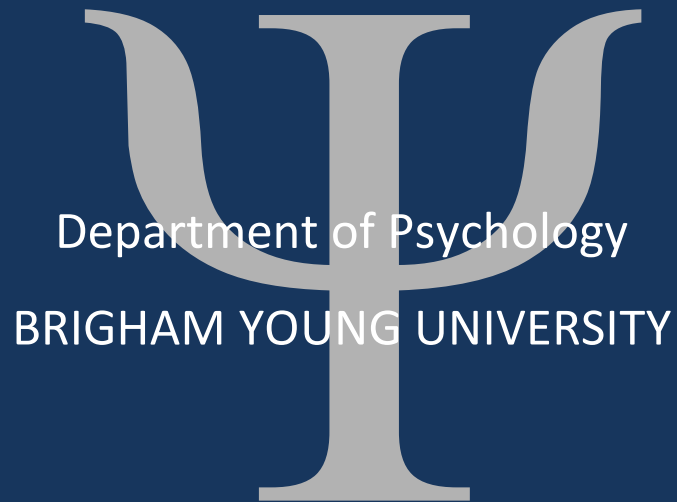


PSYCHOLOGY PHD HANDBOOK



Department of Psychology

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

Preface

Brigham Young University maintains a Policies and Procedures Manual that describes the university policies and procedures for graduate study at <https://gradstudies.byu.edu/page/policies-and-procedures>. Much of the material relevant to the student's graduate experience at BYU—taken from that manual—is found under various tabs on the Graduate Studies website, especially the [Current Students](#) tab. It is essential that you become familiar with the documents available there. The Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures Manual is the first and most important source of information available to you.

This Handbook is published by the Psychology Department as a supplement to the Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures Manual. This handbook describes policies and procedures that are specific to the Psychology PhD Program. There is a separate handbook for the Clinical Psychology PhD program. This Handbook has two main goals: first, to make clear the expectations and procedures related to the academic curriculum and graduation requirements; second, to provide some of the “nuts and bolts” of successful and timely completion of those requirements.

Comments and suggested revisions for the next edition of the handbook should be forwarded to the Student Programs Coordinator in the Department of Psychology.

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Introduction

Welcome from the Faculty

Welcome to the graduate programs in the Department of Psychology at Brigham Young University! We welcome you as a friend and colleague joining us in the development of the profession. We want you to feel accepted and comfortable at the University and in the community. If you have any difficulties with which we can help, please let us know. When you were admitted, you were assigned a Faculty Mentor who will serve as your Committee Chair throughout the program. If you have questions or need particular information, please talk to your assigned mentor first. If you need further assistance, please contact the Student Programs Coordinator.

The graduate alumni can be found in a variety of professional specialties. Many have reported that they were very well trained at Brigham Young University. We look forward to your own success and pledge our effort to help you. Work closely with your mentor in planning your program of study. To succeed, you will need to carefully consult the course requirement list for your emphasis area.

Department of Psychology Mission

Mission Statement - Dedicated to the discovery, dissemination, and application of truth about human nature.

Vision Statement - Our vision is to create an engaged, respectful community dedicated to intellectual inquiry and learning in an environment that fosters creative and critical thinking, active discourse and rigorous experimentation. We strive to discover and utilize knowledge about human beings that contributes to the betterment of human life. We seek to assist students to understand, integrate, and responsibly use that knowledge in their lives with breadth, depth, and character. We are a faith-based faculty who appreciate the diversity and value that divine revelation and spirit-guided living bring to intellectual and scientific inquiry. We encourage scholarly diversity by exposing our students to a wide range of theories about human nature and methods of investigation. We aspire to excellence in our undergraduate and graduate training programs, and in the human impact of our scholarship and service.

Values

- **Education:** Critical thinking; Effective communication; Discovery, dissemination, sharing and application of knowledge; Skill development
- **Excellence:** Striving for highest possible quality and impact in scholarship, service and teaching
- **Service:** Committed, generous, and collaborative service to the University, community and Church
- **Community:** Respect for students, faculty, staff, administration, and policies; Respect for diverse individual, theoretical and cultural viewpoints; Fostering of cooperation and altruism
- **Freedom:** Choice of direction of one's scholarly inquiry; Agent pursuit of personal growth, belief, and expression of faith
- **Spirituality:** Recognition of the Divine and the spiritual aspects of human nature

The Context of the University

Brigham Young University is a private institution sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). It originated from the Brigham Young Academy, a privately endowed school which was organized in 1875. Although the original academy was not directly sponsored by the Church, the LDS community and ecclesiastical leaders provided financial support for the institution for many years. In 1896 the LDS Church became the direct sponsor of the University and provided funds to support it. Today the Church provides the main financial support, and selected Church leaders are on the Board of Trustees.

Most undergraduates at Brigham Young University are members of the LDS Church. Their education in the liberal arts and sciences is augmented by classes focusing on religious topics. These students are a select group, with average ACT and SAT scores higher than those at any other university in the Intermountain West. About two-thirds of them are fluent in a language other than English.

The University has a unique funding model. Active members of the LDS Church contribute tithing (10% of income) to the Church. The University recognizes this contribution by keeping tuition considerably lower than that at most other private universities. The tithes of Church members pay about two-thirds of the cost of educating a BYU student. Students who are not members of the LDS Church pay double tuition, much like the higher tuition for non-residents at state institutions where resident taxes provide the main financial support. This tuition differential has been reviewed by many accrediting bodies, including the Commission on Accreditation and the American Bar Association. They recognize that students who are members of the LDS Church are already subsidizing the costs of the University.

The influence of ethical and moral values is directly felt by all who attend BYU. As part of the admissions procedure, all who apply are interviewed by an LDS bishop or a clergyman of their choice in order to affirm their commitment to the university's standards. During the Department's interview of graduate finalists, the Honor Code is again explained, including the Academic Honesty Policy and Ecclesiastical Endorsement Program, as well as Dress and Grooming Standards and Residential Living Standards. These can be accessed through the Honor Code Office web site or the Graduate Studies web site.

Those who enroll at the University agree to abide by these behavioral standards, reaffirming this commitment in an annual ecclesiastical interview. LDS students are expected to remain in good standing in the Church.

THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Department Information

The Department of Psychology is in the College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences. The department chair and the administrative staff are a resource for you to use. The faculty in the department are divided approximately equally between the clinical psychology and psychology programs.

- [Administrative Staff](#)
- [Faculty](#)

Graduate Course Listing

The current listing of graduate courses can be found on the [Graduate Studies website](#). Students without undergraduate pre-requisites can typically enroll by consent of the course instructor.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND STUDENT-FACULTY RELATIONS

Our program is founded on principles of respect for one another, tolerance for differences, ethical behavior, and fairness in our activities. Beyond providing a positive learning environment, we seek to model the values and behaviors we expect of our graduates as they proceed into their professional lives. Whereas the policies described in this section are designed to clarify ways in which problems can arise and the due process in handling them, we emphasize that problems are not commonplace and that nearly all program activities are marked by conscientiousness, respect, and evident progress. To further enhance our positive learning environment, and to assure that students understand their rights and responsibilities, particular policies and procedures are described here to highlight key elements.

Students with Disabilities

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities who are otherwise qualified to participate in BYU's programs and activities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact Assistant Dean Wendy Archibald at 801-422-5576 or the University Accessibility Center, 2170 WSC, at 801-422-2767. Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the Accessibility Center. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Opportunity Manager, D-282 ASB, at 801-422-5895 or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours) or D-282 ASB. In addition, individuals may submit reports, including anonymous reports, through EthicsPoint at https://ethicspoint.com/domain/en/default_reporter.asp, or 888-238-1062.

Preventing Sexual Harassment

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education and pertains to admissions, academic and athletic programs, and university-sponsored activities. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment of students by university employees, other students, and visitors to campus. If you encounter sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 801-422-5895 or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours), or <https://titleix.byu.edu/> or contact the Honor Code Office at 801-422-2847.

For a detailed description of the university policy, information for victims and respondents, and other topics, please review the university policy at [Title IX Website](#).

Sexual Misconduct Policy

Brigham Young University is committed to promoting and maintaining a safe and respectful environment for the campus community. The university will not tolerate sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking (collectively "Sexual Misconduct")

regardless of the sex or marital status of the parties involved. This policy prohibits Sexual Misconduct perpetrated by or against university employees (including all faculty, staff, administrative employees, and student employees), university students, visitors to the university (such as independent contractors, vendors, visiting lecturers, camp participants, and visiting students), and other participants in university programs and activities on campus and in off-campus areas controlled by the university.

This policy establishes a process whereby an individual who believes he or she has been subjected to Sexual Misconduct (“Complainant”) may report to the university. The university will take prompt and appropriate steps to stop Sexual Misconduct, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects by

- educating members of the campus community about this policy and applicable laws;
- promptly addressing and resolving reports of Sexual Misconduct in accordance with this policy;
- protecting the rights of all parties involved in a complaint;
- providing support and assistance to the parties involved in a report of Sexual Misconduct; and
- imposing appropriate discipline against those who have engaged in Sexual Misconduct.

Any person who violates this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment, suspension, dismissal, and a ban from campus, depending on the circumstances and the severity of the violation and the violator’s status as an employee, student, or visitor.

For a detailed description of prohibited conduct, reporting of incidents, complaint resolution procedures and training, please review the university policy at <https://policy.byu.edu/view/index.php?p=155>.

Academic Conduct

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism) is unacceptable and will result in whatever disciplinary action the instructor and program deem appropriate, including no credit for assignments, failure of the course, referral to the Honor Code Office, and/or other program and University sanctions (including dismissal). Portraying the work of others as their own, whether intended or not, is unethical. In university courses students are expected to learn the appropriate procedures of their discipline for citing others’ work. Remember that all students are bound by the University Honor Code and guidelines for avoiding plagiarism and other academic misconduct and by an obligation for assisting other students in fulfilling their commitment to be honest and respectful. Honor Code violations are handled through the Honor Code Office. See honorcode.byu.edu for more information.

Professionalism in Public Representations

Each person within the University community should understand that their affiliation with the University and as professionals within psychology places a responsibility for them regarding their behavior and public representations. We must always act with an understanding that our behavior can be viewed by some as a reflection upon our professional lives, employers, program, and profession. The affected situations are numerous, but we draw your attention to three:

- Dress in professional environments. When engaged in professional activities (including professional presentations, such as dissertation defenses), students are expected to dress professionally. This may require more than simply meeting the dress and grooming standards of the Honor Code.
- Responsibility in blogs, networking web sites, ringtone, voicemail, email, etc. Remember that the manner in which students represent themselves to others is often available to a wider audience. Students should see that it reflects well on them. They must understand that prospective employers, clients, and others may do web searches on them, revealing pictures on social networking sites and other information they might have thought to be private.
- Cell phones and laptops. Students are asked to please be considerate of how these devices affect those around them. Common courtesy dictates that in interpersonal situations, including class, supervision, and client contacts, full attention is given. In these circumstances it would be inappropriate to receive telephone calls or send/receive text messages. It is expected that cell phones are off or silent during classes and that any computer activities during classes and presentations are directly related to those activities. Individual instructors may have additional policies.

Informal Resolution of Concerns

Even with the best efforts of faculty and students, problems can arise. If we are to improve and foster the positive environment of our aspirations, problems should be addressed in a productive and positive process. An informal approach can often achieve a dialogue and cooperation that a formal grievance cannot. Thus, in keeping with the spirit of our professional ethical code, we encourage students and faculty to be open about concerns and work toward productive resolution. Recognizing the limited position of students, we attempt to provide additional avenues for achieving satisfactory resolutions. When appropriate, students are encouraged to speak to involved faculty members, external mentors, or fellow students about concerns. Next, students should consider approaching a trusted faculty mentor or the Coordinator of Student Programs. Regardless of the individual to whom the student speaks, the student should consider giving that person permission to carry concerns to higher levels. Faculty members have a responsibility to take these concerns seriously; if they cannot reassure the student or resolve them to the student's satisfaction and they have permission, it is expected that they will bring them to the attention of those who can resolve them. Remember that we do not share concerns given in confidence without the student's permission (unless legally or ethically required to do so), but without such permission options that can bring successful conclusion may be limited. Typically, the program directors can investigate concerns and provide advice, encouragement, and support to both the concerned parties and those creating the concerns. With permission, they can also raise the issue with others, such as the Department Chair, the College Dean, or the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Formal Grievance Policy

If a student is concerned about the manner in which any academic issue has been handled or about any issue of personal conduct, several avenues are available. First, the informal resolution of concerns described above may be an option. Second, violations of Honor Code policies can be reported to the Honor Code Office, which will investigate. Third, issues of sexual harassment can and usually should be reported to the Equal Opportunities Office, which will investigate and move the matter forward. Fourth, a formal grievance can be filed. The grievance procedure is an escalating series of steps, outlined by Graduate Studies, whereby the student's concerns may be heard and the situation resolved.

Students should remember that they have a right to file a grievance at any time. A complete description of the Graduate Academic Grievance Policy process is found in Section B of the *Policies and Procedures* document under the Resource section of the Graduate Studies website: <https://gradstudies.byu.edu/page/policies-and-procedures>. Briefly, the student is encouraged to go first to the teacher of the course, the Chair of the Graduate Committee, or the Graduate Director to discuss the matter within one year from the last day of final examinations of the semester in which the alleged grievance occurred. This step may be skipped if the grievance involves the teacher or chair, or if the student is concerned about reprisals. If the situation is not resolved, then the student may petition the Chair of the Department of Psychology in writing, and, if that does not prove satisfactory, the Dean of the College of Family, Home and Social Sciences for a review of the hearing. If no resolution is reached at the department or college level, and if the matter involves terminating the student from the graduate program, then the student may submit a written request for review to the Dean of Graduate Studies. A committee of two graduate faculty members and one graduate student from a different department will consider the student's appeal and the department's response, and then make a recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who makes a final decision. A copy of the Graduate Student Academic Grievance Procedure can be found [here](#).

REGISTRATION AND CREDIT POLICIES

Minimum Registration Requirements

All students are required to register for at least 6 credit hours per academic year, including at least 2 credit hours per semester or term in which they use any university facilities, consult with faculty, or take comprehensive or oral examinations. Students failing to meet minimum registration requirements are discontinued from graduate study by the office of Graduate Studies.

For example, students completing a dissertation must be registered for at least 2 credit hours in the semester or term in which the dissertation is defended. They must also be registered for at least 2 credit hours in the semester in which they graduate. Thus, students graduating in August must register for a total of at least 2 credit hours during the preceding Spring or Summer Term (or a combination of both) even if they have defended their dissertations in earlier semesters. (Consult Graduate Studies for specifics on Spring/Summer registration requirements for your situation.)

International students are required to register for at least 9 hours each Fall and Winter Semester to fulfill U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service requirements.

Full-Time Status

All students are required by the Psychology Department to work full-time toward the completion of their degree requirements, including coursework, research, dissertation, assistantships, and internships. This typically eliminates the ability of students to maintain employment outside the university setting. For tuition purposes, a student who is enrolled for 8.5 or more credit hours a semester or 4.5 hours or more a term is considered a full-time student. Doctoral students who are enrolled for fewer than 8.5 credit hours per semester can request full-time status under certain conditions. This may be appropriate for students who are involved full-time in pursuit of their degrees who need full-time status in order to defer repayment of student loans and who are required to register for only 2 credit hours. Students who are completing the dissertation may also qualify for the exception. The student must:

1. Have completed all required course work and have only the dissertation to complete or be limited to less than full-time enrollment because of an internship.
2. Be enrolled for at least 2 credit hours per semester or 1 credit hour per term.
3. Be certified by his or her department as being engaged full-time (40 hours or more per week) in pursuit of a degree.

Students are referred to the Graduate Studies website for the other requirements.

<http://gradstudies.byu.edu/>.

Students should direct their requests for an exception to the Student Programs Coordinator.

Time Limits and Outdated Credits

The Department of Psychology expects completion of a doctoral degree in four years. Students need to work on the requirements on a full-time basis. Failure to do so may result in termination from the program for lack of progress. However, on rare occasions, there are extenuating circumstances such as serious health issues, military service, etc. The University allows for such extreme conditions by permitting coursework to be considered current for up to eight years for PhD courses. Students should never infer that these generous parameters are to be used as standard procedure: Matriculation in a program may be terminated at any time for failure to make satisfactory progress toward the degree.

The Graduate Studies time limit policy allows the doctoral degree courses to remain current for up to 8 years after the first semester of enrollment. Only credit received within the time limit for each degree may count toward the degree. The University, not the Department, establishes the policy governing petitions to extend time limits and to include outdated credit. The Policies and Procedures Manual on the Graduate Studies website states:

1. Departments and colleges may petition for an extension of up to one year by providing reasonable evidence that extenuating circumstances caused an unavoidable delay in the student's progress toward a degree.
2. To petition for an extension of more than one year but no more than five years, the department and student must write up a contract with a detailed time line to degree completion. This contract must include impressive documentation that any outdated credits have been updated by courses retaken, by special readings courses in the subjects outdated, or by examinations in each of the courses, and it must be signed by the student and all the members of the graduate committee.
3. No credit outdated by more than eight years may apply to a current degree, regardless of circumstances.

For more information on registration requirements and credit policies, refer to the [Graduate Studies website](#), including the *Policies and Procedures Manual* found there.

GRADUATE COMMITTEES

The department uses a committee system to implement the graduate program, with a separate graduate committee constituted for each student. The major roles of this advisory committee include 1) assisting the student in the completion of the dissertation, and 2) advising, guiding, and mentoring throughout the student's graduate career.

Initial Advisement

Once accepted into a graduate program, students should consult with their faculty mentor regarding the selection of a dissertation committee. Students must select a 3-member committee for the second year project by the end of the first semester (this occurs in conjunction with the submission of the Program of Study form; see below). The full dissertation committee (four or more members) must be selected by the end of the second year in the program. Committee members can also provide valuable advice regarding subsequent registrations.

The Role of Dissertation Committees

Mentoring is an important element of our graduate programs. Many of the skills, attitudes, and knowledge sets are learned experientially, outside of formal classroom settings. The dissertation committee is at the heart of the student's mentoring opportunities and has a responsibility to see that the student is properly mentored in all of the forms that the program requires.

Doctoral dissertation committees consist of, at a minimum, four members. Members of the committee must have graduate faculty status.

All committee members share in the responsibility of advising the student concerning course work, degree requirements, and research. For example, all participate in such events as prospectus meetings and dissertation defenses and are responsible for the evaluation of the student's performance. At the same time, it is recognized that the individual contribution of committee members may vary by kind, effort, and intensity.

The relationships between a graduate student and the committee chair and between the student and the other committee members are unique. The student should feel entitled to a considerable amount of the chair's time and effort. The chair advises the student about course work and consults with the student in designing and completing the dissertation. However, the dissertation is ultimately the student's responsibility, and hence the chair's role is that of an advisor rather than supervisor.

The chair also assumes significant responsibility in helping the student find opportunities for professional involvement, including such things as presenting papers at professional meetings and providing a variety of teaching, research, and other professional experiences as appropriate.

The chair may also try to help the student find his or her first professional position upon graduation. This might involve writing letters of recommendation, being alert to the type of position for which the student would be suited, and making personal contacts where appropriate. The student should keep the chair informed about professional goals, unique needs that are and are not being met in the program, and professional activities.

Students have the primary responsibility for developing the Program of Study and for designing the dissertation project. Hence, they should become familiar with graduate school policies as well as department requirements in order to develop a program of study, and should bring research proposals to the chair when designing a dissertation project. Students should not expect the chair to take the initiative. The other committee members play less active roles in guiding students.

Selecting a Dissertation Committee

Students are assigned a committee chair upon admission. In consultation with the committee chair, the student should organize two more faculty to serve on the second-year project committee no later than the end of their first semester (see requirements for the second-year project below). Upon successfully defending the second year project, students should select the remaining fourth committee member by the end of the second year. While BYU Graduate Studies only requires 4 members on the dissertation committee, more members may be added if deemed appropriate by the committee chair and the student. If a faculty member desired for the committee does not hold an appointment on the graduate faculty, a petition may be filed with the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies requesting special permission for the individual to serve on the committee. On rare occasions a professional in the community or a faculty member from another university may be permitted to serve on the committee when the need is clear. However, the committee chair, who always is a member of the BYU graduate faculty in the Department of Psychology, must be in agreement and the petition process successfully completed.

The Program of Study form, which includes a section for the designation of the chair and committee members, must be submitted to the Student Programs Coordinator by the end of the first semester. Committee members generally remain as permanent members of the student's committee until the degree is complete. Thus, the faculty group that evaluates and makes decisions concerning the prospectus is the same group that evaluates the completed dissertation.

In setting up a committee, a student should give thought primarily to the faculty members' scholarly interests and areas of expertise. The following guidelines should also be considered:

1. Choose people your chair is comfortable working with.
2. Choose people you believe you will enjoy working with.
3. Get a balanced committee in terms of experience level, gender, editorial style, etc.
4. Especially consider people who will have enthusiasm for your area of expected research.

Occasionally, a faculty member may not be able to accommodate a request to serve on a committee

Changing a Graduate Committee

If a student wishes to change the composition of the original committee, it is possible to do so by securing the agreement of the new chair or member(s) to serve on the committee, informing the committee member(s) being replaced, and completing the request for Program of Study Change, which can be obtained from the Student Programs Coordinator. The student marks the box

designated “These signatures constitute a change in the graduate advisory committee” and obtains the signatures of all members of the newly constituted committee. Finally, the Associate Chair of Student Concerns signs the form which is then returned to the Student Programs Coordinator. It is important that the student make committee changes in a timely manner rather than waiting until the scheduling of the defense.

It may become desirable to change the composition of a dissertation committee if:

1. The student becomes interested in a new area of scholarship or research and finds it desirable to work with different faculty members.
2. The student makes a substantial change in anticipated professional goals.
3. A faculty member’s leave or other duties would interfere with serving on the committee.

COURSES AND PROGRAM OF STUDY

Department Course Listing

See the [Graduate Studies website](#) for current course listing.

Program of Study

Doctoral programs have certain course requirements for their degrees. The Program of Study is a student's personal plan for those requirements. Forms can be obtained from the Student Programs Coordinator in 1001 KMBL.

Students should list all courses (prerequisites, major courses, and electives) they plan to take throughout their graduate career at BYU. Students in the Psychology PhD program are required to take a minimum of 55 credit hours.

Once all courses have been determined, the student should review the program of study with the members of his or her graduate committee and obtain the signatures of approval on the form. The form is then submitted to the Student Programs Coordinator. Thus, the signed Program of Study form informs the department of both the constitution of the student's graduate committee as well as the coursework that will be completed in pursuit of the graduate degree.

Program of Study Form Submission Deadline

Students should submit their program of study forms by the end of the first semester. Failure to meet this deadline will result in a Marginal rating, which will be changed to an Unsatisfactory rating if the program of study form is not submitted within three months of the Marginal rating. In addition, students who have not filed a program of study form on time may not be able to register for subsequent terms or semesters. Individual Graduate Progress Reports are printed in anticipation of student evaluations in late fall or early winter semester, so it is imperative that your Program of Study be current in order to correctly reflect your progress.

Remember that the initial program of study form is not a final, binding contract. Like the graduate committee, it is easy to revise. It is a tentative plan to be altered as circumstances change, as interests develop, and as course offerings are modified. However, the preliminary tasks of identifying a committee and submitting a program of study form must be completed during the first semester in residence even though students may feel somewhat unprepared to do so. Students who fail to do so often find that they missed taking a course that is offered only alternate years, or they neglected to take a prerequisite for an important course.

Effective planning of one's career is an indicator of professional responsibility. Satisfactory development of a program of study form will be taken into account in the faculty's semi-annual review and evaluation of a student's progress and performance.

ACADEMIC EVALUATION

Competence

Graduate training is, at its core, the development of competencies. Thus, the focus of our students' education is more on the developing student rather than the completion of requirements. The required activities are indeed important, but primarily as the mechanisms the program uses to develop the needed skills. Thus, academic evaluation uses a variety of assessments and metrics, depending upon the student's program, to evaluate the student's progress. The goal is to attain by graduation, at a minimum, those skills expected of a professional with that degree.

Grades and Performance

Graduate work that is awarded a grade of "B" is considered to be the lowest level of acceptable performance. A grade of "B-" is a marginal or warning grade. If it is received in a course that appears on the program of study, the class must be retaken in a subsequent semester, and the student may be subjected to a special review by the faculty. A grade of "B+" or better is considered a professional level of performance. Graduate Studies requires students to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0.

Students who have a grievance about a course grade or any other matter of concern are advised to follow the guidelines outlined in the first section of this chapter.

Progress Reports

Graduate Studies maintains an individualized Graduate Progress Report for each student. The report compares the program of study form with the courses taken and summarizes the student's progress in the program in terms of courses completed, current registration, courses deficient, courses taken which do not apply to the program of study, and grade point average. In addition, the progress report alerts a student to possible problems with academic status, GPA, prerequisite degrees, minimum registration requirements, time limits, and outdated credits. Finally, the report identifies the chair and members of the student's committee and indicates whether or not a Program of Study has been submitted.

Students may access their Graduate Progress Reports through MyBYU at any time. Questions, concerns, and discrepancies should be addressed to the Student Programs Coordinator, the Executive Coordinator of Psychology, or the faculty member most directly involved in the issue.

The Graduate Progress Report is considered carefully by the faculty in the annual and semi-annual evaluations of students. It is imperative that students take the initiative in correcting any errors that may appear in the report. Furthermore, students should submit the request for Program of Study Change forms as often as needed to keep their program of study forms current.

Leaves of Absence

Graduate Studies states that students may request a leave of absence for the following reasons only: medical, military, or mission. The 8-year time limit for the doctoral degree still applies. While on leave, the student is NOT responsible for:

1. Minimum Registration (6 hours per academic year)
2. Satisfactory progress in the program (two evaluations per academic year).
Departments do not need to evaluate for satisfactory progress during the leave.

Students requesting a leave must submit appropriate documents to Graduate Studies: The

Leave of Absence form (found on the Graduate Studies website), as well as one of the following: **medical**—letter from the doctor/therapist that includes the amount of time away recommended by the professional; **military**—copy of the military assignment that includes the length of the assignment; **mission**—copy of the mission call letter and indication of when the student will return to school. Once Graduate Studies has received and processed the request, the “leave” status appears in the university information system.

Graduate Student Evaluation and Feedback

In compliance with graduate school policy, each student is evaluated formally by the program evaluation committee at least twice annually. Students can expect to be evaluated on their total academic performance, their status in developing competencies expected of graduates, their fulfillment of program requirements (program of study submitted, graduate committee constituted, courses completed on schedule, etc.), their research progress, and professional/ethical behavior. See also [Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures Manual, Evaluations of Student Progress](#).

Students receive overall ratings of Satisfactory, Marginal, or Unsatisfactory twice each year that are entered into the University records database for submission to Graduate Studies. Students are also given written feedback about their performance, particularly at the end-of-academic-year evaluation. When a student’s progress is evaluated as Marginal, specific direction will be provided by the committee chair or Graduate Coordinator outlining steps that must be taken in order to bring the performance up to a satisfactory level.

Unsatisfactory Ratings. When student progress is evaluated as Unsatisfactory, this means that the faculty has very serious concerns about the student. If the student’s performance does not show prompt improvement the student will be terminated from the program. **Students are automatically terminated if they receive two consecutive ratings that are less than satisfactory (two Unsatisfactory ratings or a Marginal and an Unsatisfactory rating; a Marginal rating may not be followed by a second Marginal rating).** Thus, if a student receives an Unsatisfactory (or Marginal) evaluation, he or she should meet with the chair, as well as the Graduate Coordinator to determine what needs to be done for progress to become satisfactory. Other faculty, as deemed appropriate, may meet with the student as well.

REMEDICATION AND DISCONTINUANCE

The violation of certain University regulations will result in either a loss of the student’s eligibility to register or termination of the student’s graduate status.

There are two possible avenues of action in such circumstances. The first is Loss of Eligibility to Register. This simply means that the student is not allowed to register until he or she has cleared up the problem. This action is accompanied by a plan of remediation; the action occurs because there is a concern that needs correction, and it is expected that remediation can and is likely to occur. Loss of Eligibility to Register may occur if:

1. The student has not fulfilled the minimum registration requirement (6 hours per year), has withdrawn from the graduate program, or has had his or her graduate degree status terminated by the department.
2. The student has not submitted a program of study as required: master's students by the third week of the second semester after admission; doctoral students by the third week of the beginning of the second year. (Note: This is a university rule; the department requires that graduate students submit their programs of study by the end of the first semester.)
3. Graduate Studies has not received official transcripts showing that the required prerequisite degrees have been conferred.
4. The student has violated the BYU Honor Code and is not cleared by the Honor Code Office.
5. The student has failed to submit an annual Continuing Ecclesiastical Endorsement.
6. The student's time limit has expired.

The second disciplinary action is Termination of Graduate Status. This may occur if the student:

1. Receives either Marginal or Unsatisfactory overall ratings at two consecutive reviews.
2. Fails to fulfill the University's minimum registration requirement.
3. Makes a request to withdraw (with the intent to pursue a degree at another university, for personal reasons, or in response to the department's recommendation).
4. Receives a Marginal or Unsatisfactory rating in a review by the academic department and is unable or unwilling to comply with the conditions for continuance outlined by the department.
5. Fails to make what the department or the University deems to be satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree.
6. Fails departmental comprehensive examinations.
7. Fails the final oral examination (defense of dissertation or project).
8. Violates the university's standards of conduct or Honor Code.
9. Exceeds the time limit (5 years for master's students, 8 years for doctoral students)

Student Grievance Procedure

If a student is concerned about the manner in which any academic issue has been handled, the student may provide additional information and request a reconsideration, may informally approach the Department Chair to engage the program committee in a dialogue, or may file a formal grievance. The grievance procedure is outlined by Graduate Studies whereby the student's concerns may be heard and the situation resolved. A complete description of the process is found under the resource section of the [Graduate Studies website](#).

PSYCHOLOGY PH.D. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The doctoral program in Psychology offers a rigorous educational experience leading to the Ph.D. degree. The first four semesters of the program are designed to provide broad acquaintance with the substantive areas of the discipline, training in research skills, and introduction to the particular areas of emphasis offered in the program. During the last two years students pursue more specialized training in one of the emphasis areas listed below:

- (1) Applied Social Psychology
- (2) Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience
- (3) Developmental Psychology

All students complete a common core of course work during the first four semesters. By the end of the second year in the program, all students should have completed the core course requirements. Students also complete a second-year project described below. Following the completion of the core coursework, students take their comprehensive exams at the beginning of their third year in the program. In the third year and beyond, students continue to concentrate on research in their area of emphasis. Students may take additional courses/seminars that are relevant to their course of study. During the third year students should defend their Ph.D. prospectus and begin collecting data. By the end of the fourth year students complete and defend the dissertation, including a journal article version that is in an acceptable form for submission for publication.

Requirements

Total Credit Hour Requirement: 55 Credit Hours
37 course work hours, 18 dissertation hours

Required Course Work:

PSYCH 501 Data Analysis 1 (3 cr)

PSYCH 502 Data Analysis 2 (3 cr)

PSYCH 504 Research Design (3 cr)

PSYCH 520 Developmental Psychology (3 cr)

PSYCH 550 Social Psychology (3 cr)

PSYCH 575 Cognitive Processes (3 cr)

PSYCH 585 Human Neuropsychology/Biological Bases of Behavior (3 cr)

PSYCH 605 Professional Seminar in Psychology (6 semesters – 6 cr total at 1 cr per term)

PSYCH 609 Professional and Ethical Issues in Psychology Research (1 cr)

PSYCH 552, 626 or 687R Required Classes by area (3 cr)

Elective Course Work:

Electives from the specialty area selected in consultation with the graduate committee (6 cr)

Research: 18 Credit Hours

PSYCH 799R Dissertation (18 cr)

Examinations:

1) Second-Year Research Project Defense, 2) Comprehensive Exam, 3) Dissertation Prospectus Defense, 4) Dissertation Defense

Suggested Sequence of Program Requirements**First Year Fall Semester**

Psych 501 Data Analysis in Psychological Research – 1 (3 credits)
Psych 550 Social Psychology (3 credits)
Psych 605R Professional Seminar in Psychology (1 credit)
Psych ____ An elective area course or the required area emphasis course (3 credits)

Due by end of semester:

 Selection of second-year project committee
 Program of study form
 Second-Year Research Project Definition Form and a 250-word abstract of the project

First Year Winter Semester

Psych 504 Research Design (3 credits)
Psych 585 Human Neuropsychology/Biological Bases of Behavior (3 credits)
Psych 605R Professional Seminar in Psychology (1 credit)
Psych 799R Dissertation (2 credits)

First Year Spring Term

Psych 609 Professional and Ethical Issues in Psychology Research (1 credit)
Psych 799R Dissertation (2 credits)

Second Year Fall Semester

Psych 502 Data Analysis in Psychological Research – 2 (3 credits)
Psych 575 Cognitive Processes (3 credits)
Psych 605R Professional Seminar in Psychology (1 credit)
Psych ____ Required area emphasis course (3 credits)

Due by end of semester:

 Second-year project manuscript to committee chair

Second Year Winter Semester

Psych 520 Developmental Psychology (3 credits)
Psych 605R Professional Seminar in Psychology (1 credit)
Psych ____ An elective area course or the required area emphasis course (3 credits)
Psych 799R Dissertation (2 credits)

Due in February:

 Second-year project poster presentation

Due by end of semester:

 Final version of the second-year project
 Selection of full dissertation committee

Second Year Spring Term

Psych 693 Teaching Psychology (not required for program credit, but required to be a graduate student instructor) (3 credits, optional)

Second Year Summer Term

Students will complete the comprehensive exam at the end of summer term.

Third Year Fall Semester

Psych 605R Professional Seminar in Psychology (1 credit)

Psych 799R Dissertation (1 credits)

Third Year Winter Semester

Psych 605R Professional Seminar in Psychology (1 credit)

Psych 799R Dissertation (1 credits)

Due by end of semester:

Dissertation prospectus successfully defended

Third Year Spring Term

Psych 799R Dissertation (2 credits)

Fourth Year Fall Semester

Psych 799R Dissertation (2 credits)

Fourth Year Winter Semester

Psych 799R Dissertation (2 credits)

Fourth Year Spring Term

Psych 799R Dissertation (2 credits)

Due by end of term:

Final dissertation defense (see [Graduate Studies website](#) for deadlines.)

Area Specific Courses

Must take the required courses in your chosen emphasis area plus elective credits from your chosen emphasis area.

Applied Social Psychology

- Psych 552 (3 cr) Applied Social Psychology (Required)
- Psych 510 (3 cr) History and Systems of Psychology
- Psych 540 (3 cr) Personality Theory
- Psych 750R (3 cr) Advanced Topics in Social Psychology

Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience

- Psych 514 (1 cr) Computational Neuroimaging Analysis
- Psych 515 (3 cr) Neuroimaging Analysis 1: Structural Imaging
- Psych 516 (3 cr) Neuroimaging Analysis 2: Diffusion Weighted Imaging
- Psych 517 (3 cr) Neuroimaging Analysis 3: fMRI
- Psych 687R (3 cr) Seminar in Psychopharmacology (Required)
- Psych 712R (3 cr) Seminar in Neuroanatomy
- Psych 785R (3 cr) Advanced Topics in Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience

Developmental

- PSYCH 626 (3 cr) Advanced Biological Bases of Development (Required)
- PSYCH 627 (3 cr) Advanced Social Development
- PSYCH 628 (3 cr) Advanced Perceptual and Cognitive Development
- PSYCH 720R (3 cr) Advanced Topics in Developmental Psychology

SPECIALTY AREAS

APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

This specialty focuses on the individual and his or her social context and how he or she relates to it. Topics include the self, person perception, aggression, pro-social behavior, attitudes and attitude change, and group processes. Applied Social Psychology students apply basic theory and research to real world problems in areas such as business and industry, health, education, and mass communications.

[Applied Social Faculty.](#)

COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Students in this specialty area study and examine the biological factors that control behavior. Instruction often focuses on brain function but may include any biological system.

[Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience Faculty.](#)

DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Students in this specialty area study and examine various factors that affect perceptual, cognitive, and social behavior from infancy through adolescence and early adulthood using human and non-human species. Students also examine neurotypical and atypical development as well as issues of mental and physical health.

[Developmental Faculty](#)

HEALTH EMPHASIS

In addition to one of the emphasis areas listed above, students may also opt for an emphasis in Health Psychology. Health psychology is a growing sub-specialty focused on understanding connections between psychological processes and physical health. Health psychologists conduct research and provide clinical care to promote optimal physical and mental health. The emphasis area represents a course of study common to both the Psychology PhD program and the Clinical Psychology PhD program. Students who choose to pursue this emphasis retain primary affiliation in their selected department area (e.g., clinical, social, developmental, cognitive and behavioral neuroscience) but pursue additional coursework, practicum experiences, and research topics that will enhance their preparation for careers in health psychology.

Health Psychology Emphasis Requirements

In addition to standard PhD requirements, students will be required to complete the following courses (8 credits):

Psych 583 Health Psychology (3 credits)
Psych 686R Seminar in Health Psychology (3 credits)
Psych 605R Professional Seminar in Psychology (0.5 credits/semester for 4 semesters)

Additionally, students will be required to complete two of the following elective courses (minimum of 4 credits). Elective courses are selected through consultation with faculty mentors:

Psych 552 Applied Social Psychology
Psych 680 Clinical Neuropsychology
Psych 687R Seminar in Psychopharmacology
Psych 712R Seminar in Neuroanatomy
HLTH 608 Determinants of Health Behavior
HLTH 612 Program Planning and Evaluation
HLTH 619 Infectious and Chronic Disease Prevention and Control
HLTH 630 Small-group Health Promotion Interventions

All students completing the emphasis will be expected to engage in health psychology research commensurate with expectations for research or scientist/practitioner careers. Students completing the Health Psychology Emphasis must select a dissertation topic related to health psychology. Emphasis area faculty will be responsible for assessing acceptability of the dissertation topic.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Financial support is offered in several ways:

1. Teaching and Research Assistantships: These 15-hour-per-week positions are awarded to all first and second year students, giving them an opportunity to work closely with faculty in the Psychology Department. Such contracts offer approximately \$4800 each for Fall and Winter Semesters, as well as \$2400 for Spring Term, or a total of \$12,000 for the academic year.

2. Student Instructors: Students interested in teaching may have the opportunity to carry full responsibility for certain undergraduate courses in the Psychology Department after they have successfully completed Psychology 693, Teaching Psychology. Teachers are typically paid about \$2500 per course, assuming the minimum of 20 students is reached. A student **must** complete and pass Psychology 693 and then apply to be considered for these positions when they are available. (An announcement of available courses, along with an application form, will be emailed to students about a month prior to the beginning of each semester.) The ultimate hiring and supervision is done under the direction of the Department Chair. Student instructors are assigned a mentor each semester they teach and must submit the Mentoring Agreement for Graduate Instructors. (See Appendix A)

3. Tuition Support: Limited funding is available for partial tuition assistance through departmental awards with money supplied by Graduate Studies. We anticipate students in the first four years of the program will receive just under \$1800 per semester, Fall and Winter, in addition to just under \$900 Spring Term. Tuition support is not offered beyond four years.

4. Research and Travel Support: Students are provided support up to \$1000 for their dissertation research, dependent upon a proposal demonstrating the expenses. Grants from the Program, Department, and College are available for travel to conferences in which students are presenting research papers or posters. Travel support can often cover the entire expense of one domestic conference per year.

5. Short-term and Long-term Loans: In addition to federal government guaranteed student loans, BYU offers both short and long-term loans through internal resources. Contact the Financial Aid Office at (801) 422-4104 or at <https://financialaid.byu.edu/>.

6. Competitive Awards: Psychology students have also been successful in competing for a limited number of awards offered through the university, generally through Graduate Studies or ORCA: Research Presentation Awards, Graduate Mentoring Awards, the High Impact Doctoral Research Assistantship, and so forth

Administrative support is also available:

Disabilities: Students with disabilities will be accommodated in accordance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. University services are relatively extensive, and the Program makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodations. Contact the University Accessibility Center for more information.

Counseling: The University provides extensive counseling services, free of charge, to all University personnel, full-time students, and their dependents, mostly through Counseling and Psychological Services. The Comprehensive Clinic also provides free services to University students.

Multicultural, International, and Women's Support: Various University sponsored organizations representing diverse cultures are available. Contact Multicultural Student Services for more information. The office of International Student Services provides both social and practical support to international students. A variety of support, counseling, and educational services are provided to women, coordinated through the office of BYU Women's Services and Resources.

Time Limits

Graduate Students in doctoral programs are eligible for departmental financial assistance for only four years. After four years, no tuition assistance is provided, and assistantships, student instructorships, and other means of financial support may or may not be available. Additionally, maintenance of financial assistance during those four years is dependent upon a satisfactory performance in all aspects of the program.

Registration Requirements

It is the student's responsibility to comply with any registration requirements established by sponsoring agents for student loans, loan payments, deferrals, assistantships, internships, and awards.

Deferment of Student Loan Payments

Students with student loans need to check with the Financial Aid office to determine the deferment guidelines associated with their particular type of loan. Some loans require that a student be enrolled for at least 8.5 credits in a semester in order to be considered full-time, while others require only 4.5 credits.

However, students who have completed their course work and who are working full-time on their dissertations may initiate a Request for Graduate Full-Time Status through the Student Programs Coordinator of the Department of Psychology. Such students must be enrolled for at least 2 credit hours per semester, at least part of which must be dissertation, or one credit hour per term, and must be working full-time on a dissertation. Students also must be aware that they are not eligible to request full-time status if they are employed full-time. Requests may only be submitted **after** a student has registered for the semester under consideration. For more information, please see the request form for other details.

Since there is a 6-month grace period for repayment of some student loans, students can sometimes be enrolled Fall and Winter semesters without being enrolled Spring or Summer. Please note that the student is responsible for keeping in touch with the Financial Aid Office regarding the specifics of the individual situation.

RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

Research training is a major part of graduate training in psychology. As such, all graduate students are actively engaged in research throughout their time in the program. This is primarily accomplished by: (1) active participation in the faculty mentor's research team, with increasing responsibility over projects as they progress through the program; (2) completion of a second year project wherein the student takes major responsibility for most of the research components comprising the project (e.g., conceptualization, design, data collection, analysis, and writing); and (3) completion of a dissertation with a journal-ready manuscript. The project and dissertation will frequently blend with other research in which the student will participate, but research involvement typically goes well beyond the work required for the project and the dissertation. Research training and proficiency is in part documented through completion of the: (1) Second-year research project and defense, (2) Dissertation prospectus defense, and (3) Doctoral dissertation defense. Further, development of competency in research skill sets is a significant part of the annual evaluation of student progress.

THE SECOND YEAR PROJECT

First Year: Conceptualizing and Conducting the Research

The *Second-Year Research Project Definition Form* and a 250-word abstract of the project must be submitted to the second-year project committee for approval no later than the last day of finals, in Fall Semester of the first year in the program. If this is not accomplished, the student will receive a Marginal rating for that semester.

Second Year: Completion and Presentation of the Project

The second-year project will culminate in a written manuscript submitted no later than the last day of finals, Fall Semester of the second year, to the committee chair for review. The committee chair reads the manuscript and gives the student timely feedback. The student makes revisions to the manuscript based on this feedback.

The revised written manuscript will be submitted no later than the end of the second week of Winter Semester of the second year to the student's committee. The manuscript will be submitted to the committee for review and recommendations for revision as determined by the committee. Their recommendations should be returned to the student no later than January 31st, so the student can begin work on the February/March poster presentation. No form is required for the manuscript submission at this time. If the manuscript is not submitted to the committee by the deadline, the student will receive a Marginal rating for Fall Semester.

(If the manuscript is not completed by the end of the student's second winter semester, an Unsatisfactory for Winter Semester will be given, constituting the second consecutive less-than-

satisfactory rating. Two consecutive less-than-satisfactory ratings will result in the student's dismissal from the program. A petition for exception may be considered by Graduate Studies, but is granted only on rare occasions.)

If the student fails to meet the deadline, but submits the manuscript at a later point during the Winter Semester, the Committee's review would then take place during the Spring Term – but the student's presentation nevertheless would still occur during the Winter Semester.

Evaluation of the Second-Year Project Manuscript. Evaluation of the manuscript by the committee should be completed by January 31st of the Winter Semester of the second year, provided the manuscript was submitted prior to the deadline. The student will be informed by his or her chair of whether the manuscript received a passing vote. The chair also will discuss the committee's specific responses to the manuscript with the student. If the student *does not* meet the passing requirement for the manuscript (i.e., receiving at least 2/3 of the votes for a "Pass with Revisions" or "Pass"), the student will receive a Marginal rating for the semester and be granted the remainder of the Winter Semester to make the necessary revisions to receive a passing vote. Any student who does not pass the requirement initially will still be required to complete a presentation during the Winter Semester. In other words, the presentation is not delayed because of the paper.

Poster Presentation of the Second-Year Project. During the last week of February or first week of March, second-year students will be required to prepare and present their second-year projects at a poster session convened by the department regardless of whether they passed the manuscript requirement. Attendees at the session will include committee members, other psychology faculty members, and other graduate students. If the presentation does not occur at that time, the student will receive a Marginal rating for that semester. Students who fail the presentation or fail to submit a presentation will create an electronic version that is submitted to the committee that is rated/judged by a time agreed upon by the committee.

Evaluation of the Second-Year Project. At the time of the poster presentation an evaluation form will be completed, signed, and submitted to the Student Programs Coordinator by the student's committee members. The evaluation will address (a) the manuscript and (b) the poster presentation. The signed evaluation form will be due one week following the poster presentation. If revisions of the poster are required following the presentation, the revised poster should be completed by the last day of Winter Semester. The committee chair will sign the evaluation form to certify that the revised poster was accepted by the evaluation committee.

Summary of the Second-Year Project Evaluation Process. In summary, assessment of the second-year project occurs in two stages. First, the written document is presented to the members of the committee who determine if the project is a "Pass," "Pass with Revisions," "Recess," or "Fail." Second, the project poster is presented during the department poster session that occurs in late February or early March. All members of the committee attend the poster session and determine if the student's poster is a "Pass," "Pass with Revisions," or "Fail."

Students must pass both the manuscript and the poster presentation requirements to successfully complete the second-year project.

Example Second-Year Research Projects

Students are encouraged to pursue projects that lead to publishable papers or similar deliverables (e.g., client presentations). Examples of acceptable second-year projects follow:

a. The pilot study. Students may decide to collect pilot data to fulfill the Project requirement. It may not be practical to collect *all* the data that would be necessary for a full research study (due to time constraints or other logistical reasons). In the pilot study a problem must be conceived, background reading is done, preliminary data are collected (or appropriated from an ongoing project), and analyzed. The project is written complete with references, etc. However, it differs from a journal submission in that various control conditions/groups may not be run, sample size may be reduced, etc. These limitations are described, and subsequent steps are discussed.

b. Existing data sets. The student may use and analyze existing data sets that are available from faculty members that are pertinent to a problem in which the student is interested. As with the pilot study, the results may or may not be publishable. The student's job is to state the problem under consideration, analyze the data, and write up a report, including a discussion of caveats and shortcomings.

c. Meta-analysis. The student and the advisor work on synthesizing and analyzing qualitative and/or quantitative data across multiple studies in a manner that increases our understanding of an existing phenomenon.

d. An "assigned" project. In this scenario, new data are involved, but the project has already been laid-out (i.e., designed in terms of its rationale and method, etc.) by the advisor. The student is given the data collection task and then proceeds either as in examples 'a' or 'b.' If only a portion of the study is completed and is thus limited in terms of results, as often is the case in a grant application, preliminary results are reported. The broader scope of the project and proposed analyses are also presented. The discussion presents points with reference to various possible outcomes. The assigned project is viewed as similar to submitting an NSF or NSRA application; however, applying for an NSF/NRSA award may not be used to satisfy the second-year project.

e. Theoretical projects. A theoretical paper defines and characterizes a theoretical problem or issue, including but not limited to the history and assumptions surrounding the issue chosen for the project. The student articulates a perspective on an issue and ultimately derives a proposed resolution to the issue. Students may articulate a novel theoretical argument that advances or otherwise challenges an existing perspective.

f. Issues of application. Some students within our program use the Ph.D. to pursue a career outside of a clinical or academic setting. For these students, an "applied" project may be appropriate. In this scenario, the student working with their advisor may have, or develop, a connection within business or industry to perform research within but not limited to human resources, program evaluation, personnel management, marketing, organizational behavior, and so forth. The student pursuing this option identifies the problem, performs the appropriate evaluation and assessment, and makes appropriate recommendations that are included in the written report.

If a student and the advisor feel that none of the above examples are applicable they may modify one of the above projects to meet this requirement.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

Students will complete a comprehensive examination prior to the fall semester in their third year (i.e., prior to the 5th full semester in the program). The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to test the student's knowledge of psychological science within multiple content areas.

Accordingly, the comprehensive examination will consist of three items – one from the content area of Research Design & Analysis, one from the student's area of specialization (Developmental, Applied Social, or Cognitive/Behavioral Neuroscience), and a third from one of the remaining areas (Developmental, Applied Social, or Cognitive/Behavioral Neuroscience) as selected by the student.

The exam will be administered on a pre-specified day in August in the second year of study, prior to the beginning of fall semester and the third year of study.

Within the first month (September) of the fall semester following the exam, the examination committee will grade the three exam items. Each will be graded Pass/Fail and the composite grade will be determined as follows:

Three Pass grades: Pass

One or two Fail grades: Required Remediation.

Three Fail grades: Fail. The student must retake an alternative comprehensive examination the following semester (i.e., the winter semester).

Students who do not pass the August exam will receive a "marginal" evaluation for the fall semester. Those who are required to take the alternative comprehensive exam, must do so by the end of the following winter semester. A student who does not receive the Pass grade on the alternative exam will receive an "unsatisfactory" evaluation for the winter term.

Once students have completed the comprehensive examination and defended their dissertation prospectus, they will continue to PhD candidacy.

DISSERTATION INFORMATION

Registration for Dissertation Hours

Students are required to register for a total of 18 dissertation hours before the dissertation is defended. If more dissertation hours are required, students may register for more, but those additional hours will not be applied toward the degree. Often, the completion of the dissertation is the last requirement fulfilled prior to a student's graduation. However, it must be remembered that even if all program credits have been earned and all other degree requirements completed, students must still register for a minimum of 6 credit hours per academic year, including at least 2 credit hours for any given semester. Furthermore, the semester or term the dissertation is actually defended, the student must be registered for 2 credits even if the 6-credit minimum has already been met earlier in the school year.

Nature of a Doctoral Dissertation in Psychology

The classical definition describes a doctoral dissertation as an "original contribution to knowledge which demonstrates the competence of the contributor." This definition has been narrowly interpreted by many to include only hypothesis-testing experimental research models. However, addressing broader questions within psychology is appropriate. A dissertation should explore meaningful problems and allow for the demonstration of mature professional thought.

The policy in the Department of Psychology regarding the dissertation is stated below.

"An original contribution to knowledge" implies the investigation of a meaningful and researchable problem. The canons of science and scholarship should be the criteria upon which a dissertation is judged rather than a specific methodological paradigm. The testing of a particular directional hypothesis is not required, since in some research areas there may not be sufficient existing research and theory to allow for the creation of specific hypotheses. This, however, does not exempt the student from a careful consideration of the available theory in the area of concern, nor from a careful formulation of the research problem. An adequate research design may involve experimental manipulation but it does not preclude the use of other empirical or non-empirical models. Ex-post-facto models as well as historical or philosophical modes of attack are not only permissible, but in some cases preferable.

An acceptable research proposal for the doctoral dissertation is not restricted to a hypothesis-testing experimental design. Where it is appropriate to the question being asked, other research approaches, such as assessment, exploratory, evaluative, and descriptive, including single case studies, are also acceptable. The quality of the question being studied and of the method proposed, and the availability of appropriate faculty supervision are paramount in judging the acceptability of the proposal. The Department recognizes the appropriateness of non-empirical dissertation proposals for theoretical dissertations, for example. Such proposals usually require an advanced level of sophistication and originality on the part of the student, in addition to competency in the particular method used. The Department encourages students to select topics for inquiry

that are meaningful, both to the student and to the field, and also encourages proposals that use methodologies appropriate to the questions being asked and to the data being collected.

Completion of the Dissertation

After the prospectus has been approved, the research should be completed as soon as possible. When the research, including appropriate analyses, etc. has been completed, the dissertation should be written under the supervision of the Dissertation Chair. When the chair believes that the dissertation is in its penultimate form, copies of the dissertation and manuscript should be provided to the committee. When the committee believes the dissertation is in a defensible form, then the student may schedule the final oral examination. This defense is scheduled with the department Student Programs Coordinator who in turn coordinates with Graduate Studies. The defense must be scheduled at least 2-weeks after the committee has determined the dissertation is defensible. All committee members must have a copy of the dissertation and the associated manuscript at least 2 weeks prior to the defense. At the final oral exam the student will present a brief overview of the dissertation, its rationale, design, methods of analysis, conclusions, and limitations. The committee is permitted to ask questions of the student in evaluating the quality of the dissertation.

Although the department is responsible for both the content and format of the dissertations, Graduate Studies notes that these works are expected to meet the highest standards of excellence in substance and appearance. Specific requirements regarding the format and appearance of the dissertation are provided by Graduate Studies and may be found on their website, as well as in Appendix A.

PROSPECTUS REVIEW INFORMATION

The dissertation is probably the largest single part of a student's academic evaluation. Through the prospectus process, the dissertation committee can judge the student's development of knowledge regarding the topic and competence in a significant portion of the research skill set. The first step in completing the dissertation is to decide upon a topic of interest in collaboration with the faculty mentor. This chair fills a number of roles for the student and has an acquaintance with the area in which the student's research will be conducted: He or she is willing to put forth the effort required to help the student complete the dissertation and is willing to be an advocate for the student.

After consulting with the chair, the student should contact faculty members to determine if they are also willing to serve on the committee. They must be able to devote the necessary time to help the research process move ahead and should also be a consultation resource to the student and the chair. It is appropriate to work with the Student Programs Coordinator in selecting committee members if specific expertise is needed for the development of the project. The dissertation committee is typically comprised of the three members of the student's second-year project committee plus one additional faculty member. The full dissertation committee should be decided by the end of the second year in the program.

Note that the chair of the student's graduate committee must be a member of the Department of Psychology, and all members must have Graduate Faculty status. This designation is not automatically awarded to all full-time faculty members in the Department, even if they have responsibility for graduate teaching. Exceptions can be made if a petition is approved. The Student Programs Coordinator will facilitate this process. If an individual is not approved by Graduate Studies to serve on the committee (due to insufficient current scholarship, for example) he or she can still contribute to the process informally if the committee is in agreement, sometimes serving as a sixth member of the committee if approved by Graduate Studies.

After the committee has been formed, the advisor and student, in consultation with the committee, should work together to formulate a prospectus. The prospectus should provide an overview of the research that the student intends to complete. It should include a thorough review of the germane literature, a clear statement of the research hypotheses or purpose, a delineation of the methodology that will be followed in the research, and an explanation as to why the contemplated research will be a valuable addition to knowledge related to the research area.

Organization of the Prospectus

The prospectus is often organized according to the following main headings, especially in dissertations where the methodological paradigm involves experimental manipulation. The chair can advise the student on appropriate headings for other research models.

- I. Title
- II. Introduction & Rationale
 - a. Need for the study
 - b. Problem to be addressed
 - c. Purpose of the study
 - d. Justification, including the intended contribution to scholarship

- III. Literature Review (A comprehensive review of relevant literature)
 - a. Historical line of research leading to proposed study
 - b. Current relevance of study to the field
- IV. Statement of the Problem
 - a. Definition of variables
 - b. Hypotheses to be tested
- V. Method (Scientific design which shows how the data collected, when analyzed by the methods chosen, will provide answers to the research questions)
 - a. Participants
 - b. Materials or Apparatus
 - c. Procedure
 - d. Design and Statistics for Data Analysis

The prospectus should be of such quality and scope that it essentially constitutes the first three chapters of the completed dissertation. Obviously, the student will need to alter verb tense, update the review of the literature, and modify the methods section in accordance with changes that were required as the research was carried out.

As a student writes the prospectus, and later the dissertation, he or she must follow the style requirements set forth in the most current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Furthermore, the student is responsible for complying with the Minimum Standards for Submitting Dissertations, Theses, or Selected Projects as set forth in the Graduate Studies publication of that name.

Scheduling the Prospectus Defense

Once the student has written the prospectus under the guidance of the chair and in collaboration with the committee, the document should be revised to the committee's satisfaction prior to the formal defense of the prospectus. The student should notify the Student Programs Coordinator **a month prior to the anticipated defense date** so that any committee issues can be resolved.

The Prospectus Review Scheduling Form must be signed by all committee members and returned to the Student Programs Coordinator **at least two weeks in advance** of the suggested times for the prospectus defense. Primary and secondary times (days and hours) should be chosen to meet both the student's and committee members' schedules. The student is then responsible for distributing a copy of the prospectus to each member of the committee a minimum of two weeks prior to the scheduled prospectus defense.

ote: Problems frequently arise when students assume that the first notice they need to give to the Student Programs Coordinator is only two weeks before the anticipated defense date. In reality, the Student Programs Coordinator must have time to make certain the committee in AIM is accurate and that petitions have been resolved, and students must have time to then coordinate the schedules of the entire committee so that a final date and time can be **agreed upon at least two weeks in advance** of the defense. This is a time-consuming venture and the reason for notifying the Student Programs Coordinator of the intent to defend a month before the student actually hopes to do so. Students are responsible for being certain that the committee in AIM (on the Student Progress Report) is accurate **prior to** submitting the Prospectus Scheduling Review Form. If it is not accurate, then the student is responsible for completing a Request for Program of Study Change prior to competing the Prospective Scheduling Review Form.

Checklist for Prospectus Approval

The following steps are generally followed in the preparation of the final manuscript for the Prospectus Defense:

1. A draft of the prospectus is sent to the dissertation chair who responds with required changes.
2. The student continues to make changes until the chair gives approval to send the prospectus to the members of the committee who have been involved in the development of the project.
3. The Student Programs Coordinator is notified at least a month before the student intends to defend the prospectus.
4. All members to whom the prospectus has been sent agree the prospectus is ready for defense.
5. The prospectus defense is scheduled by the student using the appropriate form which is submitted to the Student Programs Coordinator a minimum of two weeks prior to the defense.
6. Each committee member is provided a copy of the prospectus at least two weeks prior to the defense.
7. The prospectus defense is completed.
8. The student makes the required changes and obtains the approval of the committee.
9. The Prospectus Approval Form is signed by all committee members and submitted to the Student Programs Coordinator, along with a final copy of the prospectus.

Approval of the Prospectus

The Prospectus Review Committee (the student's graduate committee) may accept the prospectus as it is presented. However, in most cases they will give suggestions as to how the research may be improved. If the suggestions are substantial, the student should revise the prospectus. The Prospectus Review Committee also has the option of deciding whether the research is without merit, in which case they may withhold their approval and a new research topic must be undertaken. When the student and the chair have a version of the prospectus that has the approval of the entire Prospectus Review Committee, they should obtain the signature of each committee member.

Unless the Prospectus Review Committee is planning to meet again to review changes to the prospectus, the committee chair records all recommended changes. These changes are incorporated into the final form of the prospectus. One copy of this final prospectus must be submitted with the Prospectus Approval Form as a cover sheet to the Student Programs Coordinator within 14 days of the prospectus review. If the Prospectus Review Committee schedules a second meeting for review of the revised prospectus, the approved prospectus must be filed with the Department Student Programs Coordinator within 14 days of that meeting. A final oral examination in defense of a dissertation will not be scheduled unless an approved copy of the

prospectus is on file in the department. This copy of the prospectus will also be taken to the final oral examination when the dissertation is defended.

After the prospectus has been approved, and as long as the student undertakes the research as agreed upon by the committee, the Final Oral Examination Committee may not fail the candidate because of the research focus or the methodology that was employed, since these were approved at the time of the prospectus review. With the Prospectus Review Committee and the Final Oral Examination Committee being comprised of the same members, adherence to the procedures and methodology contained in the final form of the prospectus will obviate reexamination of these issues during the final oral examination.

The student must not conduct the research until the Prospectus Approval Form is submitted and the prospectus filed with the Department.

Institutional Review Board Approval (IRB)

After the prospectus is approved by the committee, the student will need to complete an Institutional Review Board application obtained through the Office of Research and Creative Activities if the proposed study involves human participants. The research must be approved by this board before the student may begin. Other boards exist for the purpose of reviewing proposed research with animals.

PREPARATION OF THE DISSERTATION

Guidelines are available through Graduate Studies. Students should note that the electronic thesis and dissertation (ETD) is required.

Journal-Ready Manuscript Requirement

In addition to following the full dissertation format as defined by the Graduate School, dissertations submitted to the Department of Psychology must also include a journal-ready manuscript that is appended to the dissertation. The journal-ready manuscript *must be appended regardless of whether it has been submitted for publication*. Since the precise format and focus of the article will depend upon the targeted journal, the dissertation chair should be consulted for direction. Note: The article is not submitted as part of the ETD, but is submitted to the doctoral committee prior to the defense and, after its approval, to the Department Graduate Coordinator. The purpose of the journal-article requirement is to facilitate the movement of the material to publication. The journal-ready manuscript need not deal with all that is in the dissertation. It is conceivable that a good publishable paper could be created from only a part of the work that is reported in the dissertation. Two weeks prior to the defense the manuscript and the dissertation must be distributed to the committee.

FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION (DISSERTATION DEFENSE)

The purpose of the final oral exam, also known as the defense of the dissertation, is three-fold: (1) to ensure that the dissertation is a quality product, (2) to ascertain that research competencies are at the doctoral level, and (3) to create a transition from the role of student to colleague for Ph.D. candidates.

Scheduling of the Final Oral Examination

1. The student must first apply for graduation and pay the necessary graduation fee. In order to prevent difficulties that may arise when requirements for graduation are evaluated by Graduate Studies, the student should contact the Student Programs Coordinator **a month prior to the anticipated defense date**.
2. After the dissertation has been written to the satisfaction of all committee members, the student obtains a Final Oral Scheduling Form from the Student Programs Coordinator and identifies primary and secondary times (days & hours) during which all members of the committee, both selected and assigned, are available. The student must obtain the signatures of all committee members indicating their approval of the times chosen to hold the defense. This form must be turned in to the Student Programs Coordinator **at least two weeks in advance** of the suggested times. The Student Programs Coordinator will schedule the meeting and enter that information on the computer.
3. Copies of the dissertation and journal-ready manuscript must be distributed to all committee members two weeks prior to the oral defense meeting. In addition, an unbound copy of the candidate's dissertation must be placed in the Department of Psychology at least two weeks in advance of the oral examination so that interested faculty and students may review it before the examination.

Procedural Guidelines for the Final Oral Examination

Prior to the date of the defense, a packet of forms is delivered to the Chair of the student's graduate committee who is responsible for conducting the exam, completing the Report of Committee Action for Final Oral Examination, and delivering the Committee Member Evaluations of Final Oral Examination to the Student Programs Coordinator following the exam. The form entitled Departmental Approval for Submission of Dissertation, Thesis, or Selected Project for Binding is signed and submitted only after the dissertation is completed in its final form.

In the course of the oral examination, which typically lasts two-hours, the committee members ensure that the dissertation has done what the prospectus said it would do and that the project is a contribution to knowledge, is written with professional quality, and expands the student's thinking about implications for the field and further research.

Typically, the examination begins with the student presenting a brief overview of the rationale, design, results and conclusions of the study, after which the faculty members take turns asking questions of the student to evaluate the quality of the dissertation.

Evaluation of the Final Oral Examination

At the conclusion of the examination, the committee votes on the student's defense of the dissertation according to the following guidelines:

Pass - Either the dissertation is judged to be adequately defended and it is accepted without revision, or the dissertation is judged to be adequately defended, but there are very minor changes in the document that must be completed by the candidate and reviewed by the chair of the committee.

Pass with Qualification - The dissertation is judged to be adequately defended and can be made acceptable by changes in the written work, strengthening of the candidate's preparation in subject matter areas, or both (in this case limited rewriting is required, but no re-exam is requested). The student should then make the required changes under the direction of the committee chair. Revisions must be submitted within two weeks of the final oral examination.

Recess of the Final Examination Committee - A majority vote is not necessary to recess an examination. The examination is recessed if at least two of the examining members vote that the dissertation requires significant revision or a more adequate defense. Remedial work may be required both in conceptual areas and in the form of the dissertation. The candidate should review the reasons for this decision with the committee chair and then make the required changes under their direction. A recess permits the student to reschedule a second and final examination. The new examination cannot be held sooner than **one month** after the first examination date. Rescheduling must be done through the Department of Psychology and Graduate Studies. At this reconvened examination the candidate must either be passed or failed.

Fail - A majority vote is not necessary to fail an examination. If at least two of the examining members vote to fail, the examination is failed and the student's final candidacy for the Ph.D. degree is not approved. The graduate degree program of the student is terminated.

Others' Attendance at the Final Oral Examination

The defense is a "public" defense. Other students' attendance at the final oral examination is a learning experience which is encouraged. Furthermore, all members of the BYU academic community are invited to attend. Only members of the student's graduate committee may question the candidate and vote on the candidate's performance, and the public may not attend the committee's discussion of the defense nor the feedback to the candidate.

COMPLETION OF THE DEGREE

Awarding of your Graduate Degree

After all qualifications have been met (course work is completed, and dissertation is successfully defended), the student will be awarded the appropriate degree. The candidate is responsible for being aware of all Graduation Deadlines necessary to the completion of the degree. These deadlines are available on the Graduate Studies website. However, intermediate deadlines are set by the Psychology Department and must be followed. They are provided by email from the Student Programs Coordinator.

If a student does not finish by the graduation deadlines for a particular semester, the student will be required to pay tuition for the following semester.

Continuing Our Relationship

We hope that all graduates will keep in touch with us in a mutually beneficial relationship. Many former students continue their friendships with other students and with faculty members. Some continue to publish or to work in collaboration with faculty, and assistance may be provided in helping to obtain initial job placements and to otherwise aid in career advancement. Graduates may also contribute in various ways to strengthening the graduate program and its reputation. It is expected, as part of your acceptance into our program, that you will cooperate in completing questionnaires and surveys that will help us fulfill university and professional requirements. The network of former graduates continues to grow nationally and internationally.