

Graduate Student Manual



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Department of Psychology

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

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INTRODUCTION

Program Orientation

The [graduate programs](#) in the [Department of Psychology](#) are directed toward training psychologists at the doctoral level. Whereas all students (except those in the SSP program) must complete a Master's (M.A.) degree in the course of their training, students planning on a terminal M.A. degree typically are not considered for admission. The Ph.D. primarily is a research degree and, consequently, the training is heavily research-oriented. All students are expected to acquire a broad background in psychology and to demonstrate a high level of competence in their curricular area of interest. In addition, students in practice-oriented areas are expected to demonstrate competence in the appropriate applications of psychological principles.

Student Responsibility

Disclaimer: It is the responsibility of each student admitted to the [NIU Graduate School](#) to know and observe all policies and procedures relating to the program being pursued. In no case will a rule be waived or an exception be granted because a student pleads ignorance of the rule or because the student has not been informed of it by an advisor or other authority. In particular, students planning to obtain a degree should be aware of the [deadlines](#) for having the necessary materials filed in the Graduate School.

This manual was written to inform graduate students of the policies and procedures that apply to students seeking degrees in the Department of Psychology. Changes and additions to these policies are not unusual. It is the responsibility of the student to keep informed of these changes, which will be communicated by the department as early as possible. Policies and procedures which are specific to a given training program within the department generally are not included in this manual. For such information, students should contact their academic advisor or program director. In addition to the policies and procedures in this manual, all students are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the regulations in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Students are expected to abide by the American Psychological Association's [Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct](#); all NIU policy and procedures governing research conduct as set forth by the [NIU Office of Research Compliance, Integrity and Safety](#), including [Human Subject Research](#) and [Animal Research](#); and the laws of the State of Illinois pertaining to the conduct of research and the offering of psychological services.

ADMISSIONS

General Information

All applications for graduate study in psychology must be submitted through the [NIU Graduate School](#). Applicants should refer to the [Graduate Catalog](#) for information about application dates, fees, immunization requirements, etc. With the exception of the SSP in School Psychology, the [graduate programs](#) in the Department of Psychology represent an integrated sequence of study leading to the Ph.D. degree. As a part of this sequence, students must complete the requirements for a M.A. degree in psychology. Admission to the doctoral program prior to completion of the M.A. degree will be contingent upon completion of the M.A. with a research thesis by the end of the seventh semester following initial admission into the graduate program in psychology, a positive recommendation by the student's training program at the time of completion of the M.A. degree, and a satisfactory grade point average (GPA) at that time.

To be considered for admission to the graduate program, the Graduate School requires that an applicant must have at least an overall 2.75 GPA on a 4.0 scale in the baccalaureate degree program or have completed 15 or more semester hours of graduate work at an accredited institution with a GPA of at least 3.2. These are the Graduate School's minimum requirements. Substantially higher grades than these minima typically are needed for an applicant to be competitive and reviewed favorably by the Department of Psychology. The applicant must submit to the Graduate School official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work and three letters of recommendation. Applicants are required to indicate the specific training program within the Department of Psychology for which they are applying. Assuming that minimum requirements for admission to the Graduate School are met, acceptance into the graduate program in psychology is determined by the relevant program faculty. Not all students who meet the minimum standards are accepted. An otherwise qualified applicant may be denied admission due to specific deficiencies or weaknesses, or simply because of space limitations within the department. Each year, a limited number of students are accepted from among the qualified applicants on the basis of the relative strength of the application credentials.

Change of Area

Within the Department of Psychology, graduate students are considered admitted into a specific training program. Currently, the six formal training programs are Clinical, Cognitive, Developmental, Neuroscience and Behavior, School, and Social/Industrial-Organizational. Students wishing to change programs must be in good academic standing, must petition the chair of the department (or their designee, usually, the director of graduate studies), and be approved via normal program procedures by the program to which transfer is being requested. No training program is required to accept a student who wishes to transfer. Although such changes are possible at any level of training, they typically would be expected to occur early in the student's program.

Conditional Admission into the Doctoral Program

Students working toward the M.A. degree may be conditionally accepted for admission in the doctoral program prior to completion of the master's program. A student may be considered for conditional admission to the doctoral program provided a master's thesis advisor has been appointed, a positive recommendation has been received from the student's training program, and 30 semester hours of graduate credit have been completed with at least a 3.2 GPA in graduate psychology coursework exclusive of thesis and independent study courses (including at least a 3.0 GPA in the Master's foundation courses).

Continuation in Doctoral Work Following Completion of the M.A. Degree

Upon completion of the M.A. degree, students will only be continued in the doctoral program provided they have completed an outstanding research thesis, received a positive recommendation for continuation at that

time from the student's training program, and have at least a 3.2 GPA overall and in graduate psychology coursework exclusive of thesis and independent study courses (including at least a 3.0 GPA in the master's foundation courses).

ASSISTANTSHIPS

General Information

The Department of Psychology appoints a number of graduate assistantships (GA) each year. Generally, these roles fall into two categories: teaching assistants (TA) and research assistants (RA). The duties of the TA vary in nature and may involve responsibility for introductory psychology sections, handling undergraduate laboratory sections, or assisting in large lecture classes. Under Illinois law, a student whose native language is not English must demonstrate competence in spoken English to be appointed as a graduate TA engaged in oral classroom instruction. See here: <https://www.niu.edu/grad/funding/assistantships.shtml>. Note that this requirement is separate from the NIU Graduate School's [requirement](#) that international applicants whose native language is not English provide a qualifying score on a test of English proficiency. The RA is involved in the research program of a faculty member and is supervised by the faculty member.

Assistantships may be full-time (20 hours per week), three-fourths time (15 hours/week), or one-half time (10 hours per week). Holders of full-time assistantships receive a partial tuition waiver for the semesters during which the assistantship is held and, when an assistantship is held for a full academic year, the following summer session. Assistantship duties are considered an important part of graduate training in teaching, research, and applied activities, and performance contributes to the student's overall evaluation.

Federal and state laws regarding employment eligibility apply to all university employees, including graduate student assistants. It is important for all graduate assistants to understand the applicable laws and to follow the instructions provided by [NIU Human Resource Services](#).

Yearly Support

The departmental budget available for GA assignments is dependent on broader university funding and no student is guaranteed financial support beyond Year 1. The availability of funds and student progress toward the Ph.D. degree will be factors determining the award of departmental assistantships to students. Students are encouraged to seek non-departmental support through the university and external agencies. The Graduate School maintains a [Fellowships](#) page that should be consulted.

Students will be eligible for departmental assistantship support for no more than three academic years prior to the award of the Master's degree. Third-year students must be accepted into the doctoral program and complete all requirements for the Master's degree, including the oral examination, by May 15 of that third year in order to be eligible for continued departmental assistantship support. Third-year students completing all requirements between May 16 and August 1 may be considered for support, but only if supplementary funds become available. Students will not be eligible for more than a total of five years of departmental assistantship support in the graduate program, including pre- and post-MA years (the internship year and formally granted leaves of absence will not be counted).

A training program may set lesser time limits for support of its students but may not exceed the departmental limits.

Resignation or Termination of a Graduate Assistantship

Since the award of an assistantship precludes offering it to another student, acceptance of an offer carries with it a commitment to serve as an assistant for the duration of the contract. A student who resigns from an assistantship after April 15th (preceding the assistantship year) without departmental approval may not be considered for a future assistantship appointment. Beyond this key issue, students should familiarize themselves with the section of the [Policy Library](#) that addresses [Termination or Resignation of Graduate Assistantship](#).

Effects of Tax Laws on Graduate Students' Taxable Income

Tax Reform Act. The Federal Tax Reform Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-514) has considerable effect on graduate students, for it made significant changes in the way scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, and tuition waivers are considered for income tax purposes. Unfortunately, regional IRS offices may vary in their interpretations of what federal guidelines are available. Although **the following information is not offered as professional tax advice** and should not be considered a substitute for professional tax advice, it may serve as a guide to the federal legislation and its impact on graduate students.

Assistantship stipends. Any financial award for which teaching, research, or other services are required is considered wages. Thus, the stipend received by graduate assistants must be reported as one would report salary, and it is considered taxable income. This is a major change from previous federal law, which allowed assistantship stipends, under certain circumstances, to be tax-exempt. Typically, at NIU, scholarships and fellowships do not require the performance of services, whereas assistantships do.

ACADEMIC STANDING

GPA Requirements

Students are referred to the [General Regulations](#) section of the [Graduate Catalog](#) for formal policy regarding academic standing and minimum GPA requirements.

In addition to university regulations concerning academic probation (see the [Graduate Catalog](#)), the Department of Psychology has specific standards. To remain in good academic standing students in all programs must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA in graduate psychology courses exclusive of thesis and independent study courses. Failure to meet this requirement will result in departmental probation. A student placed on departmental academic probation who fails to bring the GPA to the required level of 3.00 in graduate psychology courses (excluding thesis and independent study) during the next academic term in which the student enrolls at the university will be academically dismissed from the program.

Termination of Admission

A student failing to maintain good academic standing as described above and in the [Graduate Catalog](#) is subject to dismissal from the training program. In addition, a student in good academic standing in terms of GPA may be dismissed from the program for various reasons including, but not limited to, failure to satisfy program requirements in a timely fashion, failure to continuously register for PSYC 699 or 799 after such registration has commenced, or failure to register for a minimum of 12 credit hours each fall and spring semester without having received permission for a reduced load from the director of graduate studies or without having received an approved leave of absence from the Department of Psychology.

Incompletes

When a student is passing a course yet special circumstances prevent a student's completing the requirements of a course, the instructor may, at their discretion, direct that the symbol I (indicating incomplete) be entered in the student's record. When the I is assigned, the instructor will file in the departmental office and in the Graduate School an Incomplete/Reversion Grade Form outlining the work to be completed, the deadline for completion of the work, and the grade that will be awarded if the student fails meet the deadline. In no case may the deadline be later than 120 days after the last day of final examinations during the term for which the incomplete is assigned. The incomplete must be removed within 120 days.

If the instructor does not change the incomplete within the period allowed for resolution, the incomplete (I) will be converted to an F or to the stipulated reversion grade. If no reversion grade is recorded, a grade of F will be awarded at the conclusion of 120 days. An administratively awarded grade, like one assigned by an instructor of record, may be changed at the discretion of the instructor of record prior to a student's graduation. A student may not graduate with a transcript entry of "I" on their record. Please refer to the sections in this Manual headed "Registration for Thesis Hours, PSYC 699" and "Registration for Ph.D. Dissertation Hours, PSYC 799" for further information about grades of incomplete in these courses.

Leave of Absence

A student may submit a written request to the Department of Psychology for a leave of absence from departmental coursework requirements. A request for a leave of absence must have the positive recommendation of the student's training program and must be approved by the department chair. Students requesting a leave should especially check with the Graduate School regarding its requirements, including the maximum time period allowed to fulfill all degree requirements and the impact a leave has on this time period. With regard to progress within the training program, the time period covered by an approved leave will not count as a part of the time the student has to complete the M.A. degree with regard to assistantship support, or as a part of the time the student is allowed to pass candidacy exams. The maximum time period for which a departmental leave of absence may be granted is 12 months. Under extraordinary circumstances and with the positive recommendation of the student's training program, the chair may grant a student's request for an extension of a leave (not to exceed an additional 12-month period). If a student requests a second leave of absence or an extension of an initial leave, both the student and the student's training program should consider the option of the student withdrawing from the program without prejudice with the option of reapplication at some future date. During the period of an approved leave, students are not required by the department to register in graduate course work, but students are advised to check with the [Graduate School](#) regarding its requirements during this time period.

Academic Policies and Procedure

The [Policy Library](#) provides a central location for the NIU community to learn about university policies. It also provides a platform for feedback on proposed policies and revisions. By making it easy to learn about and comment on policies, the library helps to:

- Promote transparency and open communication on campus.
- Set clear expectations for employees and students.
- Clarify how the university conducts business.

All Department of Psychology graduate students are beholden to and protected by the [NIU Policy Library](#).

Among many other domains, it covers:

[Student Affairs](#)

[Ethics and Conduct](#)

[Research Ethics and Intellectual Property](#)

[Grade Appeals](#)

COURSE LOADS

General Information

A student's course load includes all courses for which the student is registered—graduate and undergraduate—whether taken for credit or audit.

During each fall and spring semester, the Department of Psychology requires that all graduate students register for a minimum of 12 credit hours unless permission for a reduced load is granted. A student who fails to register for a minimum of 12 credit hours each fall and spring semester without having secured approval for a reduced course load, or without having been granted a leave of absence from the department, is subject to dismissal from the training program. All students should understand that budget allocations to the department (including graduate assistantship stipends) depend on the number of credit hours generated. Credit hours are included in the count only for registration completed by the end of the first week of classes. Therefore, students are required to complete registration in each semester **prior to the first day of classes**. Students who fail to register on time will receive a lower priority for assistantship in subsequent years.

Once an approved dissertation proposal has been filed with the department and all other requirements for the Ph.D. in psychology have been met except for completion of the dissertation, students without assistantship or fellowship support may register for fewer than 12 hours during the semester with the recommendation of the dissertation advisor and approval of the program director and director of graduate studies.

Although a student is permitted to enroll in up to 16 credit hours during fall and spring terms without needing to complete a Graduate School [Overload Permit](#), specific academic advice is recommended for a student considering such a load. A graduate student on academic probation may not enroll for an overload.

Prior to the formal approval of a dissertation proposal, part of the 12 semester-hour course load during each fall and spring semester must consist of registration in PSYC 690, Psychological Research (1-3). These hours will not count toward the 30 semester hours required for the M.A. degree or toward the 90 semester hours required for the Ph.D. degree.

Once a student has begun work on a thesis or dissertation through formal registration in PSYC 699 (Master's Thesis) or PSYC 799 (Ph.D. Dissertation), it is expected that such work will progress each academic term, and registration must be continued in each subsequent term (including summer terms) until the thesis or dissertation is formally approved by the Graduate School. There is no exception to this requirement save for an approved leave of absence. It is expected that the number of PSYC 699 or 799 credit hours in which a student is enrolled should reflect the amount of work undertaken that semester subject to minimum registration requirements specified in the [Graduate Catalog](#). Registration for PSYC 699 or 799 may be in absentia. If a student interrupts continuous registration in PSYC 699 or 799 without obtaining a leave of absence, they are subject to dismissal from the training program.

Students Receiving Financial Support

Graduate students holding full or partial assistantships, fellowships, or similar assignments during a regular semester are required to enroll in 12 semester hours of courses unless approval for a reduced load has been granted by the program director and director of graduate studies.

Unapproved reductions in the required course load will result in withdrawal of the assistantship by the department.

International Students

An international graduate student on a student (F-1 or J-1) visa is expected to carry 12 semester hours in the fall and spring semesters, but is not required to register in the summer session. Approval to take fewer than 12 semester hours in fall or spring must be obtained in advance from the program director and director of graduate studies.

Students on Internship

In addition to any required dissertation hours, a student specializing in Clinical Psychology must register in PSYC 655—Internship in Clinical Psychology for at least one semester hour for three consecutive semesters (e.g., summer-fall-spring or fall-spring-summer) during the year of internship (at least three hours should be applied toward the 90 semester hours required for the Ph.D.).

A Ph.D. student specializing in School Psychology must register in PSYC 656—Internship in School Psychology for a minimum of one semester hour each fall and spring semester and a minimum of one hour during the summer session for a total of 3-30 semester hours during the year of internship (up to four hours may be applied toward the 90 semester hours required for the Ph.D.). A non-Ph.D. student specializing in School Psychology must register in PSYC 656—Internship in School Psychology for a minimum of one semester hour each fall and spring semester (but will want to register for 12 hours each semester to meet the M.A. + 30 credit hour requirement) for a total of 1-24 semester hours during the year of internship.

Reduced Course Loads

The official policy of the Department of Psychology as pertains to graduate student course load is outlined above. That is, graduate students must enroll in a minimum of 12 credits during fall and spring semesters. However, the faculty are mindful that there are circumstances in which graduate students may wish to reduce their enrollment. At the same time, a reduced course load can cause unintended problems both for individual students (e.g., related to having too few credits to satisfy graduation requirements) and the broader training program (e.g., budgetary impact). In an effort to balance these concerns, the department has implemented the following policy:

Graduate students who have not yet passed the candidacy exam must request permission from their program director for any reduction in enrollment below 12 credits. To make a request, a graduate student should email their program director with the request (complete with the proposed registration plan and rationale) and cc both the director of graduate studies and the graduate studies assistant. The program director can reply to the email with the decision. If the program director approves the request, the director of graduate studies also will approve the request (except in rare circumstances).

Graduate students who have passed the candidacy exam must request permission from their program director for any reduction in enrollment below 9 credits. To make a request, a graduate student should email their program director with the request (complete with the proposed registration plan and rationale) and cc both the director of graduate studies and the graduate studies assistant. The program director can reply to the email with the decision. If the program director approves the request, the director of graduate studies also will approve the request (except in rare circumstances). Note that requests for a reduction in enrollment to 9, 10, or 11 credits do not need program director approval. These requests can be made via email directly to the director of graduate studies and the graduate studies assistant.

Additional Notes:

1. The Graduate School has established a minimum enrollment of 6 credits during fall and spring terms (3 credits during summer terms) for graduate students with an assistantship. Requests to reduce enrollment below 6 credits during fall and spring terms (3 credits during summer terms) require Graduate School approval in addition to departmental approval. **After departmental approval has been secured,** students should complete the [Underload Permit for Graduate Assistants](#).
2. [Human Resource Services](#) and the [Financial Aid and Scholarship Office](#) consider 9 credit hours to be full-time. Financial Aid considers 6 credits to be 3/4 time. If a graduate student wishes to reduce enrollment to below 9 credits, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that such a reduction will not have a negative consequence regarding one's financial aid eligibility.
3. The Department of Psychology requires that students enroll in at least one credit hour during any academic term during which they hold a GA assignment.

GENERAL PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE

Program of Courses

Students are responsible for knowing the general regulations pertaining to the M.A. degree as well as the specific requirements for the M.A. in Psychology which appear in the [Graduate Catalog](#). Students are urged to meet early in or prior to their first term with their academic advisor to plan an official program of courses. Prior to registering each fall, spring, and summer term, students should consult with their advisor for the purpose of review and approval of all course selections. The official program of courses to be taken for the degree should be completed as early in the student's graduate studies as possible and must be approved by the student's academic advisor, the student's program director, and the director of graduate studies.

This program of courses must include all department course requirements for the M.A. degree and requires that a student earn a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate course work in psychology. Of these, 15 hours will consist of required foundation courses. The remaining 15 hours will be selected by the student in consultation with the academic advisor. For students in the thesis option, six of the remaining hours will be thesis credit (PSYC 699). The number of semester hours of graduate-level independent study in psychology (PSYC 685) on the 30-hour program of study may not exceed six.

With approval of the department chair and the Graduate School, a maximum of 15 semester hours of graduate credit, completed with a grade of B or better, may be transferred from other accredited colleges or universities as credit toward the M.A. degree. The total combined number of semester hours of graduate transfer credit plus graduate credit earned from NIU as a graduate student-at-large which can be applied toward the M.A. degree may not exceed 15.

Limitation of Time

For the M.A. degree, the student must fulfill all requirements for the degree within six consecutive years immediately preceding the date of the student's graduation. This time limit applies to enrollment in all graduate course work in the student's program including work for which transfer credit is allowed. If an NIU course does not fall within the 6-year period, the department may require the student to retake the course for credit or may allow the student to demonstrate current knowledge of the subject matter.

Course Requirements and Foundation Courses

General. The M.A. in Psychology degree requires that a student earn a minimum of 30 semester hours in psychology. Registration for a minimum of 12 semester hours is required each fall and spring semester unless the student is granted approval for a reduced load. Part of this 12-semester course load each fall and spring semester must consist of registration in PSYC 690—Psychological Research. These hours will not count toward the 30 semester hours required for the master’s degree. The M.A. in Psychology degree must include successful completion of the following set of foundation courses:

1. Both of the following 2 courses:

PSYC 604 Analysis of Variance and Hypothesis Testing in Psychological Research (3)

PSYC 606 Correlation and Regression Analysis in Psychological Research (3)

Note: Generally, PSYC 604 and PSYC 606 should be completed during the student’s first program year.

2. Three courses selected from:

PSYC 601 Fundamentals of Learning **or** PSYC 611 Cognitive Psychology I (3)

PSYC 603 Biopsychology (3)

PSYC 620 Experimental Social Psychology (3)

PSYC 641 Psychopathology (3)

(School students may substitute PSYC 645 (3) Developmental Psychopathology)

PSYC 665 Behavioral Development (3)

Note: The three courses used to satisfy item 2 above must be completed by the deadline established by the student’s training program.

In addition, 15 semester hours must be completed in one of the two options listed below.

Master’s program - non-thesis option. In addition to successful completion of the 15 semester hours of required foundation courses, 15 semester hours from other graduate courses in psychology (specified on the program of courses) must be completed successfully. These remaining hours will be selected by the student in consultation with the academic advisor.

The department also requires that students electing the non-thesis option successfully complete a minimum 3-hour or equivalent written and/or oral master’s comprehensive examination. As the student begins final preparation for taking the comprehensive examination, graduation requirements and deadlines become of greater concern. Please note: When completion of requirements for the degree approaches, it is the responsibility of the student to apply for graduation and comply with all related regulations, [deadlines](#), and graduation requirements of the Graduate School. A student on academic probation is not eligible to take the comprehensive examination.

Prior to the beginning of the semester during which a student plans to take the master's comprehensive examination, the student must file a letter of intent to do so with the relevant program director. The examination will be taken at the same time that doctoral candidacy examinations are given, or at such other times as are approved by the faculty of the program administering the examination. The composition of the examination committee will be determined by the student's program. A written statement of examination procedures may be obtained from the program director. The final comprehensive examination committee shall each consist of at least three voting members approved by the department chair or designee. A comprehensive examination committee needs no additional approval. All members of the comprehensive examination committee must hold the status of full, senior, or provisional member of the graduate faculty or serve as graduate faculty scholars at NIU. With regard to the voting members of the comprehensive examination:

- A majority must be tenured or tenure-track faculty members at NIU.
- At least one-half of the members must be full or senior members of the graduate faculty at NIU.
- All members must belong to the graduate faculty in the student's department or a closely related one as determined by the department chair (or designee).

A provisional member of the graduate faculty may, with a full or senior member of the graduate faculty, co-chair a comprehensive examination.

Students electing the non-thesis option will not be considered for admission to the doctoral program.

Master's program - thesis option. In addition to successful completion of the 15 semester hours of required foundation courses, 15 semester hours from other graduate courses in psychology (specified on the program of courses) must be completed successfully. Of these, 6 hours will be thesis credit (PSYC 699). The remaining 9 hours will be selected by the student in consultation with the academic advisor. In addition to these requirements, the student must meet any special program requirements and successfully defend the thesis in an oral examination. The section in this manual on "Steps & Procedures in The Master's Program - Thesis Option" should be read carefully.

STEPS AND PROCEDURES IN THE MASTER'S PROGRAM - THESIS OPTION

1. File Program of Courses

Please refer to the section headed "Program of Courses" found under "General Procedures and Requirements for The Master's Degree."

2. Appointment of Thesis Advisor and Committee Members

All students in the thesis option are required to complete an approved thesis based on a research study, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's degree.

The student will normally discuss research ideas with several eligible faculty members prior to the appointment of a thesis advisor. The selection of a thesis advisor is a mutual decision made by the student and the faculty member. The decision will be based on the faculty member's competence in the particular research area, appropriate graduate faculty membership, and the faculty member's availability and willingness to provide adequate supervisory time during the thesis period.

The thesis committee and the final comprehensive examination committee shall each consist of at least three voting members approved by the department chair or designee. A comprehensive examination committee needs no additional approval; however, a thesis committee must be nominated by the department and appointed by the dean of the graduate school. Committees must be appointed no later than the conclusion of the semester or term preceding that in which the student will defend the thesis or take the examination. A student intending to write a thesis should identify a prospective faculty director for the thesis and thesis committee members as soon as possible. The thesis director and thesis committee will judge the acceptability of the work. At any time, a faculty member may decline to serve as director or committee member of any particular thesis project. With the consent of the department and the approval of the graduate school dean, a student may propose to alter the composition of a thesis committee, provided that the faculty to be removed from and/or added to the committee expressly consent to the change. If a student wishes to remove a faculty member from a thesis committee, and the faculty member does not consent to be removed, the student may appeal to the dean of the Graduate School. The dean will make a decision with input from the student, the faculty members involved, the department chair, the committee chair, and the director of graduate studies; the decision of the dean will be final.

All members of the comprehensive examination and thesis committee must hold the status of full, senior, or provisional member of the graduate faculty or serve as graduate faculty scholars at Northern Illinois University. With regard to the voting members of the comprehensive examination and thesis committee:

- A majority must be tenured or tenure-track faculty members at NIU.
- At least one-half of the members must be full or senior members of the graduate faculty at NIU.
- All members must belong to the graduate faculty in the student's training department or a closely related one as determined by the department chair (or designee).

A provisional member of the graduate faculty may, with a full or senior member of the graduate faculty, co-chair a comprehensive examination or thesis committee.

The Department of Psychology's Policy and Procedures Manual contains specific guidelines regarding faculty participation on thesis/dissertation committees. These guidelines were adopted in part to limit the number of committees on which a faculty member may serve. For example, faculty are discouraged from serving as the chair of more than five (5) thesis/dissertation committees at any given time. Whereas it is not necessary for graduate students to review all of the specific guidelines or to learn the process that faculty use for requesting an exception, this issue is raised here so as to make students aware that faculty may decline to serve on a committee for workload reasons.

The Policy and Planning Committee clarified on 9/18/87 the Department policy on the question of training program and departmental restrictions on thesis and dissertation committees (amended 2/5/88).

The current official policy is that members of thesis/dissertation committees are recommended by the dean of the College to the dean of the Graduate School for his/her approval.

Recommendations to the College dean are made by the Department. Training program restrictions on committee composition are informal practices typically conformed to on a collegial basis.

3. Registration for Thesis Hours, PSYC 699

Before registration is permitted in PSYC 699—Master's Thesis, a student must have a thesis advisor officially approved by the department chair. Students must always obtain departmental approval before registering for thesis credit (PSYC 699). The graduate studies assistant will notify the student when permission has been granted by the thesis advisor.

Questions regarding number of hours to take should be addressed to your thesis advisor. It is expected that the number of PSYC 699 or 799 hours in which a student is enrolled should reflect the amount of work undertaken that semester subject to minimum registration requirements specified in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Students are expected to make continuous and sustained progress toward completion of the thesis. Once a student has formally begun registration in PSYC 699 (Master's Thesis), registration must be continued in each subsequent term, including the summer term, until the thesis is submitted to and formally approved by the Graduate School. Registration for PSYC 699 may be in absentia. If a student interrupts registration in PSYC 699 without obtaining a leave of absence, the student's admission to the program will be terminated.

While a student is working on the thesis, a grade of U or IP will be awarded. In the final semester in which the thesis is successfully completed, a grade of S will be awarded. Grades of IP previously awarded will remain on the transcript.

4. Application for Conditional Admission into the Doctoral Program

Prior to completion of the master's program, a student may apply for conditional admission to the doctoral program. A student may be considered for conditional admission provided a master's thesis advisor has been appointed, a positive recommendation has been received from the student's curricular area, and 30 graduate credit hours have been completed with at least a 3.2 GPA in graduate psychology course work exclusive of thesis and independent study courses (including at least a 3.0 GPA in the Master's foundation courses). Admission to the doctoral program at this point is contingent upon completion of the M.A. degree with a research thesis by the end of the seventh semester following initial admission into the graduate program in psychology, a positive recommendation of the student's curricular area at the time of completion of the M.A. degree, and a satisfactory GPA (at least a 3.2 GPA in graduate psychology courses exclusive of thesis and independent study courses and at least a 3.0 GPA in the Master's foundation courses).

5. Approval of Thesis Proposal

Prior to the completion of data collection, the student must have an approved thesis proposal, signed by members of the committee, on file in the department office (verbal agreement by the thesis advisor, or by the committee, does not constitute such approval). The filed proposal should be a document that has been edited, corrected, and typed in final form in accordance with APA Style. The face sheet should be signed by committee members after final approval of the document. Thesis proposals, together with the signed face sheet, should be submitted by the committee chair to the director of graduate studies, who will review them for conformance to the above guidelines, give departmental approval, and file them in the student's departmental folder. Committee members should keep their own copies.

Writing a clear, concise research proposal is an important part of research training. It deserves the same care, supervision, and standard of quality that are expected in other aspects of graduate training. The quality of the accepted proposal sets a standard which is likely to be reflected in the subsequent submission of the written thesis.

6. Data Collection and IRB or IACUC Approval

Prior to any data collection on any research project (including the thesis), the student must have received approval of the University's Institutional Review Board ([IRB](#)) or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee ([IACUC](#)), as applicable. Approval of IRB or IACUC is necessary prior to data collection for every research project involving human subjects (IRB) or animals (IACUC), whether the research being conducted is in conjunction with a course assignment, part of an independent study, a pilot study, a thesis or dissertation, a fellowship or grant study, or any other type of project.

If the research involves using and/or observing human subjects in any way, including the use of previously collected data, an IRB application must be submitted. The application—which must be co-signed by the student's research advisor—first is submitted to the Authorized Departmental Reviewer (ADR; typically, the director of graduate studies) of the Psychology Department's Human Subjects Review Committee. The ADR reviews each application to ensure that all required elements are included and complete, prior to forwarding acceptable applications on to the University's IRB for its review.

If the research involves using or observing animal subjects in any way, an IACUC application must be approved by the student's research advisor. The application then is submitted to the University's IACUC for its review and routed for appropriate signatures (research advisor, director of graduate studies).

Important information about the ethical conduct of research at NIU (and the process of securing approval to conduct research) can be found at the [Office of Research Compliance, Integrity, and Safety](#). Application [forms](#) for IRB and IACUC review can be found on their website.

7. Appointment of Thesis Examining Committee and Scheduling the Oral Examination/Defense of the Thesis

As the thesis nears completion, graduation requirements and deadlines become of greater concern. **Please note: When completion of requirements for the degree approaches, it is the responsibility of the student to apply for graduation and comply with all related regulations [deadlines](#), and graduation requirements of the Graduate School.** A student on academic probation is not eligible to submit a thesis for acceptance by the Graduate School. When the thesis has been completed to the satisfaction of the student and the thesis advisor, the thesis advisor will request the department chair to schedule the oral comprehensive examination/defense of the thesis. All members of the thesis examination committee must hold formal status at NIU as graduate faculty scholar, provisional member of the graduate faculty, full member of the graduate faculty, or senior member of the graduate faculty. Unless permission has been granted by the committee, the defensible copy of the thesis must be in the hands of all members of the examining committee at least one week prior to the date of the oral examination. If this requirement cannot be met, the oral should be delayed, even if this delays the student's graduation. In a few instances, faculty members have received copies only a day or two before the defense and/or have been pressured to have the oral when the thesis was not yet in final form, so that the student could meet some deadline. This practice is unprofessional and unacceptable. Faculty members try to be accommodating but they cannot do an adequate job under these conditions. It is the responsibility of students to be aware of the deadlines and to make plans accordingly.

Voting on the acceptability of the written thesis and voting on the oral examination/defense by the student are restricted to members of the thesis examining committee. A student who fails this oral examination may, with the permission of the department, repeat it no sooner than the following academic term. A student who fails this oral examination a second time will not be permitted to continue work toward the degree in the program, and admission to the program will be terminated.

When the examination has been completed and all required changes have been made in the thesis to the satisfaction of the examining committee, a report of the results of the examination will be forwarded to the Graduate School. During the semester when the thesis is completed as above, the advisor will assign a grade for PSYC 699.

8. Graduate School Review and Approval of the Thesis

Following final approval of the written thesis by the thesis committee, the thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School in accordance with Graduate School [deadlines](#) and regulations available from the NIU [Thesis and Dissertation Office](#).

GENERAL PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

Program of Courses

Students are responsible for knowing the general regulations pertaining to the Ph.D., as well as the specific requirements for the Ph.D. in Psychology, which appear in the [Graduate Catalog](#). The official program of courses for the Ph.D. degree must total a minimum of 90 semester hours beyond the bachelor's degree, typically including at least 75 hours in psychology graduate courses, and a minimum of 30 semester hours in psychology graduate courses beyond the Master's degree, exclusive of dissertation. These 30 hours must be taken in the Department of Psychology at NIU. With the consent of the student's training program and approval of the director of graduate studies, the 90 semester hours beyond the bachelor's degree may include fewer than 75 hours in psychology. The program of courses must be approved by the student's dissertation director, the student's program director, and the director of graduate studies. The [program of courses form](#) should be filled out and approved shortly following the dissertation director appointment.

The 90-semester hour program of courses must include all departmental requirements and all requirements of the student's curricular area for the doctoral degree. The dissertation will account for approximately two full semesters of the 90-hour total (18 hours minimum, 24 maximum). The 90-hour program of courses may also include graduate-level courses taken to satisfy the research tool requirement. The number of graduate-level semester hours of Independent Study in Psychology (PSYC 685) on the 90-hour program of study may not exceed 15.

With approval of the program director, the director of graduate studies, and the Graduate School, up to 30 semester hours of transfer credit from a master's degree program completed at an accredited institution may be applied to meeting the credit-hour requirements of the doctoral degree. In addition, a maximum of 15 semester hours of credit for graduate courses taken subsequent to the master's degree and completed with a grade of B or better may be transferred from other accredited doctorate granting departments as credit toward the Ph.D. degree. The total number of semester hours of graduate credit earned at NIU as a student-at-large which can be applied toward the Ph.D. degree may not exceed 15. The total combined number of semester hours of graduate transfer credit plus graduate credit earned at NIU as a student-at-large which can be applied toward the Ph.D. degree may not exceed 45. At least 50% of the minimum number of credit hours required for the doctoral degree in the student's major must be earned in the student's major department at NIU as an admitted graduate student.

Limitation of Time

For the Ph.D. degree, the student must fulfill all requirements for the degree within nine consecutive years immediately preceding the date of the student's graduation. This time limit applies to enrollment in all graduate course work in the student's program, including work for which transfer credit is allowed. At the discretion of the department, the nine-year limit need not apply to some or all of the earliest 30 semester hours of credit included in the student's doctoral program of courses. If an NIU course does not fall within the nine-year period, the department may require the student to retake the course for credit or may allow the student to demonstrate current knowledge of the subject matter.

Course Requirements

The Ph.D. in Psychology degree program requires that a student earn a minimum of 90 semester hours beyond the bachelor's degree, including at least 75 hours in psychology department graduate courses, and a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate work in psychology beyond the master's degree, exclusive of dissertation. These 30 hours must be taken in the Department of Psychology at NIU. With consent of the student's curricular area and approval of the department chair, the 90 semester hours beyond the bachelor's degree may include fewer than 75 hours in psychology.

Registration for a minimum of 12 semester hours is required each fall and spring semester unless the student is granted permission for a reduced load by the program director and director of graduate studies. Once an approved dissertation proposal has been filed with the department and all other requirements for the Ph.D. in Psychology have been met except for completion of the dissertation, students without assistantship or fellowship support may register for fewer hours during the semester with the recommendation of the dissertation advisor and approval of the department chair. Prior to the formal approval of a dissertation proposal, part of the 12 semester-hour course load during each fall and spring semester must consist of registration in PSYC 690—Psychological Research. These hours will not count toward the 90 semester hours required for the Ph.D.

All students in the Ph.D. program are required to complete an approved dissertation, based on a research study, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree. The dissertation will be a substantial contribution to knowledge in which the student displays ability to conduct original scholarship. The dissertation—via PSYC 799—will account for the equivalent of two semesters of the 90-hour total (18 hours minimum, 24 maximum).

Students admitted to the doctoral program who have received a master's degree in Psychology from other institutions will be expected to take the master's foundation courses. Petitions to substitute courses taken elsewhere for the above requirements must be approved by the faculty in a student's training program and a certification of equivalence must be obtained from the instructor of the relevant foundation course.

No formal minor is required by the department. However, training programs may have particular course requirements which all doctoral students in that program must complete and students should check with their training director if they have questions. In addition to required courses within a given program, students are encouraged to take additional courses outside their curricular area and, when appropriate, outside the department, to increase the breadth of their training.

An additional requirement for the Ph.D. in Psychology is the research tool requirement, operationalized by this department as a sequence of four statistics courses. Graduate level courses taken to satisfy the research tool requirement may be included on the 90-hour doctoral program of courses. More detailed information about the research tool requirement may be found in the section on "Steps & Procedures in the Ph.D. Program."

Students in Clinical Psychology or School Psychology must complete a year of internship. A student specializing in Clinical psychology must register in PSYC 655—Internship in Clinical Psychology for at least one semester hour for three consecutive semesters (i.e., fall semester, spring semester, and summer session) during the year of internship (three of these hours should be applied toward the 90 semester hours required for the Ph.D.). A Ph.D. student specializing in School Psychology must register in PSYC 656—Internship in School Psychology for a minimum of one semester hours each fall and spring semester and a minimum of one during the summer session for a total of 3-30 semester hours during the year of internship (four of these hours may be applied toward the 90 semester hours required for the Ph.D.). A non-Ph.D. student specializing in School Psychology must register in PSYC 656—Internship in School Psychology for a minimum of one semester hour each fall and spring semester (but will want to register for 12 each semester to meet the M.A. + 30 credit hour requirement) for a total of 1-24 semester hours during the year of internship.

STEPS AND PROCEDURES IN THE PH.D. PROGRAM

1. Application for Conditional Admission into the Doctoral Program

Prior to completion of the master's program, a student may apply for conditional admission to the doctoral program. A student may be considered for conditional admission provided a master's thesis advisor has been appointed, a positive recommendation has been received from the student's curricular area, and 30 semester credit hours have been completed with at least a 3.2 GPA in graduate psychology course work exclusive of thesis and independent study courses (including at least a 3.0 GPA in the Master's foundation courses). Admission to the doctoral program at this point is contingent upon completion of the M.A. degree with an outstanding research thesis by the end of the seventh semester following initial admission into the graduate program in psychology, a positive recommendation of the student's curricular area at the time of completion of the M.A., and a satisfactory GPA (see 3, below).

2. Confirmation of Continued Admission in the Doctoral Program

Upon completion of a Master's degree, students will only be continued in the doctoral program provided they have completed an outstanding research thesis, received a positive recommendation for continuation at that time from the student's curricular area, have at least a 3.2 GPA overall and in graduate psychology course work (exclusive of thesis and independent study courses), and achieved at least a 3.0 GPA in the Master's foundation courses. Students who complete more than three foundation courses should designate on the [Program of Courses form](#) which courses shall be used to meet the foundation requirement.

3. Completion of Research Tool Requirement

Before a dissertation director can be appointed, a student must meet the general Graduate School research tool requirement. This requirement may be met by one of the following options:

- a. Two research tools with average proficiency.
- b. One research tool with a high level of proficiency.

Proficiency in a research tool is demonstrated by the completion of designated courses in a particular research skill (see the following list). Completion of two (2) approved courses in a given research skill, with a grade of A or B in each fulfills one research tool at the *average* proficiency level; completion of four (4) courses (in one skill, with minimum grades of B) normally constitutes fulfillment of the research tool requirement at the *high* proficiency level. Courses used to satisfy the tool requirement must have the approval of the student's advisor, the department chair, and the dean of the Graduate School. The attached list indicates courses that, in appropriate combinations, may be acceptable in fulfillment of tool requirements.

Designated courses change periodically, and the student should consult with their training director before registering for a course to determine whether the course is currently approved by that training program. Courses designated as approved for the tool requirement may be nominated by any faculty member, and are approved by the department chair in consultation with the policy and planning committee. Courses also may be periodically deleted from the approved list. Courses taken outside the Department of Psychology and carrying graduate credit count toward the 15-hour limit of outside courses that can be applied toward the 90 hours required for the Ph.D. All proposed means of satisfying tool requirements are subject to the approval of the office of the dean of the Graduate School.

Approved Tool Course List

Computer Tool

CSCI 230	Computer Programming in Fortran
CSCI 240	Computer Programming in C++
CSCI 360	Computer Programming in Assembler Language
CSCI 461	Techniques of Computer Programming and Algorithmic Processes
CSCI 464	Data Structures in Assembly Language
ETT 539	Courseware Systems Development

Statistics and Quantitative Methodology Tool

ETR 562	Applied Categorical Data Analysis
ETR 590	Workshop in Research and Assessment
ETR 721	Nonparametric Statistics
ETR 722	Methods of Multivariate Analysis
ETR 724	Multilevel Modeling
ETR 725	Bayesian Approach to Educational Statistics and Decision Making
ETR 734	Construction of Scaling Instruments
ETR 735	Theory of Measurement
ETR 790	Workshop in Research and Assessment
PSYC 604	Analysis of Variance and Hypothesis Testing in Psychological Research
PSYC 606	Correlation and Regression Analysis in Psychological Research
PSYC 607	Psychometric Techniques
PSYC 671D	Studies in General Psychology: Quantitative Methods
PSYC 710	Multivariate Data Analysis in Psychological Research
PSYC 712	Structural Equation Modeling in Psychological Research
PSYC 714	Meta-Analysis in Psychological Research
STAT 573	Statistical Methods and Models I
STAT 574	Statistical Methods and Models II
STAT 665	Regression Analysis
STAT 666	Discrete Multivariate Data Analysis
STAT 670	Probability Theory
STAT 671	Stochastic Processes
STAT 672	Theory of Statistics
STAT 673	Linear Models
STAT 674	Design and Analysis of Experiments
STAT 675	Multivariate Methods of Statistics
STAT 676	Distribution-Free Statistics
STAT 677	Sampling Techniques
STAT 678	Time Series Analysis

Technical and Interdisciplinary Research Methodology Skills

PSYC 671E Studies in General Psychology: Instrumentation

PSYC 671D and PSYC 671E must be approved individually.
Seminar in Research Methods is not eligible for tool credit.

4. Preparation and Timelines for the Doctoral Candidacy Examination

All students seeking the Ph.D. in Psychology are required to pass an extensive written candidacy examination covering the student's curricular area. Candidacy examinations may be taken in any training program approved by the department. Currently these are: Clinical; Cognitive/Instructional, Developmental, Neuroscience and Behavior, School, and Social/Industrial-Organizational. Students should consult with their program director for information on all aspects of the examination, including preparation, procedures, and schedule. Of note: The training area also may require other evaluative procedures to comprise the candidacy examination. A student on academic probation is not eligible to take the candidacy examination.

For students continuing in the doctoral program following receipt of the Master's degree from the Department of Psychology, the candidacy examination must be completed by the deadline established by the student's training program.

For students entering the doctoral program with an M.A. in Psychology degree obtained elsewhere, the candidacy examination must be completed by the deadline established by the student's training program.

Any petition by a student for a delay in initial examination, a delay in re-examination, or an additional examination will require approval by the training program.

Prior to taking the doctoral candidacy examination, an examining committee must be appointed. Prior to the beginning of each semester, the coordinator of each curricular area shall determine the number of students required and electing to take the examination and notify the director of graduate studies so that examination committees can be nominated for Graduate School appointment. In each case, the faculty nominated to be members of the examining committee will be drawn primarily from the student's curricular area. The candidacy examining committee shall consist of at least three faculty members who must hold the status of full, senior, or provisional member of the graduate faculty or serve as graduate faculty scholars at NIU.

The examination shall be constructed and approved by the examining committee using the standard procedures determined by the student's curricular area.

The chair of the examining committee shall be responsible for scheduling and making arrangements for the administration of the examination and for notifying students of these arrangements. Each curricular area will develop its own policy for scheduling candidacy examinations during a given semester. The date of the examination will be announced by each examining committee chair.

5. Passing the Doctoral Candidacy Examination

The requirement for admission to doctoral degree candidacy is passing the doctoral candidacy examination. Prior to passing this exam, students may have a dissertation director appointed and may enroll in PSYC 799—Ph.D. Dissertation.

The examining committee shall grade the candidacy examination using procedures specified by the curricular area. A decision by the examining committee shall constitute a departmental decision and shall be so reported to the Graduate School. Each question will be graded by a minimum of two readers. The final evaluation of a student's performance should take into account the mean overall performance, the percentage of questions passed, and the total number of passing ratings. The decision to pass or fail a student shall be by majority vote of the faculty members on the examining committee. Final action on the examination will be completed as soon as possible, usually within two weeks of the administration of the examination.

The chair of the examining committee shall have the responsibility of communicating the results of the examination to the students concerned and to the director of graduate studies. All students taking the examination in a curricular area should be notified of their examination results as soon as possible and at approximately the same time. Faculty members shall refrain from discussing the examination in whole or in part with students until official notification has been received by the students. The chair of the examining committee will make arrangements for a faculty member to review the student's performance with the student. This review shall be confined to the committee's evaluation of the particular student's performance on the examination. Any other evaluations of student progress which are under the province and discretion of the examining committee and curricular area are not to be a part of the evaluation of the candidacy examination.

A student who fails the examination may, with the permission of the curricular area, repeat the examination. A student who fails the examination a second time will not be permitted to continue work towards the doctorate. Repeat examinations must be taken no later than the academic semester following the initial attempt, excluding the summer term.

The director of graduate studies shall be responsible for recording the results in the student's departmental file, and filing the appropriate forms with the Graduate School.

6. Appointment of Dissertation Director and Committee Members

All candidates for the Ph.D. degree are required to complete an approved dissertation, based on a research study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree. The dissertation will be a substantial contribution to knowledge in which the student displays ability to conduct original scholarship.

The student typically will discuss research ideas with several eligible faculty members prior to the appointment of the dissertation director. The selection of a dissertation director is a mutual decision made by the student and the faculty member. The decision will be based on the faculty member's competence in the particular research area, appropriate graduate faculty membership, and the faculty member's availability and willingness to provide adequate supervisory time during the dissertation period.

The faculty member will request in writing that the director of graduate studies make the nomination as dissertation director and will also recommend at least two additional faculty members to serve on the basic dissertation directing committee. The final examining committee will be comprised of at least four faculty members (one from outside the student's curricular area): The director, the dissertation-directing

committee members, plus any additional faculty readers needed to constitute the four-person final examining committee. Further, the director of graduate studies, with the consent of the director of the dissertation committee, may appoint an additional faculty reader at the time of the final oral defense. Committees to conduct the oral defense of the dissertation will be nominated by the director of graduate studies, approved by the college, and appointed by the dean of the Graduate School. All members of the thesis examination committee must hold formal status at NIU as either graduate faculty scholar, provisional member of the graduate faculty, full member of the graduate faculty, or senior member of the graduate faculty. With regard to the voting members of the dissertation committee:

- A majority must be tenured or tenure-track faculty members at NIU.
- At least one-half of the members must be senior members of the graduate faculty at NIU.
- All members must belong to the graduate faculty in the student's department or a closely related one as determined by the department chair (or designee).

A graduate faculty scholar or a full member of the graduate faculty may, with a senior member of the graduate faculty, co-chair a dissertation committee. In addition, the dean of the Graduate School or the dean's designee will serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member of all committees to conduct the oral defense of the dissertation. The dean or a dean's designee is to participate in both parts of the defense.

The Department of Psychology's Policy and Procedures Manual contains specific guidelines regarding faculty participation on thesis/dissertation committees. These guidelines were adopted in part to limit the number of committees on which a faculty member may serve. For example, faculty are discouraged from serving as the chair of more than five thesis/dissertation committees at any given time. Whereas it is not necessary for graduate students to review all of the specific guidelines or to learn the process that faculty use for requesting an exception, this issue is raised here so as to make students aware that faculty may decline to serve on a committee for this reason.

The Policy and Planning Committee clarified on 9/18/87 the Department policy on the question of curricular area and departmental restrictions on thesis and dissertation committees (amended 2/5/88).

The current official policy is that members of thesis/dissertation committees are recommended by the dean of the College to the dean of the Graduate School for their approval.

Recommendations to the dean of the College are made by the department. Training program restrictions on committee composition are informal practices typically conformed to on a collegial basis.

7. File Program of Courses

Please refer to the section in this Manual headed "Program of Courses" found under "General Procedures and Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree."

8. Registration for Ph.D. Dissertation Hours, PSYC 799

Before registration is permitted in PSYC 799—Ph.D. Dissertation, a student must have a dissertation director officially approved by the department chair. Students must always obtain departmental permission before registering for dissertation credit (PSYC 799). The graduate studies assistant will notify the student when permission has been granted by the advisor. Questions regarding number of hours to take should be addressed with your dissertation director. It is expected that the number of PSYC 799 hours in which a student is enrolled should reflect the amount of work undertaken that semester subject to minimum registration requirements specified in the [Graduate Catalog](#). Students are expected to devote a substantial amount of time to and make sustained progress toward completion of the dissertation.

Once a student has formally begun registration in PSYC 799—Ph.D. Dissertation, registration must be continued in each subsequent term—including summer terms—until the dissertation is formally approved by the Graduate School [Thesis and Dissertation Office](#). Registration for PSYC 799 may be in absentia.

If a student interrupts registration in PSYC 799 without obtaining a leave of absence, the student may be dismissed from the training program.

While a student is working on the dissertation, a grade of U or IP will be awarded. In the final semester in which the dissertation is successfully completed, a grade of S will be awarded. Grades of IP previously awarded will remain on the transcript.

9. Approval of Dissertation Proposal

Prior to any formal collection of data, the student must have an approved dissertation proposal, signed by members of the committee, on file in the department office (verbal agreement by the dissertation director, or by the committee, does not constitute such approval) and approval of the University's Institutional Review Board or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, as applicable. The filed proposal should be a document that has been edited, corrected, and typed in final form in accordance with APA Style.

The face sheet should be signed by committee members after final approval of the document. Dissertation proposals, together with the signed face sheet, should be submitted by the committee chair to the director of graduate studies, who will review them for conformance to the above guidelines, give departmental approval, and file them in the student's departmental folder. Committee members should keep their own copies. Urgency to begin data collection is not an acceptable reason for bypassing or delaying the proposal or for filing an inadequate proposal.

Writing a clear, concise research proposal is an important part of research training. It deserves the same care, supervision, and standard of quality that are expected in other aspects of graduate training. The quality of the accepted proposal sets a standard which is likely to be reflected in the subsequent submission of the written dissertation.

10. Admission to Candidacy

A student is not eligible to have a dissertation defense or to submit a dissertation for acceptance by the Graduate School prior to admission to doctoral degree candidacy.

11. Data Collection and IRB or IACUC Approval

Prior to any data collection on any research project (including the dissertation), the student must have received approval of the University's Institutional Review Board ([IRB](#)) or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee ([IACUC](#)), as applicable. Approval of IRB or IACUC is necessary prior to data collection for every research project involving human subjects (IRB) or animals (IACUC), whether the research being conducted is in conjunction with a course assignment, part of an independent study, a pilot study, a thesis or dissertation, a fellowship or grant study, or any other type of project.

If the research involves using and/or observing human subjects in any way, including the use of previously collected data, an IRB application must be submitted. The application—which must be co-signed by the student's research advisor—first is submitted to the Authorized Departmental Reviewer (ADR; typically, the director of graduate studies) of the Psychology Department's Human Subjects Review Committee. The ADR reviews each application to ensure that all required elements are included and complete, prior to forwarding acceptable applications on to the University's IRB for its review.

If the research involves using or observing animal subjects in any way, an IACUC application must be approved by the student's research advisor. The application then is submitted to the University's IACUC for its review and routed for appropriate signatures (research advisor, department chair).

Important information about the ethical conduct of research at NIU (and the process of securing approval to conduct research) can be found online at the [Office of Research Compliance, Integrity and Safety](#).

Application [forms](#) for IRB and IACUC review can be found online.

12. Appointment of Dissertation Examining Committee and Scheduling the Oral Examination/Defense of the Dissertation

As the dissertation nears completion, graduation requirements and deadlines become of greater concern. Please note: When completion of requirements for the degree approaches, it is the responsibility of the student to apply for graduation and comply with all related regulations, [deadlines](#), and graduation requirements of the Graduate School. A student who has not yet been admitted to doctoral degree candidacy or who is on academic probation is not eligible to have a dissertation defense or to submit a dissertation for acceptance by the Graduate School. When the dissertation has been completed to the satisfaction of the student and the dissertation director, the dissertation director will request the department chair to schedule the oral comprehensive examination/dissertation defense and to nominate to the dean of the Graduate School any additional faculty members needed to constitute the 4-person examining committee. All members of the thesis examination committee must hold formal status at NIU as either graduate faculty scholar, provisional member of the graduate faculty, full member of the graduate faculty, or senior member of the graduate faculty.

With regard to the voting members of the comprehensive examination and thesis committee:

- A majority must be tenured or tenure-track faculty members at NIU.
- At least one-half of the members must be senior members of the graduate faculty at NIU.
- All members must belong to the graduate faculty in the student's department or a closely related one as determined by the department chair (or designee).

The defensible copy of the dissertation must be in the hands of all members of the examining committee at least four weeks prior to the date of the oral examination. If this requirement cannot be met, the oral should be delayed, even if this delays the student's graduation. In a few instances faculty members have received copies only a day or two before the oral and/or have been pressured to have the oral when the dissertation was not yet in final form, so that the student could meet some deadline. This practice is unprofessional and unacceptable. Faculty members try to be accommodating but they cannot do an adequate job under these conditions. It is the responsibility of students to be aware of the deadlines and to make plans accordingly.

Voting on the acceptability of the written dissertation and voting on the oral examination/defense by the student are restricted to members of the dissertation examining committee. A student who fails this oral examination may, with the permission of the department, repeat it no sooner than the following academic term. A student who fails this examination a second time will not be permitted to continue work toward the degree in the program, and may be dismissed from the training program.

When the examination has been completed and all required changes have been made in the dissertation to the satisfaction of the examining committee, a report of the results of the examination will be forwarded to the Graduate School.

13. Graduate School Review and Approval of the Dissertation

Following final approval of the written dissertation by the dissertation committee, the dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate School in accordance with [deadlines](#) set by the Graduate School and regulations available from the NIU [Thesis and Dissertation Office](#).

STUDENT PUBLICATION

Students are encouraged to present research papers at professional meetings and to publish in professional journals. In particular, students are encouraged to submit the meeting abstract component of their theses and dissertations for presentation at the meetings of the appropriate professional societies. Such papers and journal manuscripts will normally be co-authored or sponsored by a member of the faculty of the Department of Psychology who will review and approve the manuscript prior to its submission. Under these conditions, NIU may be listed as the institutional affiliation.

In the event that a student submits a manuscript for presentation or publication without prior review and approval by a departmental faculty member, NIU should not be used as the institutional affiliation.

Unless specifically provided for under other university regulations, the final disposition of materials developed by a student and submitted to meet course requirements (e.g., PSYC 699, 799) remains the prerogative of the student. Should materials so developed result in publication, the authorship shall be determined by the student. Unless specifically provided for under other university regulations, data collected during the term of the appointment by a student employed as a research assistant shall be the property of the graduate faculty member. Should such data result in publication, the authorship shall be determined by the faculty member.

As a guiding principal, the Department of Psychology abides by Section 8.12 (Publication Credit) of the [APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct](#).

DEPARTMENTAL COMPUTER FACILITIES FOR STUDENT USE

In an effort to provide students with greater access to convenient computer facilities, the department provides computers in Room 324 for graduate student use. Computers are equipped with Windows Applications and various statistical software (e.g., SPSS). Additionally, access to NIU's network, library, E-Mail, and the Internet is provided.

GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Approved at the December 6, 1991 Faculty Meeting

To provide input to the department concerning matters relevant to the department's efforts to ensure a quality program of graduate education.

A. Composition

Six Student Members: Chosen from among full-time enrolled graduate students in good academic standing in the department. Each member will serve a one-year term, from the beginning to the end of the academic year. There is no limit on the total number of terms or on the number of successive terms an individual student may serve.

One member from each curricular area in the department will be elected by the students of that area. The faculty coordinator of each area will organize the elections and notify the department of the election results. The remaining members will be appointed by the director of graduate studies to attempt to balance committee membership with the proportionate numbers of graduate students in the different curricular areas and/or to enhance diversity of representation (e.g., to include representation of newer or longer-term students in the department, etc.). The director of graduate studies shall serve on the committee as a resource person in an ex-officio non-voting capacity.

The committee shall be chaired by a student selected by the committee at the first meeting of the committee during the academic year. This first meeting will be called by the director of graduate studies.

B. Duties

1. The committee will serve as a liaison between the Department's graduate student body and the Department Policy & Planning Committee and the director of graduate studies.
2. The committee shall serve as the primary group to which department graduate students can bring broad concerns on matters such as department policy and procedures and quality-of-life issues pertaining to graduate education. As appropriate, the committee will discuss and make recommendations on these matters to the Department Policy and Planning Committee and/or to the director of graduate studies.
3. The committee will also discuss and make recommendations, as appropriate, on issues referred to it by the Department Policy and Planning Committee or the director of graduate studies.
4. The committee chair shall serve on the Department's Policy and Planning Committee as an ex-officio non-voting member. The student will be involved in all aspects of committee functioning except those matters that are confidential as indicated by Departmental Policies or the University Constitution and Bylaws.
5. The committee will recommend graduate student representatives to the director of graduate studies when nominations are sought for certain department, college, graduate school, and university committees.
6. The committee will assist the director of graduate studies in gathering information about graduate students' experiences, concerns, and opinions on various issues, as appropriate.

Appendix A: BRIEF LIST OF STEPS AND PROCEDURES IN THE MASTER'S PROGRAM

<u>Procedure</u>	<u>Note</u>
1. File MA program of courses*	1. Before end of first semester, usually when registering for second semester courses
2. Appointment of thesis director and committee upon members	2. When agreed
3. Register for thesis hours (699). Permit form with required for initial registration only – graduate studies assistant will obtain permission in future semesters*	3. When work on thesis has begun, permission of advisor; credit hours determined by advisor. Continuous enrollment required until formal approval of thesis by the Graduate School
4. Apply for <i>conditional</i> admission into doctoral program. graduate studies assistant will notify you and provide instructions	4. Following appointment of thesis director and completion of 30 hours. Requires area endorsement
5. File thesis proposal*	5. When approved by committee
6. Apply for IRB or IACUC participant approval*	6. Prior to start of data collection
7. Appointment of thesis examination committee and scheduling of oral defense*	7. When thesis is completed to satisfaction
Complete Foundation courses	Prior to award of M.A.
Apply for graduation	Approximately six months before Graduation is anticipated.
8. Graduate studies assistant submits results of defense to Graduate School – student uploads final document electronically	8. When corrections to thesis made to satisfaction of examination committee

Additional Notes

- An asterisk (*) indicates that a form or permit is required. See the graduate studies assistant for forms or find links at: <http://www.niu.edu/psyc/graduate/current/masters.shtml>
- See the [Graduate School website](#) for all important [deadlines](#)
- Please note that some of the above elements and/or their sequencing may vary across curricular areas

Appendix B: BRIEF LIST OF STEPS AND PROCEDURES IN THE PH.D. PROGRAM

<u>Procedure</u> (numbering follows <i>Manual</i> text)	<u>Note</u>
1. Application for continuation in Doctoral Program - graduate studies assistant completes necessary paperwork	1. Immediately upon acceptance of the M.A. thesis – requires positive recommendation of area
2. Appointment of candidacy examination Committee – notify graduate studies assistant	2. Prior to taking candidacy examination – Student notifies area of intent to take exam
3. Fulfill tool requirement.	3. <i>Before</i> appointment of dissertation director
4. (4-5) Take candidacy examination - area reports results	(4-5) After conditional admission to the doctoral program, but before the end of the third semester following award of M.A.
6. Appointment director and committee*	6. Anytime following step 1
7. File doctoral program of courses*	7. Immediately upon appointment of dissertation director
8. Register for dissertation hours (799)* Permit form required for initial registration only – graduate studies assistant will obtain permission in future semesters	8. After dissertation work begun, after appointment of director; credit hours determined by director; continuous enrollment required until approval of document by the Grad School
9. File approved dissertation proposal*	9. Upon approval by committee -- prior to data collection
(10.) N/A	(10.) N/A
11. Apply for IRB or IACUC participant approval*	11. Prior to data collection
12. Appointment of oral defense committee and scheduling of oral examination*	12. When dissertation is completed to the satisfaction of the committee
<u>Apply</u> for graduation	Approximately six months before Graduation is anticipated.
13. Graduate studies assistant files results of defense to Graduate School – student uploads final document electronically	13. When corrections to dissertation made to satisfaction of examination committee

Additional Notes

- An asterisk (*) indicates that a form or permit is required. See the graduate studies assistant for forms or find links at: <http://www.niu.edu/psyc/graduate/current/masters.shtml>
- See the Graduate School website for all important deadlines: www.grad.niu.edu
- Please note that some of the above elements and/or their sequencing may vary across curricular areas