

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY & SPECIAL EDUCATION

***Ph.D. Program in Educational Psychology-
A Student's Guide to Graduate Study***

Revised by Curt Carlson, October 2019

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WELCOME TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

The faculty members of the Department welcome you to graduate study at Texas A&M University-Commerce. We are pleased that you are interested in attending TAMUC for your graduate studies and promise to work diligently with you to ensure your success. Among the major resources available to you are the faculty, fellow graduate students, an excellent library with many online databases, courses and seminars, multimedia instructional classrooms and resources, computer labs, the University computer network with high speed wired and WiFi connectivity, and access to a variety of other resources and organizations. If you are persistent and use these resources well, your graduate education will be excellent.

The coordinator of the doctoral program is currently Dr. Curt Carlson, and he will be your degree plan advisor during your time in the program. However, the single most important faculty member for you will be your research advisor. This individual, along with the other members of your ultimate thesis and dissertation committees, are your primary resources and are responsible, with you, for a major portion of the paperwork necessary for the orderly administration of the graduate program. Your research advisor has been (or will be) assigned on the basis of your program and on what is known of your interests. Typically, new students are given a chance to take some courses prior to officially being linked with a particular research advisor.

There are a number of rules, regulations, and procedures applicable to graduate study. To the extent that you take time to become informed about these, you will experience fewer frustrations. It is especially important that you become well acquainted with the rules and regulations contained in the Graduate Catalog (<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/catalogs.aspx>). It is a good idea to keep the graduate catalog that was current during the year you were admitted to the department. The University also publishes a student handbook ([Doctoral Student Handbook](#)) that addresses policies and responsibilities associated with student conduct. Much of this information is also available on the University homepage (<https://new.tamuc.edu/>) and the homepage for the Department at: (<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/educationHumanServices/psychologySpecialEducation/default.aspx>).

In addition to these online sources, the main offices of the Department are in Binnion Hall, Rooms 201 and 202. Faculty offices are located on the second floor of Binnion and attached Henderson Hall. Mailboxes for faculty and graduate assistants are located in Binnion 207. Various bulletin boards for graduate students are located in the hallways near the departmental office and near faculty offices.

As you proceed with your studies, your departmental file should reflect important decisions and milestones regarding you and your program. Maintenance of this information is primarily the responsibility of the departmental staff and your degree plan advisor, but you are also expected to monitor your academic file. Other records are maintained by the [Office of Graduate Studies](#) (OGS). Keeping this information current is the responsibility of you, your degree plan advisor and departmental staff, and the OGS.

It is also your responsibility as a graduate student to maintain contact with the OGS, the Department, your degree plan advisor, and your research advisor regarding your progress toward a degree. You should inform your advisors and the Department, in writing (email is fine), of changes of address, telephone number, etc. Make sure that such changes are made with the administrative assistants of the Department and with your faculty advisors. Do these promptly so that the Department will be able to contact you if the need arises.

The Ph.D. Program in Educational Psychology

The Department offers the Doctor of Philosophy degree (Ph.D.) in Educational Psychology. The Educational Psychology program has an interdisciplinary perspective, with a strong foundation in the

science and methodology of psychology. The focus of the Educational Psychology program is human cognition and instruction. Students will acquire an in-depth knowledge of human learning and cognition, instructional strategies, research, and evaluation. This emphasis will prepare students to integrate knowledge of human cognition and instructional practice across a variety of occupational, educational, and content matter domains, with emphasis on applications of learning technologies.

Vision Statement for the Ph.D. Program in Educational Psychology

The vision of the Program is to offer a premier Ph.D. in Educational Psychology by providing an optimal combination of online instruction and face-to-face interaction, instruction, and mentoring.

Mission Statement for Ph.D. Program in Educational Psychology

The mission of the Ph.D. program in Educational Psychology is to prepare students to produce, integrate, and apply knowledge and understanding of human cognition, learning, research methodology, program evaluation, instructional design, and educational applications of technology to create and manage life-long learning environments and processes for individuals and organizations.

Brief History of the University and Department

Texas A&M University-Commerce began as East Texas Normal College in 1889 when founder William Leonidas Mayo opened the doors to a one-building campus in Cooper. His creed, which continues today, was “ceaseless industry, fearless investigation, unfettered thought, and unselfish service to others.” The institution’s history of dynamic change began in 1894 when “Mayo’s College” moved to Commerce. The State of Texas took over the campus in 1917 and the name was changed to East Texas State Normal College. In 1923, the school was renamed East Texas State Teachers College. The graduate program was added in 1935. In 1957, the Legislature, recognizing that the purpose of the institution had broadened from teacher education, changed the name to East Texas State College. Following the inauguration of the first doctoral program in 1962, the name was changed to East Texas State University. In 1996, the institution entered the Texas A&M University System and became Texas A&M University-Commerce. Today, on the Commerce campus, the Metroplex Center in Mesquite, the Universities Center at Dallas, Navarro College Partnership, Collin Higher Education Center in McKinney, and through state-of-the-art distance learning, the University meets the undergraduate, graduate and professional needs of the citizens of Northeast Texas and beyond. Its mission is achieved through teaching, scholarship, and service activities on its campuses and in the community and region.

The Department was established at East Texas State University in 1962. In 1970, the Department was designated by the Texas Coordinating Board of Higher Education as a doctoral degree-granting program with emphasis areas in Educational Psychology and general Psychology. In 1989, the Departments of Psychology and Special Education were merged into a single Department. In 1992, the Department undertook a comprehensive review and reorganization of the doctoral program. By 1994, the first class of twelve doctoral students was admitted to the “new” doctoral program in Educational Psychology. In 2011, the Department of Psychology and Special Education merged with the Department of Counseling to become the Department of Psychology, Counseling, and Special Education, but in 2018 the Department returned to Psychology & Special Education only. Since the establishment of the Department there have been eight Department

Heads-Dr. J. E. Franklin, Dr. Monroe Lanmon, Dr. Glenn Fournet, Dr. Paul Zelhart, Dr. Raymond Green, Dr. Tracy Henley, Dr. Jennifer Schroeder, and Dr. DeMarquis Hayes (current interim). During its history, the Department has grown to more than 30 full-time faculty members.

Organization of the Department and Program

The Department currently provides undergraduate degree programs in Psychology and Special Education, Master's degree tracks in Applied Psychology, General Psychology, and Special Education, a Specialist degree in School Psychology, certification programs in Special Education, and the Ph.D. program in Educational Psychology. All of these programs and their associated faculty, staff, and resources are under the direction of the Department Head. The Department also includes a Coordinator of Special Education Programs (Dr. Beth Jones), Coordinator of the General Psychology Master's and Educational Psychology Doctoral Programs (Dr. Curt Carlson), Coordinator of the School Psychology Program (Dr. DeMarquis Hayes), and Coordinator of the Applied Psychology Program (Dr. Sean Lauderdale). There are also several committees-the Psychology Doctoral Committee, Master's Program Committees, the Undergraduate Program Committee, as well as many ad hoc committees.

The Psychology Doctoral Committee consists of at least three faculty members appointed by the Department Head. At least two of the members should be full professors with graduate faculty standing. The Educational Psychology Program Coordinator is a committee member. The general purpose of the Committee is to provide direction, oversight, and recommendations regarding policy and direction of the General Psychology Master's and Educational Psychology Ph.D. programs. Specifically, the Chairperson and Committee members shall:

- Share responsibility for establishing and maintaining the quality and integrity of the General Master's and Educational Psychology programs
- Act as a liaison between the General Psychology Master's and Educational Psychology programs and exterior communities, such as schools, industry, governmental, and community agencies
- Review and periodically evaluate the curriculum of the General Psychology Master's and Educational Psychology programs
- Review and assist the formation of dissertation and thesis committees
- Assist in planning the scheduling of graduate classes
- Recommend the allocation and acquisition of resources for the General Psychology Master's and Educational Psychology programs
- Advise and review the comprehensive examinations for the General Psychology Master's and Educational Psychology programs
- Interview applicants to the Educational Psychology doctoral program
- Monitor the admission of students and recommend the assignment of students to advisors
- Assist in the review and evaluation of the academic progress of students in the Educational Psychology doctoral program
- Recommend guidelines and procedures for the General Psychology Master's and Educational Psychology programs
- Assist in the review of applications for graduate assistantships and make recommendations
- Assist in the recruitment of prospective psychology graduate students

Goals of the Ph.D. Program in Educational Psychology

- Train psychological scientists
- Provide students with an understanding of the past, present, and future development of the science and discipline of Psychology
- Provide students with the understanding required for ethical decision-making and professional practices in the roles of researcher, student, and psychological scientist
- Provide students with an understanding of the processes and principles that underlie the discipline and science of Psychology, including cognitive development, learning, cognition, and instructional design
- Teach students the skills needed to design, execute, and evaluate research
- Provide students with an understanding of pedagogy and support the development of the knowledge and skills needed to select, apply, and evaluate the use of educational technology to assist learning, teaching, and training

Graduates of the Educational Psychology degree program will be prepared to enter careers as psychologists in industry, government, military, higher education, and public education. Graduates will provide expertise and resources needed to: (a) understand human cognition, motivation, and development; (b) conduct research and/or program evaluation; (c) employ technology to promote effective learning and training; and (d) promote and support organizational and individual goals related to optimizing learning, motivation, training, and product and process quality.

The department reserves the right to suspend or remove from the program any student who, in the judgment of a duly constituted departmental committee, does not meet the ethical and professional standards described below.

Criteria for Entrance into the General Psychology Master's and Educational Psychology Programs

In evaluating and admitting students to the graduate programs of the department, faculty members act as a committee of the whole. They employ holistic evaluation with both quantitative and qualitative criteria. Admission decisions are based upon multiple criteria; no exclusive criterion is used, nor are there minimum cut-off levels for quantitative criteria, other than the GPA minimums required by the OGS. Each candidate's qualifications are evaluated individually and in comparison to previous and current applicants, currently enrolled students, and graduates. The following information is required for admission:

1) Resume or vita

Particular attention will be given to successful employment experience, particularly in fields related to the foci of the degree program such as training and education, and to any relevant special abilities or skills, such as bilingualism or computer skills.

2) Goals statement (two forms: general and psychology-specific)

Applicants whose career aspirations are inconsistent with the mission and focus of the degree program will be disadvantaged in the selection process.

- 3) Transcripts (including undergraduate and graduate GPA and all completed coursework)
Applicants are not required to have completed an undergraduate or graduate major in psychology, nor any prerequisite graduate coursework required for admission.
- 4) GRE (verbal, quantitative, and analytical or writing)
In rare cases, such as students with doctoral degrees in other fields, the Department retains the option of waiving the GRE for admission.
- 5) Letters of recommendation
Follow the OGS requirements for doctoral programs.

Applicants who compare most favorably across all criteria to enrolled and graduated students and to previous and current applicants will be preferred in the selection process. In this regard, the following levels for quantitative criteria are typical of candidates that have been accepted in the past:

Undergraduate GPA (last 60 hours or in major):	3.2 and higher
Graduate GPA (for at least 18 hours of completed graduate coursework):	3.5 and higher
GRE verbal for native English speakers:	50 th percentile or higher
GRE quantitative:	50 th percentile or higher
GRE writing:	4.5 and higher

Faculty Advisor and Advisory Committee

Upon admission to the doctoral program, each student will be assigned a faculty advisor (typically the Coordinator until a research advisor is selected). The faculty advisor, in consultation with the student, will prepare a degree plan that states the requirements for graduation. Also, the degree plan provides an opportunity for the advisor and student to determine what, if any, courses should be transferred in from other programs. These transferred courses should be marked on the degree plan and will need to be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The degree plan should be returned to the OGS for their records. Once filed with the OGS, the degree plan can be modified at the request of the student's faculty advisor. The degree plan is used to determine if the student has met all the requirements for graduation, so it is important to keep the degree plan updated. In addition to designing a degree plan, each student's faculty advisor will advise the student in selecting two additional faculty members to serve as members of the student's advisory committee. It is the responsibility of this committee to guide the student through the program until such time as the student is ready to form the dissertation committee. Specific duties of the advisory committee include advisement and consultation, liaison between the faculty and student, and monitoring student progress in the program. If a student wishes a change of faculty advisor, such requests should be submitted in writing by the student's faculty advisor to the Department Head.

Ph.D. Tracks and Curriculum Description

The University requires 90 hours for all incoming students, regardless of whether or not the student enters with a completed Master's degree in another field. However, the cognate part of your degree plan can be filled with Master's level courses transferred in from another university. The program Coordinator addresses this during the student's first year in the program. If entering with a Master's degree in Psychology

and a completed thesis, the doctoral committee conducts a meeting to determine whether or not to accept the thesis. To meet Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board requirements, no more than 85% of a student's coursework can be taken fully online and used for credit toward the degree.

Prior to entering the program, each student should select which of **two curriculum tracks** to take. Each of the tracks (Educational, Experimental) includes its own set of courses, but all students, regardless of track, will need to complete a larger set of core courses. These are described below.

Program Core: (12 credit hours)

PSY 505 Introduction to Educational Psychology

PSY 509 History and Systems of Psychology

PSY 545 Developmental Psychology

PSY 620 Human Learning and Cognition

All students complete the Program Core, plus one of the following tracks:

Educational Psychology Track Core (21 credit hours)

PSY 514 Theories of Human Learning

PSY 594 Ethical Issues in Organizations

PSY 622 Introduction to Theses and Dissertations

PSY 625 Cognition and Instruction I

PSY 626 Cognition and Instruction II

PSY 645 Introduction to Learning Technology

PSY 679 Program Evaluation

Experimental Psychology Track Core (21 credit hours)

PSY 511 Cognitive Science

PSY 515 Neuromechanisms/Biological Bases of Behavior

PSY 594 Ethical Issues in Organizations

PSY 621 Advanced Cognition

PSY 622 Introduction to Theses and Dissertations

PSY 625 Cognition and Instruction I

PSY 627 Social Cognition

Research Tools Courses (15 credit hours)

PSY 695 Research Methodology

PSY 612 Psychological and Educational Statistics

PSY 681 Intermediate Statistics (prerequisite: PSY 612)

Then choose two of the following three:

PSY 610 Nonparametric Statistics (prerequisite: PSY 612)

PSY 670 Multivariate Statistics (prerequisite: PSY 612)

PSY 671 Advanced Tests and Measurements (prerequisite: PSY 612)

Electives (choose 2 remaining courses):

PSY 517 Introduction to Human-Computer Interaction Design

PSY 527 Social/Cultural Bases of Behavior

PSY 572 Psychological Assessment and Measurement
PSY 598 Psychology of Gerontology
PSY 618 Group Dynamics
PSY 640 Evolutionary Psychology
PSY 675 Advanced Topics in Educational Psychology (can be repeated with different topics)
PSY 680 Professional Development
PSY 689 Directed Independent Study (up to 6 hours)

Cognate Area: (18 hours). This should be a grouping of PSY electives or non-PSY courses that ties into an area of specialization relevant to your academic and career goals. This area should be constructed in consultation with the student's research advisor. The OGS grants final approval of the cognate.

Research Credits:

PSY 518 Thesis (6 hours required unless entered with an approved Master's thesis in Psychology)
- Must be enrolled in 518 continuously every term while working on thesis
PSY 718 Dissertation (12 hours required)
- Must be enrolled in 718 continuously every term while working on dissertation

Residency Program

Although face-to-face and online courses will be offered during the fall and spring semesters, we realize that many of our students do not live nearby. Thus, required core courses in the program will be offered during compressed summer sessions (June Residency). There are typically 2-4 courses from which to choose in a given summer, and students take one course in the morning and one course in the afternoon. The courses run during a 2 and 1/2 week period (10 class days) comprising M-Th, M-Th, and M-T the third week.

Guidelines and Considerations for Course Selection and Sequencing

Not all courses are offered every semester, though a few are. Most are offered at least once a year and some are offered only every two years. With this information in hand, students are advised to try to plan ahead in terms of course scheduling and consult closely with your academic advisor regarding the sequencing and availability of courses. For full-time enrollment, assume a 9-hour per semester course load; graduate and teaching assistants would typically take 6 hours. Below are some guidelines regarding course selection and sequencing.

- The first Research Tools Courses to take are PSY 695 and 612, in any order. PSY 612 is the prerequisite for all other research tools courses (except 695). Students are encouraged to begin these research tools courses early in their degree program because these tools will be useful in completing the Master's thesis en route to the dissertation.
- All of the Research Tools Courses need to be completed before a student can become a doctoral candidate and start taking PSY 718 (dissertation hours).
- Students are encouraged to begin work on their thesis soon after their enrollment in the degree program.
- Occasionally a doctoral course will be offered online during Winter Mini or May Mini

Students should consult with their program coordinator prior to registering for courses each semester. Any possible substitutions in the degree plan should be discussed with and approved by the program coordinator.

Research Tools

The OGS requires that all students admitted to doctoral programs take **five** courses that have been approved as research tools. In Psychology, these courses are PSY 695, 612, 681, and (choose two of the following: 610, 670, 671). Students may take research tools courses in any doctoral department at Texas A&M University-Commerce that offers them (e.g., HIED 695).

Satisfactory Progress

Only courses graded “A” and “B” will be counted toward graduation. If a student receives more than two C’s or lower (including a “U” for Unsatisfactory in 718), the student will be considered for permanent suspension from the University by the OGS. Graduate students are subject to academic probation or suspension if they fail to maintain a semester average and an overall GPA of at least 3.0. Please refer to the [graduate catalog](#) for additional details regarding grade requirements.

Every fall the Department reviews the progress of all students in the doctoral program. Students are expected to show consistent academic progress toward completion of their degree program. Under some circumstances, students may be granted a leave of absence for not more than one academic year, which must be approved by the doctoral committee. Faculty advisors primarily are responsible for reviewing each advisee’s progress and making evaluative recommendations. If evaluation indicates lack of adequate progress or inappropriate professional or personal conduct, specific remedial recommendations and/or disciplinary actions will be made and communicated to the student. Students are subject to immediate dismissal from the degree program for violation of academic or professional standards, such as plagiarism.

Independent Study Courses

A maximum of 12 semester hours of independent studies courses (e.g., 689), including Master’s degree credit, may be applied toward a doctoral degree. Any doctoral student wishing to take an independent study for credit toward their degree must obtain prior approval of their advisor.

Time Limitations for Degree

No course work beyond the Master’s degree taken from TAMUC that is over ten years old at the time of graduation can be counted toward degree completion. It is recommended that all students in the Educational Psychology Doctoral Program apply to graduate with their Master’s degree when they qualify (after the requisite 36 hours, which are part of the 90-hour doctoral degree plan). Any course included in the Master’s degree will not be susceptible to the 10-year deadline for the Ph.D. In addition, according to the Texas State Legislature, if a student earns more than 100 hours of graduate credit beyond the Master’s, the student will be charged at the out-of-State tuition rate for any additional credit hours. Please note that for students who do not make consistent progress on their degree program, particularly with their thesis and dissertation, that there is a potential conflict between the maximum number of hours allowed and the requirement for continuous dissertation enrollment after completion of the comprehensive exams. Recently,

a few students in our doctoral program have found that they must pay out-of-State tuition rates for continued enrollment in dissertation hours. This situation can be avoided if students diligently work on their dissertation topic when enrolled for dissertation credit (PSY 718).

Residency Requirements for the Ph.D. Program

Being that this is not an online program, all students must complete the residency requirement (specifically, the June residencies). The purpose of the residency requirement is:

- To enhance the professional development and academic growth of the student
- To provide opportunities for faculty to guide each student's academic program
- To determine student competency and academic progress
- To ensure that the student attends a sufficient number of face-to-face courses

These goals will be accomplished by providing the student with access to and participation in academic, social, and cultural activities, experiences, and resources associated with the Department, the College of Education & Human Services, Texas A&M University-Commerce, and the Texas A&M University System, as well as experiences provided by other discipline-related professional organizations and activities.

Residency includes an on-campus experience involving enrollment in at least six hours of academic credit during at least four different calendar year summer school terms. Four fall or spring long semester terms could also be acceptable alternatives to summer school enrollment if face-to-face courses are taken. However, certain core courses will only be offered during the summer. Students will be required to be on campus to complete the academic requirements of course enrollment during each of these summer terms. The two courses required during each summer are arranged so the actual time on-campus for each summer term is expected to be about 10 class days. In addition to this on-campus presence during these summers, students may also be required to be on campus for written and oral comprehensive exams, thesis and dissertation proposals, thesis and dissertation defenses, thesis and dissertation committee meetings, or as the student's advisor, chairperson, faculty, or advisory committee deem necessary.

Students are encouraged to document the completion of residency activities by maintaining a residency portfolio. The portfolio will be open to examination by the student's advisory committee at any time during the residency. The residency plan will describe and provide evidence of professional development. Examples of such services, activities, and experiences are provided below:

- symposiums
- invited guests and speakers
- conferences and workshops
- lectures and presentations
- special events and activities
- personal/professional development activities

- University library resources
- Departmental academic advisement
- student counseling/advisement services
- computing resources and telecommunication services
- interactions with the program advisor and advisory committee members
- academic interaction among peers in class and outside of class
- thesis and dissertation Chairperson/student interaction
- student-to-student social and professional interactions in and outside of class
- academic contacts and experiences in cognate disciplines, such as educational technology, computer science, education, etc.
- attendance at and participation in professional societies and meetings
- student membership in and interaction among students in campus, regional, and national professional societies, such as Psi Chi (the Department has a local chapter), the American Educational Research Association (<http://www.aera.net/>), the Southwest Psychological Association (<http://www.swpsych.org/>), the APS (<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/>), and the APA (<http://www.apa.org/>)
- interaction among students in campus student organizations, such as the TAMU-Commerce PCGSA (Psychology-Counseling Graduate Student Association – search for it on Facebook)

Formative evaluation of the student’s professional development activities will be conducted each year during the annual review of academic progress conducted by the faculty. If professional development activities are deemed not adequate, students will be provided with remedial activities and informed that their status in the degree program is in jeopardy if such activities are not satisfactorily completed by the next annual review.

Requirements for the General Psychology Master’s Degree

Course Requirements

Students must complete a psychology thesis and (optionally) earn the Master’s degree prior to completion of the requirements for their Ph.D. Doctoral students can obtain a 36-hour Master’s degree that includes six thesis hours or a 36-hour degree without a thesis, but a thesis is required as part of the Ph.D. track. For terminal degree Master’s students (students not enrolled, or intending to enroll, in the doctoral program), a 36-hour Master’s degree is available. If the non-thesis track is chosen, a 595 course must be completed (Introduction to Research Literature and Techniques). Note that 595 is not a required part of the doctoral curriculum and is not included on the doctoral degree plan. Also note that Psychology does not offer a 595, but Special Education does, as well as many other departments in the University. Students can take a 595 from any department in the University, however, most of these courses are not offered online. Regardless of which Master’s coursework is selected, all Ph.D. students will be required to complete a thesis.

Thesis

For students enrolled in the Ph.D. program, a thesis committee can be formed at any point

after entrance into the program. Students are encouraged to begin their thesis as soon as possible. Students who wish to form a thesis committee should approach their program coordinator or research advisor for guidance on this process. The thesis committee will typically be composed of three members from the faculty of the Department, although qualified members from other departments or Universities are permitted. The thesis committee will consist of a Chairperson and two or more members. If desired, the Chairperson may also become the student's research advisor, but this is not required. In addition, the student's advisory committee may be changed to include the departmental members of their thesis committee, but this is not required. All desired changes in the student's faculty advisor and/or advisory committee must be submitted in writing (email is fine) by the student for approval by the Coordinator of the Educational Psychology Program.

All thesis and dissertation proposals must be reviewed and approved by the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human participants prior to the presentation of the written proposal to the faculty. This can be done either before the proposal or immediately afterward, but in either case IRB approval must be obtained before submitting the thesis/dissertation proposal to Thesis and Dissertation Services (TDS) for approval. In general, a human participants research proposal should provide that: risks are minimized through procedures consistent with sound research design (reasonable risks beyond those incurred in daily life may be out-weighted by benefits to the subjects), selection of participants is equitable and the setting appropriate, informed consent is adequate, consent is documented, continued monitoring takes place to ensure the safety of the participants, and privacy and confidentiality are maintained. Participation of a human being in any study must be voluntary, and the information provided to gain participant consent must be adequate and appropriate. See https://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/IRB-Protection_of_Human_Subjects/default.aspx for Submission and Protocol Forms. Students should become familiar with the requirements for the protection of human participants in research. Resources describing various policies, laws, commissions, ethical codes, and the operation of the IRB for the protection of human participants are included in Appendix A.

Prior to submission of an IRB protocol, a student (and everyone who will work on the project) must first complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) ethics training online: <http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/humanSubjectsTraining.aspx>

Upon IRB approval, a candidate must present a thesis that is acceptable to the student's thesis committee, departmental faculty, the TDS, and the OGS. The thesis committee has considerable latitude in deciding what topics and types of investigations are permissible for a Master's thesis. One of the primary purposes of the thesis is to familiarize the student with the process of planning, proposing, executing, and reporting an independent research project. Students who have completed an empirical thesis in Psychology prior to entering the Educational Psychology Program may receive credit for thesis, if approved by the student's advisor and advisory committee.

Proposal. Regardless of previous registrations, the student must register for a minimum of six hours of PSY 518. Students must enroll in at least three hours of 518 during each of the semesters they are receiving advice and assistance from a member of the faculty in the preparation of his/her thesis or while utilizing university facilities for thesis work. Thesis proposals will be presented in a public meeting before members of the departmental graduate faculty (if available). The proposal presentation should take no longer than 20-30 minutes, followed by questions from

the committee and/or audience. Students cannot defend their proposal and thesis in the same semester. Thus, all students writing a thesis must submit a thesis proposal to the TDS at least one semester prior to graduation. Specific dates and times for proposal presentations are reserved by the Department during each semester. Whenever possible, chairpersons should schedule the proposal presentation at least two weeks prior to the date of the presentation. Students are required to provide a written copy of the proposal to all faculty members at least one week prior to the proposal presentation. This can be done by asking one of the departmental administrative assistants to email the proposal to all faculty members. At the same time, a copy should be placed in the office for inspection and review by any interested parties.

Thesis. Thesis and Dissertation Services (TDS) is your primary source for information and updates concerning the entire thesis process. Always check <http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/Thesis%20and%20Dissertation%20Services/default.aspx> for updated forms and guidelines. There are excellent templates, guides, and timelines to utilize. An oral defense of one's thesis is required, similar to the proposal. Again, the presentation should last no longer than 20-30 minutes if possible, followed by questions from the committee and/or audience.

Comprehensive (Qualifying) Exams for the Master's Degree

As a requirement for receiving the Master's degree, all students must complete a written comprehensive examination. The comprehensive written examination for the Master's degree (there is no oral exam for the Master's) is scheduled three times a year by the Department, typically in February, June (during residency), and October. The request to take the comprehensive examination must be submitted to the Coordinator in writing (email is fine) by the student at least two weeks prior to the date of the exam, or the student can reply to the official "Request for Students Taking Comps" from the administrative assistant assigned to the doctoral program. The written portion of the exam will consist of a series of questions focusing on the core content of the Master's degree. Areas that will be covered include: (a) Cognition/Neuropsychology, (b) History of Psychology, (c) Statistics, and (d) Social and Developmental Psychology. In each of these sections students will be presented with a series of questions that will require the ability to integrate discipline knowledge, defend a position or argue against a presented thesis, explain a model or theory, make predictions based upon models and frameworks, describe best practices, etc.

Students have four hours to complete the exam, during one of the four designated exam times: typically 8-noon or 1-5pm on a Thursday or Friday (possibly Friday or Saturday during residency). The entire exam, including all four sections, must be taken during the same period (February, June, or October). Once the examination begins, students will not be allowed to leave the testing area or interact with anyone other than exam proctors. Students may use computers to type their answers but all media devices are subject to inspection prior to the examination. Students at a distance may complete the exam with the appropriate proctors present at an approved site, but only if approved by the coordinator of the Educational Psychology program at least two weeks prior to the exam. Revealing/discussing questions with others after the exam will be considered a violation of the academic honesty standards. Grading is blind – all names are removed from student exams before being given to graders. Students should avoid identifying themselves in their answers. All written exams will be read and evaluated by at least three domain experts (among the departmental faculty). Students failing the written exam will be required to take the exam over again. A second

failure may result in dismissal from the degree program. Any failure of a written exam should be discussed with the doctoral program coordinator.

Requirements for the Doctoral Degree

Course Requirements

Students must complete several additional hours of coursework after the Master's degree in order to be eligible for the Ph.D. in Educational Psychology. Courses from A&M – Commerce over 10 years old that are not part of the Master's or another degree will not be counted toward completion of the doctoral degree. If age of coursework is a potential issue, the student should discuss this with their advisor when designing their degree plan.

Doctoral Comprehensive (Qualifying) Exams

The comprehensive written examinations for the doctoral degree occur during the same times of the year as the Master's comps. The request to take the comprehensive examination must be submitted to the Coordinator in writing (email is fine) by the student at least two weeks prior to the date of the exam, or the student can reply to the official "Request for Students Taking Comps" from the administrative assistant assigned to the doctoral program. Students are encouraged to attempt each section of the doctoral comprehensive exam immediately after they have completed the course(s) on which that section is based.

In addition, prior to completing all written comprehensive examinations, all students will be required to have submitted for publication at least one scholarly paper or to have presented research at one academic conference. This submission/presentation can be the outcome of a completed thesis. It is expected that the submission for publication will be the result of significant collaboration and oversight by a faculty member and that relationship will require significant scholarly contribution on the part of both the student and the faculty member. The collaborating faculty member will be responsible for written documentation of completion of this requirement. Such documentation should include a copy of the paper/presentation and specifics regarding submission for publication.

The doctoral comprehensive exams consist of a written and oral exam. The written portion of the exam consists of a series of questions focusing on the core content of the Master's and doctoral degree. Areas that will be covered include: (a) learning and cognition, (b) history (of psychology) and ethics, (c) cognition and instruction, and (d) statistics, research methodology, and measurement. In each of these areas students will be presented with a series of questions that will require the ability to integrate discipline knowledge, defend a position or argue against a presented thesis, explain a model or theory, make predictions based upon models and frameworks, describe best practices, etc. Students are encouraged to take just one section at a time, and each is offered every February, June, and October. There are four hours allowed for each section. Once the examination over an area begins, students will not be allowed to leave the testing area or interact with anyone other than exam proctors. Revealing or discussing questions with others after the exam will be considered a violation of the academic honesty standards. Students at a distance may complete the exam with the appropriate proctors present at an approved site, but this must be approved by the coordinator of the Educational Psychology doctoral program at least two weeks prior to the exam. Students may use computers to type their answers but all media devices are subject to inspection prior to the examination. Grading is blind – all names are removed from

student exams before being given to graders. All written exams will be read and evaluated by at least two faculty members.

Students failing any section of the written exam will be required to submit an appeal to the OGS (but first contact your departmental degree plan advisor) to be able to take that section again. No other section of written exams can be attempted until the failed section is passed. If the department and OGS approve the appeal, then the student is allowed to try one more time. A second failure of a given section will result in removal from the doctoral program. This applies to each section of written comps, and also the oral comp (described next).

After successful completion of the written comprehensive exam (all four of the sections), the student is eligible for the oral examination. This will be a public display of a student's knowledge, competence, and ability to respond to a variety of questions concerning their discipline. Prior to the oral examination, students are required to provide an approximately 20-30 page typed literature review describing a selected area of research interest and knowledge. It is most sensible for this area to be a precursor to one's dissertation proposal. However, it should be emphasized that the oral examination is not a proposal pre-defense. Based on the accompanying literature review, students will prepare a presentation (no more than 20-30 minutes) for the oral defense. The oral examination will be open to all faculty and graduate students and will typically last one hour (including Q&A time with the committee). Students will be examined on factual and theoretical knowledge regarding the content of their literature review, and this may include methodological particulars of a research study. While the oral exam is comprehensive in scope, the area(s) of research interest described will provide a focus for some of the oral exam questions and discussion. In other words, in addition to being asked particulars about your selected area of research interest that you provided in the oral presentation and accompanying written document, you may be asked questions regarding how the topic intersects with materials from the written comprehensive exams and coursework. If the student's advisory committee recommends approval of the oral exam, then the student will have passed the comprehensive examinations and become a candidate for the doctoral degree (upon approval by the OGS). After completing comprehensive exams and becoming a degree candidate, students must continuously enroll for dissertation credit (PSY 718) during the fall and spring semesters (and during the summer terms if they are actively working with a faculty member). The OGS will notify the student of his/her admission to candidacy after successfully completing the written and oral qualifying exams.

Dissertation Committee, Proposal, and Final Defense

The primary source of information for the overall dissertation process/deadlines can be accessed here: <http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/Thesis%20and%20Dissertation%20Services/deadlines-for-submission.aspx>

A doctoral committee can be formed any time after the student has successfully proposed and defended their thesis. Requests for formation of the dissertation committee should be submitted in writing (email is fine) to the Coordinator of the Educational Psychology program. This request, if approved, will then be reviewed by the Department Head and the OGS (there is an official form for the OGS). The committee should be composed of three members of the Psychology faculty and one additional faculty member who is not a member of the Department. After the dissertation committee is formed and a chairperson selected (the chairperson is typically the student's research advisor), the chairperson shall assume the duties of the faculty advisor, and the departmental dissertation committee shall become the student's advisory committee.

A candidate must present a dissertation that is acceptable to the student's dissertation committee, TDS, and the OGS. To be acceptable, the dissertation must give evidence that the candidate has pursued a

program of theory- or model-based research, the results of which were empirically-tested and reveal superior academic competence and a substantive contribution to discipline knowledge and understanding. Thesis and Dissertation Services (TDS) is your primary source for information and updates concerning the entire dissertation process. Always check <http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/Thesis%20and%20Dissertation%20Services/default.aspx> for updated forms and guidelines. There are excellent templates, guides, and timelines to utilize. In addition, the College of Education and Human Services provides help with writing of theses and dissertations.

The format for writing a dissertation must follow the guidelines of the current *APA Publication Manual* and TDS. Regardless of previous registrations, current OGS policy requires that the student must be registered for PSY 718 each semester they are receiving advice and assistance from a member of the faculty in the preparation of his/her dissertation or while utilizing university facilities for dissertation work. When admitted to candidacy by the OGS, continuous enrollment for dissertation is required and a reduced fee for PSY 718 may be approved by the Registrar's Office.

Proposals will be presented in a public meeting before members of the departmental graduate faculty (if available). Specific dates and times for presentations are reserved by the Department during each semester. The student, in consultation with his/her committee chairperson, should schedule the proposal at least two weeks prior to the date of the presentation. Students are required to provide a written copy of the proposal to all faculty members and the Dean of the College at least one week prior to the proposal presentation. Two weeks prior to the proposal presentation/defense, a copy of the written proposal should be placed in the departmental office for inspection and review by any interested parties. Oral presentation of the proposal is open to all faculty and graduate students of the university. The presentation should last no longer than 20-30 minutes, not including questions from committee and/or audience. Relevant methodology and protection of human participants (consent) portions of the proposal must be reviewed and approved by the University Protection of Human Subjects Committee (IRB Board) after a successful proposal defense. If the proposal is judged to be acceptable by the dissertation committee, IRB, TDS, the OGS, and the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services, then the student will be able to begin data collection and subsequent completion of the dissertation. If the proposal is judged unacceptable, the student may be required to modify the proposal and present the proposal again or completely redo the proposal.

A final comprehensive oral examination in defense of the dissertation is required upon completion of the dissertation project. This examination is open to all faculty members and graduate students of the university. This final oral examination is given only after all coursework and dissertation requirements have been fulfilled and upon recommendation of the candidate's dissertation committee. As with the dissertation proposal, the presentation should last no longer than 20-30 minutes, not including questions from committee and/or audience. After successful completion of the dissertation defense, copies of the dissertation should be submitted to TDS and the OGS for review. Please consult TDS <http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/Thesis%20and%20Dissertation%20Services/default.aspx> for specific requirements concerning timelines, forms, final copies, library requirements, abstracts, copyright, formatting, and other issues related to official submission of the dissertation.

Graduate Assistantships and Scholarships

A limited number of graduate assistantships, teaching assistantships, and scholarships are available for students enrolled in graduate studies in Psychology. Appointment as a teaching assistant requires completion of 18 graduate hours in Psychology prior to appointment. Applications for assistantship

positions may be obtained from the departmental administrative assistant. Graduate assistants and assistant instructors are required to take at least 6 credit hours, in addition to courses taught or other work assignments. Additionally, scholarships are available annually at the Department level, the College level, and the University level. Graduate assistantships, teaching assistantships, and some scholarships allow for a reduction of out-of-State tuition rates to in-State rates.

General Academic Information and Policies

Registration: Students can register in person at the Registrar's Office (BA170) or online by accessing MyLeo.tamuc.edu.

Dropping a Course: A drop/add sheet for courses to be dropped or added may be obtained at the Registrar's Office or by calling (903) 886-5102. The student must obtain approval from the Department and the instructor. The drop/add sheet is returned to the Registrar's Office. After the 4th class day, the form must be signed by the Dean of the OGS. Drop/add deadlines are found in the *Graduate Catalog* and the *Schedule of Classes*.

Withdrawing from School: A student leaving the University before the end of a semester for which he/she is registered must clear his/her record by filing an application for voluntary withdrawal in the Office of the Dean of Students.

Refund Policy: The Refund Schedule for dropped courses is listed in the catalog. There is no refund for courses dropped after the 12th class day.

Good Standing Rule: Entering students who have been fully admitted will be considered in good standing and will remain in good standing as long as a 3.0 GPA is maintained without any other OGS or University restrictions. See the section on Academic Probation, Retention, and Suspension from Graduate Programs.

Incomplete Coursework: When a student, due to events out of his/her control, cannot attend class during the last three weeks of the semester an instructor may assign a grade of X. When an instructor gives a grade of X, a plan of completion must also accompany the grade. The instructor is then responsible for accepting and processing the late coursework and submitting the grade to the Registrar by the end of the following semester. Grades of X for any spring semester are due December of that year. If a grade is not turned in by the deadline, the X becomes an F.

Removal of an X or incomplete grade: When a student has completed the requirements for a course, the instructor must submit a removal of X form to the Registrar's Office.

Extension of X or incomplete grade: Under certain circumstances, an X grade may be extended provided a request is made to the Dean of the OGS. Reasons for the extension and a time of completion should be included in the request.

Student's Appeal of Instructor's Evaluation: Students challenging a final grade must show that the instructor's judgment was unfair (e.g., standards different from those applied to other students in the same course section, or a substantial, unreasonable, and unannounced departure from previously articulated standards or the syllabus).

Academic Probation, Retention, and Suspension from Graduate Programs: Students are expected to maintain a 3.0 GPA. Depending on the admission status, a student who has a GPA below a 3.0 is subject to suspension or probation. No courses with a grade of C or lower will be counted toward a Master's or doctoral degree. A student receiving a grade of C or lower (including a "U" for unsatisfactory in 718) in three graduate courses will be suspended and will not be allowed to pursue further graduate study at this institution. This provision applies to all courses taken, including duplicated courses, drop/fail courses and courses where an X has changed to F. All courses completed while the student is on probation and those completed upon enrollment following suspension must be appropriate to the degree sought. A student on academic suspension may, after the suspension period, be allowed to re-enroll only upon the recommendation of the major Department and with the approval of the Graduate Dean. Failure to achieve an overall 3.0 GPA during any subsequent semester of enrollment will result in suspension, and the student will not be allowed to pursue further graduate study in the degree program.

Reinstatement to a Degree Program: Students who have served at least two years and one semester of suspension are eligible to petition for reenrollment. The petition should be sent to the Dean of the OGS. A student must explain how the situation is different and present a plan for success if readmitted.

Non-Degree Status after Suspension: Students who have been suspended may enroll with a non-degree admission status. Courses taken in a non-degree suspension status will not apply to a Master's or doctoral degree. The courses will, however, apply to certification. Each student will have to sign a form with the understanding that coursework taken will not apply to a degree.

Old Coursework: Students may have grades over ten years old removed from their GPA. The student needs to send a letter to the Graduate Dean requesting permission to remove old grades from calculation of their GPA. Upon approval of the request, courses and grades will remain on the transcript, but grades will not be calculated in the GPA.

University Attendance Policy

Students are responsible for learning about and complying with the attendance policy stated in the Graduate Catalog, Student's Guidebook, and/or faculty syllabus. In general, students are expected to be present for all class meetings of any course in which they are enrolled. Students are responsible for requesting makeup work when they are absent. They will be permitted to make up work for absences that are considered by the faculty member to be excusable. The student is responsible for providing the faculty member reason(s) for his/her absence. The faculty member then determines the validity of the reason(s) for the absence and whether the student is to be excused for the absence. Faculty members may consider the following reasons for absence as excusable.

- Participation in a required/authorized university activity
- Verified illness
- Death in a student's immediate family
- Obligation of a student at legal proceedings required as a citizen

- Others determined by individual faculty to be excusable (e.g., University activities)

The method of making up this work shall be determined by the faculty member. A record of excused and unexcused absences will be maintained by a faculty member for reference because certain financial assistance and other programs may require attendance records. When requested by the student, teachers will inform the student who has been absent whether the makeup work is allowed and whether absences jeopardize the student's standing in a class.

If a student believes the final grade is unfairly impacted by attendance requirements, an appeal can be made. This appeal process is explained in "Student's Appeal of Instructor's Evaluation" (Rule 13.02.99.R14).

Standards for Student Behavior

The faculty in the Department adhere to the APA Ethical Standards of Psychologists (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/>), and it is understood that students will become familiar with those standards and conduct themselves in accordance with them at all times. In addition, all students and graduate faculty in the Department are expected to demonstrate:

- a democratic attitude that respects the worth, uniqueness, and potential for growth and development of all individuals
- personal stability, ethical behavior, and respect for the confidentiality of privileged information
- a personal manner in which responsibilities are discharged in a cooperative and conscientious fashion
- productive and cooperative work relationships that display motivation, independence, and adaptability
- a commitment to continuing personal and professional growth characterized by participation in professional organizations, scholarly productivity, academic honesty, and personal integrity

All students and graduate faculty in the doctoral program are expected to act in accordance with the ethical standards for the profession. The Department reserves the right to suspend or remove any student who, in the judgment of a duly constituted departmental committee, fails to maintain these standards or who does not meet the professional expectations of the discipline.

The University, and thus the Department, regard the following as illustrations of misconduct by individuals or groups, which may result in review by the appropriate disciplinary agencies:

(1) "Academic Cheating and Plagiarism." The university will not condone plagiarism in any form. The faculty, administration, and students are expected to uphold and support the highest academic standards in this matter. Plagiarism is handled initially by the instructor. If the instructor feels the problem warrants more attention, it should then be pursued through the Department Head. If the Department Head wishes, it should be brought to the attention of the Dean of the College for study and review before meeting with the standing University Discipline Committee.

(2) "Furnishing false information to the University."

- (3) “Forgery, alteration, unauthorized possession or misuse of University documents, records, identification cards or existing copyright laws. This would include faculty publications and laboratory materials related to the educational process.”
- (4) “Malicious destruction, damage, unauthorized possession or misuse of University property, including library and laboratory materials, or of private property on the campus.”
- (5) “Participating in hazing, acts which are degrading or injurious, or acts in which another is held against his/her will.”
- (6) “Abuse, whether physical, mental or otherwise, of another person in the University community, including members of the administration, faculty, staff, the student body and citizens of Commerce.”
- (7) “Possession, consumption, sale, manufacture or furnishing of alcoholic beverages on University property is prohibited, except in those areas of University housing where possession and consumption is allowed (Ref. University Housing Policy) and where possession and consumption are allowed by Board of Regents’ Policy C-5.”
- (8) “Possession, consumption, sale or manufacture of illicit drugs and narcotics, including marijuana, and drug paraphernalia.”
- (9) “Disorderly conduct that inhibits or interferes with the educational responsibility of the University community or the University’s social-educational activities.”
- (10) “Malfeasance or misuse of elective or appointive office in a student organization, which is detrimental to the organization, its members, or the welfare of the University Community.”
- (11) “Violation of visitation and/or closing hours as recommended by the living-group governmental bodies and approved or established by the University administration.”
- (12) “Possession of weapons on University property; for example, knives (in threatening or violent manner), firearms (in university gun-free zones), explosives, incendiary bombs, etc. (interpretation of this policy may be obtained from the University’s Police Department.)”
- (13) “Violation of local, state and federal laws on or off campus.”
- (14) “Recurring incidents that are in violation of University policies and/or other such persistently irresponsible behavior that brings into question the student’s serious intent to pursue an education.”
- (15) “Failure to respond to a summons by letter, telephone call, or personal messenger from a University administrative official or faculty member.”

(16) "Failure to meet financial obligations incurred by the student to the University."

(17) "Theft or unauthorized possession of student property, including textbooks."

(18) "Entering a University building without authorization."

(19) "Sexual or racial harassment."

(20) "Sexual assault."

(21) "Such other violations of policies included in official publications of the University; for example, the University catalog, traffic regulations brochure, intramural catalog, etc."

Appendix A: Sources of Information on the Protection of Human Subjects, Professional Codes of Conduct, Institutional Review Boards, and Plagiarism

<http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/training/Responsible-Conduct-in-Research.aspx>

All Graduate students conducting research also need to conduct a thorough set of online training modules prior to beginning data collection:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/training/ResponsibleConductInstructions.aspx>

<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/>

This is the definitive site for information on IRB's and related resources, such as the Belmont Report, Code of federal Regulations (Title 45-Public welfare, Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health-Office for Protection from Research Risks, Part 46-Protection of Human Subjects), Institutional Review Board (IRB) Guidebook, and more.

<http://www.apa.org/ethics/>

American Psychological Association Ethics Office—downloadable copies of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct

APPENDIX B

University Resources Available to Students

Services Available through the Library

The James G. Gee Library (903-886-5718) is the academic center of campus. The online catalog provides access to the library's collection containing over 1.8 million monographs, periodicals, microforms, and other processed materials including non-print media. The University has been a depository for federal government publications since 1938 and for Texas state documents since 1963. To access the library visit <http://www.tamuc.edu/library/>

Services Available through Administrative Offices

ID Service: Student IDs are made in the Sam Rayburn Student Center, 1st floor.

Parking: Vehicles parked on the University campus must have a parking permit. Permits are purchased at the University Police Station located between Binnion and Henderson Buildings on Monroe Street on the east side of campus.

University Police: This office provides police services and all security functions for the University. The Department is responsible for parking and enforcement of motor vehicle laws. Officers of the Department are certified by the State of Texas as commissioned peace officers and have full law enforcement authority.

Map of Campus: Downloadable pdf at <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/theCampus/campusMap.pdf>

University Counseling Center: Appointments may be scheduled in person or by phone during office hours. The Counseling Center is open Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. Appointments are scheduled in 45-minute intervals with the first appointment beginning at 8:15 am and the last at 5:15 pm. Standing appointments are scheduled for those needing specific appointment times.

Student Services Building, Room 204.

903-886-5145 (Day) 903-886-5868 (After Hours/Emergencies).

Morris Recreation Center: Information concerning the University's recreation center can be accessed at: <http://www.tamuc.edu/CampusLife/campusRecreation/default.aspx>