed with the Graduate School prior to the beginning of the semester in which the examination will be taken and at least 30 days prior to the start of the exam. The form is available at the Graduate School website (see H.8 above).
2. The graduate school recommends that the qualifying examination be taken no later than during the fifth semester, in order to keep on track toward completing the degree in five years. The qualifying exam **MUST** be successfully completed by the end of the tenth semester of residence for the student to remain in good standing.
3. 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.
4. The qualifying examination is designed, at least in part, to test the student's expertise and fitness to undertake independent research. The examination assures that the student can meet the demands and standards of a scientific and professional community.
5. Specialty areas within the department have considerable latitude in how to examine the students in their area, and similar latitude may be granted to the guidance committee. The material provided in the Appendix for each specialty area should be consulted to determine whether protocols for examination have been specified.
6. The Qualifying Examination consists of (a) a scholarly review and analysis of a body of literature, (b) a dissertation proposal, and (c) an oral exam. Normally the student prepares and submits (a) and (b) to the guidance committee an appropriate period of time, e.g., two weeks, prior to (c). The oral exam, typically scheduled for two hours, entails a discussion of (a) and (b), with special focus on (b), the dissertation proposal, with the goal of making whatever changes are necessary for the student to be able to proceed with the research in the manner accepted by the Committee.

At the discretion of the student's research advisor, parts (a) and (b) can be done at different times, in which case a one-hour oral exam is scheduled for each section. It is possible for (b), the dissertation proposal, to be vetted by the Committee prior to (a), the scholarly review.

The preparation of both written portions of the Qualifying Examination should be reasonably independent endeavors. The dissertation proposal in particular should provide evidence of the student's ability to conceptualize and design a piece of original research within the context of an advisory relationship with the chair of the committee.

At the advisor's option, the dissertation proposal may be written up in the format of an NIH grant application.

7. The scholarly review generally follows one of three major models:
  - a. The student is asked to write an in-depth paper on a subject that is not exactly on the topic of his or her dissertation. This is designed to assure mastery of subject matter which might buttress the dissertation but would not ordinarily be a major part of the dissertation.
  - 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 is expected to write a well referenced response over a period that might range up to five days.
8. Guidance committee decisions about performance on the written and oral exams are generally made at the meeting in which the oral exam is administered. Attendance of all guidance committee members is required at this meeting.
9. By the rules of the Graduate School, the exam (written and oral) must be passed or failed as a whole, and a student may not be passed if there is more than one dissenting vote. A pass cannot be made contingent upon other factors, such as the completion of additional course work or supplemental literature review. However, it is possible to pass a student 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 K.1.
11. In the event that the examination is failed, the guidance committee may recommend to the Graduate School that the student be permitted to take the qualifying examination again, at a time mutually satisfactory and within a period of not less than six months nor more than one year from the date of the first examination. Requests for exceptions to this time period must be approved by the department Chair. A student may not be permitted to take the qualifying examination more than twice.
12. The Graduate School form for reporting results of the exam must be filed within 48 hours of the oral portion of the exam.

J. Admission to Candidacy

1. Admission to candidacy for a doctoral degree occurs only after a student has (1) passed departmental course and screening requirements, (2) completed at least 24 units at the University, and (3) 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.

K. Dissertation Committee

1. After the qualifying examination has been passed, the guidance committee is redesignated as the dissertation committee. At this point, it may be reduced to four members, on unanimous recommendation of the guidance committee, and with a CoC 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.
2. The composition of this committee is reported on the CoC form (see H.8 above).
3. At this time the student should see the graduate advisor to run a degree check and a STARS Report.

L. 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. Leave of absence may be taken under exceptional circumstances by requesting it by petition (to the department) the semester before the leave is to be taken. Such a leave does not change the candidate's responsibility for meeting the time schedule for completion of degree requirements.
5. 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.

M. Dissertation and Defense of Dissertation



1. 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.
2. 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.
  - b. The dissertation is written in a form which would be suitable for publication. Pertinent background is cited and discussed as would be the case for a normal journal article.
3. An oral defense of the dissertation is required of the candidate. It is conducted by the dissertation committee, which may allow limited or general public attendance.
4. Both the dissertation and the oral defense must have unanimous approval by the dissertation committee for satisfactory completion of the dissertation requirement.
5. A packet called Ph.D Submission Packet, 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. This packet can be obtained from the Graduate School website: [www.usc.edu/schools/Graduate](http://www.usc.edu/schools/Graduate) (click on Current Students, Thesis & Dissertation...)

**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, one of which should be 504 (Research Design). At least two of the three 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 (see footnote at end):

- 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)
- Cognitive and affective aspects of behavior, to be met through PSYC 506 (Learning and Cognition)

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

- One of the following courses (see footnote at end) 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**

The following eight clinical psychology core courses also fall into area C by the Department's classification:

PSYC 514 (Psychopathology)

PSYC 515 (Psychological Assessment)

PSYC 619 (Psychological Intervention)

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). Students in child-family or clinical-aging are encouraged to take at least one clinical seminar related to their specialty if this is feasible. Otherwise, a specialty area course may in some cases substitute for one of the two clinical seminars, as noted in the specialty track descriptions below, for students who have formally declared the track.

## V. Additional Track Requirements

### A. Child and Family Track:

Students in the child and family track must complete all courses required by the clinical area plus 3 additional courses on topics related to child development, child psychopathology and treatment, learning disabilities, family systems, or children, adolescents, families, and social policy. These course requirements can be met through:

- One or more clinical area courses or seminars on a child or family related topic. These courses can focus on diagnostic and assessment issues, intervention, or policy. If a course other than PSYC 660 or 680 is taken, 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 in Social Work, Education, Sociology, or Law. To obtain approval for a specific course, a petition to the clinical area faculty will be needed along with your advisor's approval and a copy of the course syllabus

An additional requirement is that students in the child and family track enroll in the PSYC 695 on Couples, Families, and Children.

### Clinical-Aging Track

Clinical-aging students must complete all courses required by the clinical area plus these additional requirements, which represent three additional courses:

- An overview of the psychology of aging (this can be met by GERO 520, Life Span Developmental Psychology, or by other courses in PSYC or GERO)
- One additional course in aging from PSYC, GERO, or another department, e.g., biology of aging, neuroscience of aging, epidemiology, or social policy. Sometimes this requirement can be met by a course that also satisfies another requirement – e.g., Area B/C or course requirements associated with an NIA traineeship
- PSYC 524 or equivalent coverage of longitudinal research design and data analysis
- The PSYC 695 didactic-practicum in psychotherapy with older adults. This counts as one of the two required years of diprac
- A clinical seminar on an aging related topic. If met by a course other than PSYC 660 or 680, this course will substitute for one of the two 660 or 680 required by the clinical science program

Footnote: Under certain circumstances (for example, with the introduction of new courses in our curriculum or based on a student's prior graduate level coursework and demonstrated competence in a breadth area), the clinical area faculty can determine that there are appropriate substitutions for these specific courses. Any such substitution first should be discussed with

your advisor in terms of your overall education plan and then should be presented in a petition to the DCT and clinical area faculty.

#### Clinical Area Expectations for Research Experiences and Requirements

Whereas your first year proposal is written in close collaboration with your research advisor, the dissertation proposal, as part of your qualifying exam, is to be written relatively independently. It is understood, however, that the conceptualization and design of this research will be discussed with your advisor and others in your research lab.

The quals paper, in contrast, is to be written independently without feedback from anyone on either the specific contents of the paper or on written drafts. That paper must be an independent piece of work by the student with only verbal consultation from the discussion with the advisor (no editing, reading of drafts, written feedback from the advisor, or direct input).

If the dissertation proposal is accepted with changes, the chairperson lists the changes that are to be made before commencement of work on the proposed dissertation. This is done on the Dissertation Proposal Approval Form. It is the student's responsibility to provide the committee members with a cover letter stating exactly what changes have been made and how the recommendations have been addressed. Committee members need to sign off on the revised proposal and the recommended changes before work on the dissertation begins.

For all committee meetings, you should provide your committee with a copy of the completed proposal, paper, project, etc. at least two weeks prior to the date of your scheduled meeting.

---

## 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 501) and either 502 or 503, and are required to 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 area. This report must be acceptable in order for the student to continue in the program. The area head must 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 SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students beginning the graduate program after September, 1998 are required to complete a minimum of 9 graduate content courses (i.e. non-research, 590, 690, 790) for a total of 36 units. These courses 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, which must be 506.

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 from either AREA B or AREA C, which is not a social psychology content seminar.

### FIRST YEAR RESEARCH EVALUATION

During the fall semester, all first year students will attend the non-credit seminar in which faculty members introduce students to ongoing research activities.

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.

REQUIREMENTS OF QUANTITATIVE PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

In addition to the departmental requirements, the students in the Quantitative Area should take four additional quantitative courses plus such other courses from Psychology or other disciplines as seem appropriate for the individual student.



## REQUIREMENTS OF DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

The two programs that fall under the developmental specialization, Child Development and Adult Development and Aging (ADAGE) share a common core of coursework, methodological concerns, and a common set of research requirements for the first two years of study. The major requirements of both programs 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 which students from both programs are expected to take in the first two years of graduate study are listed below.

### Course Requirements

In addition to meeting departmental distribution requirements, students in the developmental psychology specialization are required to take 501 and either 502 or 503. The following specific courses are also required, and should be completed in the first two years:

524 Research Design in Developmental Psychology

Multivariate and longitudinal research designs and analyses. Structural equation models.

535b, 533, 534, Adult Development and Aging, Cognitive Development, and Social Development, the core courses for the Developmental area. They should be taken in the first two years. Take them in any order. Sometimes one or two 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).

Other courses are selected in consultation with the advisor.

### RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

There are first year, second year and dissertation research requirements that are common to students in the sub-areas of Developmental.

#### First Year Research Evaluation

Each student or trainee must complete a first year research paper by May 15 of the academic year they enter. The paper will 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. This proposal will be reviewed by area faculty (the advisor and at least one other faculty member).

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 may also become involved in other research, including designing and running a pilot study, making modifications to a faculty member's research project that is underway, 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 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 final draft of the second year project is due by **September 1** (beginning of the third year). The student must pass an oral exam on the second year project conducted by the advisor and two other faculty readers by October 5. It is generally advisable that the students and trainees 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 Examinations and Dissertation

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

### REQUIREMENTS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIZATION

In addition to the courses outlined above, child development students are expected to take two advanced seminars in the Psychology Department, one of which should be Psychology 675, Seminar in Child Psychology. This course can be taken more than once, as topics have varied (Cognitive Development, Social Development, Cross-Cultural Developmental Psychology, Psychology of Learning Disabilities).

Students are allowed a great deal of flexibility in designing the course of study after the first two years.

### REQUIREMENTS OF ADULT DEVELOPMENT & AGING PROGRAM (ADAGE)

In addition to the courses required by the department and the general developmental program, students in this program are expected to take at least two from among the following advanced

seminars: Information Processing in the Nervous System, Aging, Psychobiology of Development and Aging, Biological Basis of Learning and Behavior, Adult Development of Cognitive Capabilities. Courses in both the Neurosciences and Gerontology may also be included.

Students are also expected to attend the Multidisciplinary Research Seminar in Aging, although they needn't take it as a course (Gerontology 592). Attending the seminar will help build perspective and appreciation for the broad range of research and breadth of factors related to aging, and to foster contact between ADAGE students and people in different disciplines of the university. Prominent scholars from different disciplines (economics, psycholinguistics, medicine, biology) present their thinking and research on aging. The presenters are about evenly divided between faculty of the USC Andrus Center of the School of Gerontology and researchers from other departments of the university, other institutions in the Los Angeles area, and visiting scholars.

**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/>