



# DOCTORAL STUDENT HANDBOOK

## PhD in Psychology: Program in Neuroscience



Department of Psychology  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

**Edition N2021**

Note: This edition of the handbook applies only to students who are currently enrolled in the Neuroscience program. It was produced on August 10, 2021.

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Welcome to the PhD in Psychology: Neuroscience Program at UWM! **This handbook is intended only for students who are enrolled in the program. It is not intended for applicants to the program. Applicants should instead read the departmental admissions brochure at <http://uwm.edu/psychology/graduate/application/>**

This edition (N2021) was developed to provide easily accessible information on policies and procedures for doctoral students in the Neuroscience program, which, prior to Fall 2017, was known as the Neuroscience major in the Experimental Psychology program. The information was accurate at the time the handbook was prepared.

## **PEOPLE TO SEE FOR HELP**

The department's Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), Professor Hanjoo Lee, is available to provide you with advising on any aspect of your graduate program, including course selection, changing major professors, help with filing forms with the graduate school, and advice on how to plan your program. As the DGS, his major job is to serve as a resource about programmatic and curricular requirements for all students to ensure that comparable advice is available to all.

### **Hanjoo Lee, Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)**

Office: Garland 211

Contact: [leehj@uwm.edu](mailto:leehj@uwm.edu) | 414-229-5858

Professor W. Hobart Davies is Chair of the department and is available to assist you with questions about departmental regulations.

### **W. Hobart Davies, Chair**

Office: Garland 202C

Email: [hobart@uwm.edu](mailto:hobart@uwm.edu)

## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

If you have a documented disability and need special accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of the program, please contact the DGS as soon as possible. He will need your official Accommodation Plan, which you can obtain at the Accessibility Resource Center (Mitchell 112, <https://uwm.edu/arc/>).

## **COVID-19 PANDEMIC CONCERNS**

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted how we deliver our program, and life in general, in unprecedented ways. The public health situation is constantly changing, which requires the program to adapt accordingly. This results in substantial uncertainty and likely the need to adapt to new means of engaging in training and research. We realize that this is

stressful. We also realize that people vary substantially in their comfort with in-person and virtual education. We strongly encourage you to discuss your concerns with your major professor, your instructors, the DGS, etc. – whoever is appropriate for your concerns.

## **SWITCHING PROGRAMS REQUIRES FORMAL APPLICATION**

You are enrolled exclusively in the Neuroscience program, which is one of our three PhD in Psychology programs: Clinical Psychology, Health Psychology, and Neuroscience. If you ever wish to try to switch to a different program, you must apply for formal admission to the other program. Admission to the other program is **not** guaranteed. You would be competing for admission to the other program along with everyone else in the general applicant pool for that program.

## **MAJOR PROFESSORS**

Regulations of the Graduate School and the department require that all students have a major professor (advisor) who supervises their research. Students may change major professors at any time without penalty. However, due to the small number of faculty in the department, flexibility is required on the part of the student, or else the student might not be able to find a new major professor. It is important to consult with the DGS for assistance if you contemplate switching to a new major professor. Any time a student changes from one major professor to another, and grades need to be assigned for such things as research credits, the student has the option of having the grade assigned by either the former major professor or the new major professor. The student's annual evaluation form for that year will be signed by the new major professor and not the former major professor.

## **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENTS**

The Neuroscience curriculum consists of two semesters of introductory statistics, four neuroscience courses (i.e., three core courses and one proseminar course), three semesters of a 2-credit seminar course, and three additional courses (i.e., electives) of your choice (totaling at least 9 credits). Neuroscience students must also complete a master's thesis and earn the MS degree (if they didn't enter the program with an acceptable thesis-based master's degree in psychology, neuroscience, or a related field). They must pass one preliminary exam in Neuroscience. They must fulfill the continuous enrollment requirement. They must attain dissertator status. They must complete a doctoral dissertation. They are expected to attend departmental colloquia that don't conflict with their classes or other duties

## DEGREES AND TIME LIMITS

All students are admitted to the doctoral program with the expectation that they will ultimately earn the PhD. The MS degree is a required milestone on the road to the PhD.

Although it is possible to complete the program in four years, most students take five or more years to complete the program. The following time limits have been established by the department:

- The MS must be earned within three years of enrolling (by March 10 of the third year for most favorable consideration in the teaching assistant priority system, see p. 17). Students who entered in 2018, 2019, or 2020 may, if necessary, request an extension of this deadline if they experience significant pandemic-related delays in thesis data collection.
- The PhD must be earned within seven years of enrolling. If you do not earn your PhD within seven years of enrolling, it is possible that the department will recommend your dismissal from the university. You must file an appeal letter with the DGS to request an extension if you fail to meet this deadline.

The following time limits, which have been established by the Graduate School, apply to all UWM doctoral students:

- The preliminary exam must be passed within five years of enrolling. If you do not pass your prelim within five years of enrolling, it is possible that UWM will dismiss you from the university. You must file a Request for Exception form (RFE) with the Graduate School if you fail to meet this deadline.
- (Note: The following rule is relevant only if a student has been granted an extension of the department's 7-year time limit for earning the PhD.) The PhD must be earned within 10 years of enrolling. If you do not earn your PhD within 10 years of enrolling, it is possible that UWM will dismiss you from the university. You must file a Request for Exception form (RFE) with the Graduate School to appeal for an extension if you fail to meet this deadline.

## MS DEGREE AND APPLYING FOR MS GRADUATION

Students admitted without an acceptable thesis-based master's degree in Psychology, Neuroscience, or a related field must earn the MS in our department. The MS requires 30 credits and a thesis. **Exactly six credits must be earned in Psych 790.**

Students must form a thesis committee consisting of at least three faculty members, one of whom is the major professor, by March 1 of their first year. Students must write a thesis proposal, which they must orally defend at a meeting of their committee (i.e., the thesis proposal hearing). Then, when the research is completed, students write the thesis itself and defend it at another meeting of the committee (i.e., the thesis defense). You should *not* collect

the data for your thesis project before the thesis proposal hearing, because this practice defeats the purpose of the proposal hearing, which is to gain your committee's approval of the design and method before executing the project.

At the beginning of the semester in which the thesis is to be defended, the student must apply for graduation by filing an application for MS graduation with the Graduate School, which can be done via this link:

[https://www4.uwm.edu/grad\\_school/graduation\\_application?application=masters](https://www4.uwm.edu/grad_school/graduation_application?application=masters)

Part of the master's process is to prepare the thesis in accordance with format and margin rules set out by the Graduate School:

<http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/thesis-dissertation-formatting/>

After the student has passed the thesis defense and has perfectly formatted the thesis, they submit the thesis to the Graduate School electronically via ProQuest:

<http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/electronic-theses-dissertations/>

Time limit: As noted above, the MS must be earned within three years of enrolling (and successfully defended by March 10 of the third year to maintain the best priority in the TA priority system).

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### STATISTICS

Students must complete the introductory statistics sequence (Psych 510G and 610G).

### NEUROSCIENCE COURSES.

#### Core courses:

- Cellular and Molecular Neuroscience (offered under Psych 711: Current Topics)
- Cognitive Neuroscience (Psych 727)
- Behavioral Neuroscience (Psych 854)

#### Proseminar:

- Proseminar in Biological Psychology (Psych 754)

### SEMINAR IN NEUROSCIENCE

Students must enroll in 3 semesters of Seminar in Neuroscience (Psych 933), which is a two-credit course.

### ADDITIONAL COURSES

Students are required to take **three** additional graduate-level courses (i.e., electives), **totaling at least nine credits**. They should select the courses with the approval of their major professor. Both departmental and extradepartmental courses can be selected.

### RESEARCH CREDITS

All students who will earn a master's degree (i.e., those admitted without an acceptable thesis-based master's degree in psychology, neuroscience, or a related field) must take **exactly 6 credits of in master's research (Psych 790)**. **After having taken 6 credits of Psych 790, use Psych 890 (Graduate Research) to sign up for research credits.**

Students working on their PhD projects should take some credits in Psych 990 (Doctoral Research). You should begin to enroll in Psych 990 (rather than Psych 890) after you become a dissertator.

Research credits receive a grade of either Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. The Department and the Graduate School encourage major professors to provide for their students, in writing, their expectations for a "Satisfactory" grade for each semester. All graduate

students and major professors should meet at the beginning of each semester to agree on what will be required in order to earn a grade of "Satisfactory." A written agreement is the best way to guard against any problems in assigning the grade at the end of the semester.

\* Psych 890 allows up to 6 credits in one semester. It allows a total of 15 attempts with a maximum total of 45 credits. Psych 990 allows up to 6 credits in one semester. It allows a total of 30 attempts with a maximum total of 120 credits. Contact the DGS if you need take more than this.

### **EXTRA COURSES (Optional)**

Although they are not required to do so, some students choose to enrich their education by taking extra courses offered inside and outside of the department.

### **COLLOQUIUM**

Students in residence at UWM are generally expected to attend departmental research colloquia that do not conflict with their classes or other duties.

### **CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT**

All students must be continuously enrolled every semester (fall and spring) from the time they enter until the time they graduate. Furthermore, you must be enrolled in the semester in which you graduate. Degrees are granted three times during the year: May, August, and December. Usually, you don't have to enroll for credits during the summer. However, if you wish to graduate with the MS or PhD in August, then you have to register for credits in the summer of your MS or PhD graduation, unless you meet certain early thesis/dissertation submission deadlines, which you should discuss with the DGS.

### **LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

In rare circumstances, the Psychology Department may grant a student an internal leave of absence, which would allow them to break enrollment. See the DGS for assistance. Such leaves are given for a definite time, for a definite reason, such as illness. Your time in leave-of-absence status does not stop the "TA priority clock" from ticking, i.e., your priority level continues to increment throughout the leave of absence. Any student on leave of absence who does not have a major professor willing to sponsor them back into the program will not be allowed to re-enter the program.

**Please also note:** UWM's Graduate School has a temporary emergency policy to address expected increased need for leaves of absence during the COVID-19 crisis. Details can be found here: [https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/90/2020/05/UWM-Graduate-Academic-Leave-of-Absence-Emergency-Accommodation\\_2020-05-05.pdf](https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/90/2020/05/UWM-Graduate-Academic-Leave-of-Absence-Emergency-Accommodation_2020-05-05.pdf)

## COURSELOAD

The usual courseload is eight to 12 credits per semester. If you wish to take more than 15 credits (or 12 credits if you hold a UWM Fellowship such as an AOP Fellowship), you will have to file a Request for Exception form (RFE) with the Graduate School to get permission. See the DGS for assistance.

**TAs, PAs, and RAs** are required to enroll in at least 6 credits every semester. Fellows are required to enroll in at least 8 credits every semester.

**Dissertators** (students who have completed all requirements except the PhD dissertation proposal and the PhD dissertation) must enroll in exactly three credits, usually Psych 990, each semester; see the section on Dissertator Status (p. 8).

## POLICY FOR INCOMING STUDENTS WITH PRIOR GRADUATE WORK

Students admitted with a master's degree in Psychology, Neuroscience, or a related program that included an acceptable empirically based thesis are exempt from the requirement of earning the MS at UWM.

Students admitted with a master's degree that did not include an empirically based thesis must complete a thesis (which will result in the official conferral of a master's degree in Psychology from UWM). Students must form a committee of at least three faculty, one of whom is the major professor, by March 1 of their first year. Students should enroll in Psych 790 for purposes of completing the thesis.

If you completed some graduate work after earning your bachelor's degree but before enrolling in UWM, you should make an appointment with the DGS, who will ask to see a copy of your transcript. The DGS will examine your prior graduate work and make suggestions about whether or not specific courses are likely to be acceptable substitutes for courses in our graduate program. Then, he will direct you to faculty members who teach the corresponding courses in our Department. You should contact these faculty members so that you can show them syllabi and any other materials you have for those courses. The decision about whether you will be able to use your prior coursework toward Departmental requirements rests with the individual faculty member, who will provide a "waiver letter" for any course waivers they are willing to grant you based on your prior graduate coursework. Be sure to keep a copy of each letter. When you have completed this process, report the results to the DGS.

The above procedures are internal "waiver" procedures that apply to curricular requirements only. They do not result in any transfer of credits. Students in our program rarely need to transfer any credits. However, if for some reason you wish to transfer credits, you should be aware that this process is governed by UWM Graduate School policy, which has many restrictions. Please see the DGS if you are thinking about transferring credits.

## **PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION**

Graduate School regulations state that all students must pass the preliminary examination within five calendar years of entering the program. You are eligible to take the preliminary exam if you have passed your master's thesis defense and have completed the four required neuroscience courses, with the exception of the Cellular and Molecular Neuroscience course. The instructions for the prelim should be obtained from the neuroscience faculty member in charge of the exam.

For all students, the Graduate School requires an application to take preliminary examinations. This application should be submitted to the Graduate School *after* having passed the preliminary exam, and it must be submitted via the online Doctoral Milestones system. It is very important to contact the DGS before submitting this application.

## **DISSERTATOR STATUS**

Dissertator status is a financial designation allowing you to pay a lower rate per credit. It is granted with the understanding that you have completed all coursework and now have nothing left to do except the doctoral dissertation proposal and doctoral dissertation. The following six criteria must be met to be eligible for dissertator status:

- All coursework must have been completed (i.e., introductory statistics sequence, four neuroscience courses, three semesters of Seminar in Neuroscience, and three additional courses; please see p. 5 for details on the course requirements.)
- The preliminary exam must have been passed.
- The Graduate School's residency requirement must have been fulfilled (2 consecutive semesters of at least 8 credits each, or 3 consecutive semesters of at least 6 credits each).
- A brief summary of the dissertation topic (two sentences minimum) must be provided.
- The cumulative GPA must be 3.0 or higher.
- All grades of Incomplete must have been cleared.

Consult with the DGS when you are ready to apply for dissertator status. It is important to contact him first, as he will examine your record and determine if you have satisfied all requirements. If it is determined that you have satisfied the requirements, you will be instructed to apply for dissertator status via the online Doctoral Milestones system.

Once you attain dissertator status, you must enroll in exactly three credits per semester. It is expected that these credits will be research credits (Psych 990) and not course

credits. The Graduate School requires you to file a Request for Exception form (RFE) if you wish to request permission to take course credits as a dissertator.

## **PhD DEGREE**

The PhD requires a minimum of 54 credits, at least 27 of which are typically earned after the MS was awarded. (If you entered the program with an acceptable thesis-based master's degree in Psychology, Neuroscience, or a related field, then you must earn at least 27 credits at UWM.)

## **DISSERTATION COMMITTEE**

The PhD requires a dissertation. Within a semester of having defended the master's thesis, or by March 1 of the first year if the student was admitted with a master's thesis in psychology, the student, in consultation with his/her major professor, must form a doctoral dissertation committee.

Your major professor is not only a member of your committee, but also the chair of it. A doctoral dissertation committee must have a total of at least five members, at least three of whom must be tenure-track or tenured UWM Psychology Department faculty who hold Graduate Faculty status (i.e., those with the rank of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor). A maximum of two committee members may be individuals who have doctoral degrees (i.e., PhD, PsyD, EdD, or MD) but who do not have Graduate Faculty status at UWM.

## **DISSERTATION PROPOSAL**

Before conducting the dissertation research, the student must write a dissertation proposal and orally defend it at a meeting of the dissertation committee known as "the dissertation proposal hearing." **The student is eligible to hold the dissertation proposal hearing after the preliminary exam has been passed, but not before.**

You should *not* collect the data for your dissertation before the proposal hearing, because this practice defeats the purpose of the proposal hearing. However, exceptions to this rule are allowable, at the discretion of your major professor.

After passing your proposal hearing, you must enter the appropriate information into the online Doctoral Milestones system. It is very important to contact the DGS before submitting your proposal hearing information.

## **DISSERTATION DEFENSE AND DISSERTATION WARRANT**

After the research has been completed and the dissertation written, it must be orally defended at another meeting of the doctoral committee (i.e., the dissertation defense).

**No doctoral dissertation defense may occur without prior issuance of a warrant for defense by the Graduate School.** In order to obtain a warrant, you must email a request (including the date of the defense, the title of the dissertation, and the names of all committee members) to the DGS at least two weeks before your defense date.

Part of the dissertation process is to prepare the dissertation in accordance with format and margin rules set out by the Graduate School:

<http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/thesis-dissertation-formatting/>

After the student has passed the dissertation defense and has perfectly formatted the dissertation, they submit the dissertation to the Graduate School electronically via ProQuest:

<http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/electronic-theses-dissertations/>

## **APPLYING FOR PhD GRADUATION**

At the beginning of the semester in which you expect to graduate, you must apply to graduate by submitting an Application for Doctoral Defense and Graduation (available on PAWS) to the Graduate School. See the DGS for information about this process.

## **GRADUATE SCHOOL REGULATIONS ON DOCTORAL DEFENSES**

The following is adapted from the Graduate School's "Doctoral Defense Guidelines and Procedures."

The subject of the doctoral defense is the dissertation itself. The defense provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their expertise and original scholarship following several years of preparatory coursework, research, and writing. Students will also demonstrate their abilities to explain ideas and methods embodied in the dissertation and to defend the implications and conclusions of the research. The defense allows selected faculty members the opportunity to verify the student's independent, scholarly contributions. They may offer guidance regarding possibilities for publication and encourage further research efforts. The major professor is charged with the responsibility of determining the readiness of the dissertation for defense. Students are encouraged to plan defenses during fall and spring semesters. Scheduling during the summer semester may be difficult.

Both the student and the committee members must extend professional courtesies to each other. The student must give each committee member ample time (at least two weeks) to read the completed dissertation. A committee member must not keep the dissertation for an inordinate period of time because of the press of other duties. Service as a doctoral committee member is an integral part of the faculty member's teaching assignment, fully comparable to conducting classes. After the committee members have read the dissertation, they advise the major professor on the readiness for the defense. If substantial revisions are necessary, they must be completed before the defense date is confirmed. The major professor contacts the student to confirm the defense date.

Once the DGS has informed the Graduate School of the names of the members of the committee and the date for the defense, these matters must not change without notification of and approval from the Graduate School.

If the decision to defend the dissertation is made against the judgment of one or more committee members, those members cannot resign in order to avoid frustration or collegial confrontation. Readiness for defense, however, is not tantamount to acceptance of the dissertation. It means only that the committee is ready to hear the defense. The decision to hold the doctoral defense, moreover, is not entirely up to the committee. If a student insists on defending the dissertation before the committee believes it ready, the student may defend.

At the conclusion of the defense, the committee must vote either pass or fail (or, in very rare instances, the committee may decide to defer their votes). The warrant (indicating pass or fail) must be returned to the Graduate School within 10 working days of the defense. In order for a student to pass, a positive vote by a simple majority of the committee is required. Students who fail the defense may redefend once after a waiting period, determined by the committee and communicated to the student in writing. The Graduate School requires that this second defense take place within one calendar year of the date of the original defense. A new application for defense and a new warrant are required before this defense can be conducted.

## **SATISFACTORY PROGRESS IN THE PROGRAM**

### **IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES**

- **Year 1**

March 1. Establish master's thesis committee.

- **Year 3**

March 10. To maintain highest possible priority in the TA system, you must defend your master's thesis by March 10 of your third year. Students who entered the program in 2018, 2019, or 2020 may request an exception to this rule if the COVID-19 pandemic significantly delayed data collection for their thesis.

August. If you do not earn your MS by August of your third year, you are no longer in good standing in the program. You must appeal to the Graduate Program Committee to request an additional year to avoid being terminated for lack of progress.

- **Year 5**

August. You must have passed your prelim. If you have not yet passed your prelim, you must file a Request for Exception form (RFE) with the Graduate School to avoid being terminated for lack of progress.

- **Year 7**

August. Departmental rules stipulate that the PhD must be earned within 7 years of enrolling. If your PhD dissertation has not yet been defended, you are no longer in good standing. To avoid being terminated for lack of progress, you must appeal to the Graduate Program Committee to request an additional year.

- **Year 10**

August. Graduate School regulations stipulate that the PhD must be earned within 10 years of enrolling. You must deal directly with the Graduate School if you wish to apply for an extension of this time limit, which is strictly enforced.

## DEFINITION OF UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS

Students are not in good standing if they have any of the following 11 problems:

- Any student found guilty of academic misconduct (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials in completing a take-home exam, etc.) may be terminated from the program.
- No major professor. You can't go for more than a year without a major professor, if you decide to change major professors.
- Lack of a full committee. You must have a full master's thesis committee or doctoral dissertation committee, unless you are in transition because of changing major professors.
- Lack of continuous enrollment.
- Cumulative grade point average below 3.0. The Graduate School will place you on academic probation (i.e., "Dean's OK required to continue") unless you maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA.
- Any two grades of B- or below. Note: **B is the minimum acceptable grade. You will probably be required to repeat any course in which you earn a grade below B.** The Graduate School will issue a warning every time you get a grade below B.
- An indication from the major professor on the annual review form that you are not making satisfactory progress in research or professional development.
- Failure to earn your MS within three years of enrolling. Leaves of absence are counted in determining whether this criterion was met. That is, applying for a leave of absence does not stop the clock.
- Failure to pass the preliminary exam within five years of enrolling.
- Failure to earn the PhD within seven years of enrolling. Leaves of absence are counted in determining whether this criterion was met.
- A majority vote of the Neuroscience Faculty that you have engaged in unethical or extremely unprofessional behavior.

## **MECHANISMS OF REVIEW**

Students are evaluated and receive feedback letters from the Neuroscience Faculty and from the DGS every year.

The DGS's evaluation of students is conducted in May ~ June. Online evaluation forms will be distributed for this purpose, and must be filled out by each student promptly following the instructions. The DGS will generate a report for each student's progress, and the report will be made available for both the student and the major professor. Students and major professors should meet with each other to review the evaluation report.

Students may be dismissed if they make unsatisfactory progress in the program, as defined above. Any student in danger of being dismissed for unsatisfactory progress will be notified in writing and given the opportunity to speak on his or her own behalf at a meeting of the Neuroscience Faculty, which will then go into closed session to discuss the case and make a recommendation to the Department. A majority vote of the Department's faculty will be required before a recommendation can be made to the Graduate School to terminate a student. Students will be informed that they are being considered for termination and will be invited to the Department meeting to speak on their own behalf.

In cases where problems are noted, the feedback letter sent to the student will indicate areas that need improvement, and will specify the actions that need to be taken to clear up the problems. A pattern of unsatisfactory evaluations, e.g., two consecutive evaluations in which unsatisfactory progress was noted, may be taken as grounds for dismissal. For this reason, it is extremely important to correct any problems immediately.

## **TERMINATING THE ADVISOR-ADVISEE RELATIONSHIP**

A student may switch to another major professor at any time for any reason, without penalty or retaliation. Please see the Graduate Program Coordinator for assistance if you are thinking about switching major professors. You are not in good standing if you do not find a new major professor within a year of having left your former major professor.

Based on a student's unsatisfactory progress, a faculty member may stop serving as a student's major professor at any time. Independent of a student's progress, a faculty member may stop serving as the student's major professor if the decision is made before the end of the student's third year or an equivalent duration in the advisor-advisee relationship.

## TITLE IX

Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination. Sex discrimination includes sexual harassment, sexual violence, and any other sex-based misconduct, relationship violence, discrimination based on pregnancy, and the failure to provide equal opportunity in all areas of schooling such as admissions, educational programs or activities, and athletics.

In compliance with Title IX, UWM will not tolerate discrimination or harassing conduct that is based on a protected status. The University's Discriminatory Conduct Policy prohibits, among other forms of discrimination, sex-based discrimination. Sex-based discrimination is conduct that (1) adversely affects any aspect of an individual's employment, education or participation in activities or programs at UWM; and (2) is based on sex, including gender identity or expression. Sexual harassment is a form of prohibited discrimination and is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that unreasonably interferes with the individual's work, education or participation in activities or programs at UWM or creates a working or learning environment that a reasonable person would find threatening or intimidating. Sexual harassment may be of any type including oral, written or physical. Sexual violence is also a form of prohibited discrimination, and UWM defines sexual violence as physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent.

UWM's Discriminatory Conduct Policy also prohibits retaliation. Retaliation is an adverse action made as a result of an individual's complaint about conduct prohibited by the University's Discriminatory Conduct Policy or participation in enforcement of this Policy. Protected activities include reporting discrimination or serving as a witness in an investigation in connection with the same.

Some examples of conduct prohibited by Title IX and UWM's Discriminatory Conduct Policy include but are not limited to:

- Insults about, directed at, or made in the presence of an individual or group based on sex and/or gender identity or expression.
- Physical contact or verbal threats based on sex and/or gender identity or expression.
- Sexual jokes, language, epithets, advances or propositions.
- Comments about a person's body, sexual orientation, sexual prowess or gender identity or expression.
- Touching, whistling, leering, brushing against the body, or suggestive, insulting, or obscene comments or gestures of a sexual nature.
- Requesting sexual favors in exchange for assignments, promotions, grades or promises of the same.
- Stalking.
- Cyber-stalking or cyber-bullying.
- Rape, sexual battery, sexual assault or sexual violence. This includes sexual contact without consent.

- Dating Violence
- Domestic Violence

**Please note:**

“UW System codes and policy changes necessary to be in compliance with the new federal Title IX regulations approved by the UW System Board of Regents and Governor Evers, took effect on August 14, 2020. These changes are temporary; permanent changes will be circulated for public review and comment later this year and will likely take effect in early 2020.”

**For the most up-to-date information on Title IX, please consult:**

<https://uwm.edu/titleix/>

## TEACHING ASSISTANT APPOINTMENTS

### PRIORITY SYSTEM

Incoming (first-year) doctoral students have the highest priority for TAships, followed by second-year doctoral students, etc. Note that doctoral students in their 7th year or beyond (6th year or beyond for those who entered with the MS) are in Priority 9. *Important: The department reserves the right to deny TAships to students who are not in good standing.*

Priority	Student's Current Year
1	1st year doctoral students (incoming students) (with either BS or MS)
2	2nd year doctoral students (with either BS or MS)
3	3rd year doctoral students (with BS)
4	4th year doctoral students who defended MS by March 10 of their 3rd year (and 3rd year students who entered with MS in psychology with thesis)
5	5th year doctoral students who defended MS by March 10 of their 4th year (and 4th year students who entered with MS in psychology with thesis)
6	6th year doctoral students who defended MS by March 10 of their 5th year (and 5th year students who entered with MS in psychology with thesis)
7	4th year doctoral students who failed to defend MS by March 10 of their 3rd year
8	5th year doctoral students who failed to defend MS by March 10 of their 4th year
9	All other psychology doctoral students
10	Psychology master's specialization students
11	All others (non-psychology graduate students, psychology undergraduates)

## **WORK CONDITIONS**

The standard appointment is .50 FTE, for approximately 20 hours per week. The appointment ordinarily starts one to two weeks prior to the start of the academic semester, lasts the 14 or 15 class weeks of the semester, and continues for one week after finals at the end of the semester. Note that TAs are not permitted to appear the day before classes begin and disappear the day after classes end; they must be on campus and prepared to work throughout the entire contractual period. The Graduate School publishes a set of guidelines for making appointments, which the Department follows.

## **TUITION REMISSION APPLIES ONLY WHILE YOU ARE A TA, PA, RA, OR FELLOW**

Students are reminded that tuition remission applies only while you are a teaching assistant (or project assistant or research assistant or fellow). If you do not have a TAship or other such appointment, you must pay tuition, and if you are not a Wisconsin resident, you must pay it at the out-of-state rate. The registrar, not the Department, determines resident status. Resident status is rarely granted if students were not Wisconsin residents when they initially enrolled in the graduate program at UWM, regardless of how many years they have lived here while attending graduate school.

## **TEACHING ASSISTANT DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The department assigns teaching assistants as classroom or online TAs and, occasionally, as graders. The difference between the two is that classroom or online TAs provide instruction and hold office hours, whereas graders do not. Otherwise, the responsibilities are likely to be the same: keeping records of grades, grading exams, grading papers, photocopying and collating exams, etc. The faculty member or instructor in charge of the course assigns responsibilities and sets policy. TAs absolutely cannot cancel sessions, change classrooms, or change grades without permission of the faculty member or instructor teaching the course.

TAs are reminded that student grades are confidential. Papers or tests cannot be handled in any way that discloses the student's score to others. Proper care should be taken in posting grades and in handing back graded papers. No part of a student's name or campus ID number should ever be used in posting grades. The order of posted grades should never be by alphabetical order of students' names.

Consistent with Title IX, interactions with students are to be on a professional level. Amorous or romantic relationships with students in your discussion or laboratory sections, even if ostensibly consensual, are not allowed. The asymmetrical power status of the student and the TA may lead, even if unintended, to problems of abuse of authority and harassment.

Even ostensibly "social" relationships have the potential for misunderstanding, so long as the student-TA situation exists. Similarly, potentially offensive jokes in classes, as well as derogatory or demeaning comments related to race, ethnicity, sexuality, sexual orientation, or gender, even in an attempt that you mean only as humorous, interfere with the educational process, and hence are not permitted. All students have the right to be treated with courtesy and dignity in an educational environment. Severe legal problems may result from the violation of these principles.

## **DISPUTES, COMPLAINTS, AND APPEALS**

From time to time, differences in opinion may arise among students and faculty on a wide variety of matters. The Department has a formal procedure to attempt to resolve such differences; the procedure is listed below. However, if you wish to pursue a more informal procedure, please contact the DGS for assistance. The position of DGS was created in part so that students would have someone to talk to if problems arise. Please feel free to contact her to discuss *anything* that is of concern to you in your graduate career.

Here is the department's formal procedure:

**Step 1:** The student discusses the grievance/appeal with the faculty member within 30 days from the date of the action that prompted the grievance/appeal.

**Step 2:** The student may appeal the Step 1 decision to the department chairperson within 10 working days from the Step 1 decision. The chair may attempt to mediate the problem.

**Step 3:** If the problem cannot be successfully mediated by the chair, he or she refers the problem to the Graduate Program Committee.

**Step 4:** The student may appeal the decision of the Graduate Program Committee to the departmental faculty as a whole. The student has the right to present his or her case to the faculty at a special department meeting called for this purpose. The student has the right to bypass Step 4 if he or she wishes.

**Step 5:** The student may appeal the Step 3 or Step 4 decision to the Graduate School's Associate Dean. The appeal to the Graduate School should be filed within 10 working days of notification of the decision from Step 3 or Step 4.

Consistent with Title IX, UWM has specific policies against harassment, whether it is sexual or any other form. As noted above, all students, including graduate students, deserve to be treated by others with professional respect. Similarly graduate students must treat any others, such as undergraduates and faculty, with professional respect. The appropriate guideline is for everyone to be professional in their interactions with others. As long as professional regard and mutual respect rule the day, problems can usually be avoided.

# SHEETS FOR KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR PROGRESS

Date

## MASTER'S LEVEL STATUS SHEET

1. Form MS committee \_\_\_\_\_
2. Select thesis topic \_\_\_\_\_
3. Pass thesis proposal hearing \_\_\_\_\_
4. Apply to Graduate School for MS graduation \_\_\_\_\_
5. Defense of thesis passed \_\_\_\_\_
6. Format and submit thesis to Graduate School \_\_\_\_\_
7. MS officially awarded \_\_\_\_\_

## DOCTORAL LEVEL STATUS SHEET

1. Form PhD committee \_\_\_\_\_
2. Preliminary exam passed \_\_\_\_\_
3. File Preliminary Examination Application via Online Doctoral Milestones system \_\_\_\_\_
4. Apply to Graduate School for dissertator status via Online Doctoral Milestones system \_\_\_\_\_
5. Pass dissertation proposal hearing \_\_\_\_\_
6. File Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Hearing Form with Graduate School via Online Doctoral Milestones system \_\_\_\_\_
7. Apply to Graduate School for graduation (on PAWS) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Email the Graduate Program Coordinator at least two weeks in advance of scheduled defense to request a defense warrant \_\_\_\_\_
9. Dissertation defense passed (Bring warrant to the defense; return signed warrant to Graduate Program Coordinator immediately) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Format and submit dissertation to Graduate School \_\_\_\_\_
11. PhD officially awarded \_\_\_\_\_

## **AGSIP AND OTHER STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

The Association of Graduate Students in Psychology (AGSIP) is a fully chartered UWM student organization that was started in 1999. All graduate students in the psychology department are members, and there is no membership fee. The purpose of AGSIP is to facilitate and promote the research and professional development of graduate students in psychology. In order to meet this goal, AGSIP organizes an annual symposium (usually in April) for graduate students to present their research. The event also includes a featured guest speaker. Election of officers occurs every October. Any AGSIP member can run for president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer. Note: Students in the department have also founded many other, more specialized organizations.

## **GOING BEYOND THE REQUIREMENTS**

This handbook has focused on the minimum course and program requirements you must satisfy to earn a PhD in our department. However, if you really want to be employable once you have that PhD, you must do far more than what is described in this handbook. In particular, if your career goal is to be a professor in a psychology department, just having completed a thesis and a dissertation is not likely to get you a tenure-track faculty job, and will probably not even get you a postdoctoral position. The academic job market is intensely competitive; jobs and postdocs go to those who have published several research articles in respected journals by the time they earn their PhDs. Timely progress in the graduate program, teaching experience, and depth and breadth of knowledge are also important for success in the academic job market.

# Psychology Department Ombuds Resources

6/25/21

Prepared by Bonnie Klein-Tasman, Christine Larson, and Karyn Frick

**This document serves as a guide to the role and expectations related to the ombuds role. The document may also be useful as guidance to any faculty or staff member who is approached for consultation by graduate students. Faculty who are not formally designated to serve in the ombuds role encouraged to let students know that they have reviewed this document and understand the general philosophy.**

## Purpose of the Psychology Department Ombuds:

- Help graduate students navigate challenges or consult regarding progress through the degree, considerations regarding dropping out, changing advisors, or course concerns, mentorship/advising challenges, and/or challenging experiences related to diversity, equity, inclusion.
- These consultations may be related to experiences with faculty, staff, or fellow graduate students.
- These are within-Department consultations. Outside the Department, the UWM Dean of Students Office is also available to consult, and may do so in collaboration with the Graduate School if appropriate.

**First and foremost, graduate students are encouraged to have such discussions with any faculty member they believe would be helpful to them.** Potential resources (depending on the considerations) may be the graduate students research mentor, the area head (DCT in the case of the Clinical program), a course instructor or clinical supervisor, or any other member of the faculty per the student's comfort and interest. The inclusion of ombuds resources is not meant to imply that graduate students are required to speak with an ombuds or that the ombuds should be the first person to whom the graduate student turns.

## Ombuds role:

- All are encouraged to read about the role of the ombuds here: <https://www.ombudsassociation.org/>
- **Role:** "The primary **duties** of an organizational **ombudsman** are (1) to work with individuals and groups in an organization to explore and assist them in determining options to help resolve conflicts, problematic issues or concerns, and (2) to bring systemic concerns to the attention of the organization for resolution."
- Generally confidential, within legal limits, or unless discussion with the graduate student results in the graduate student's decision for the consultation not to be confidential

## A note about advocacy vs. neutral guidance:

Feedback from graduate students indicated a range of views regarding whether the ombuds person should serve as a neutral party or engage in advocacy. The degree to which the ombuds engages in advocacy may depend on the specifics of the nature of the graduate student concern. The ombuds *may* engage in advocacy but is not required by their role to do so.

## How best to use ombuds/expectations regarding consultation:

- Students are encouraged to view the ombuds process as a collaborative consultation and/or problem-solving effort
- It would be helpful for students to have in mind what they are looking for when they approach the ombuds. However, it is acknowledged that navigating challenges is a process, and what they are looking for may indeed change over time, and that is ok.
- Students should expect that one of the first questions they will be asked is what they have tried so far to navigate the situation, resolve the conflict or address the challenge. The ombuds is likely (in most but certainly not all cases) to begin by exploring ways to support the graduate student in navigating the situation (if that has not already occurred).

Proposed Model within the Psychology Department:

- 2 Psychology faculty members identified as within-Department ombuds, from 2 different areas in the Department
- These individuals will be appointed by the Chair.
- An opportunity to provide feedback about the Ombuds process will be included in the annual climate survey
- Students can choose to speak with whichever ombudsperson they would like.
  - Students are explicitly not discouraged from seeking out input and guidance from other faculty
  - Bonnie Klein-Tasman and Karyn Frick are appointed in this role until the end of calendar year 2021
  - It is permissible for a group of students to meet with the ombuds together
  - The ombuds will:
    - Review guidance about privacy and confidentiality (below) before beginning discussion. (Based on this guidance, consultations are private but not confidential.)
    - disclose of any potential COI on the part of the ombuds (e.g., friendship, collaboration with student's advisor)
    - Provide the student with the range of options (to the best of their knowledge) for addressing the problem and assist the student in weighing those options
    - Approach their role with kindness
    - Take a tiered approach (flexibly applied, may not be sequential, role of the ombuds discussed with student):
      1. assist student in navigating;
      2. offer participation in navigation as neutral party;
      3. with the consent of the student, assist with mediation
      4. advocate on behalf of the student OR support the student in connecting with someone outside the department who could assist with advocacy (e.g., other campus resources)

Approach to Privacy and Confidentiality:

- Privacy means that the information is kept between the parties, unless required by policy or law or other legitimate educational need.
- Confidential means that the individual is barred from providing that information by law, for example a legally protected privilege.

- General guidance: All aspects of consultation can remain private except under the following circumstances:
  - If the disclosure meets Title IX reporting requirements (see <https://uwm.edu/titleix/>)
  - If the disclosure meets Equity and Diversity Services reporting requirements (<https://uwm.edu/equity-diversity-services/>)
  - If the disclosure trips Mandatory Reporting requirements (<https://uwm.edu/hr/toolkits/eo54/>)
  - If the disclosure indicates risk of imminent harm to self or others
- The ombuds and graduate student will discuss the approach to confidentiality that is desired by the graduate student who is seeking consultation
- If the ombuds and the graduate student agree on a specific action on the part of the ombuds, there will be followup communication to update the graduate student; it is possible that the degree of transparency about action may be limited under some circumstances (e.g., personnel matters are often not transparent)
- The ombuds and graduate student will likely engage in minimal communication about the process over email, given that email is not confidential
- If the ombuds person feels a need for consultation themselves, they will either:
  - consult with someone outside the Psychology Department; or
  - have the student's permission to consult with someone inside the Psychology Department
- If a pattern of consultations involving similar concerns emerges, the ombuds may act on that concern in a way that maximizes individual student confidentiality to the extent possible
  - Example: If several students approach the ombuds with a concern about a particular faculty member that appears to reflect a pattern, the ombuds may choose to discuss the broad outline of the concerns with the Chair or with that faculty member
- Challenges with Anonymity/Confidentiality:
  - Confidentiality and anonymity may limit the actions the ombuds (or Department) could take to advocate for changes to address the concern. For example, no direct personnel action can take place based on entirely confidential or anonymous communications

**Governance Processes Regarding Graduate Student Concerns:**

The department has a formal grievance and appeal process. It is documented in the graduate student handbook. Please be aware that formal remediation

- requires that the challenges be fairly serious/egregious
  - typically takes place after there is documentation of concerns and challenges over the course of many semesters
  - takes a lot of time – graduate students should know that they may not see measurable change in their time in the program, but engagement in the formal process may benefit future students
  - is not public – legally, personnel issues cannot be discussed with students, and if something goes to Title IX or EDS it is often not discussed with the faculty
- Thus, it is expected that most challenges can be addressed using an informal process. In many cases, informal attempts to resolve challenges are a prerequisite to more formal action. (Challenges that relate to Title IX or EDS concerns may indeed be an exception.) Sometimes

students may bring up issue that faculty are completely unaware of, so it may be useful to allow for an informal resolution when appropriate and if possible. In addition to graduate student efforts at informal resolution, as colleagues we can take informal advocacy through respectful communication as colleagues.

- In cases where formal remediation is needed, please be aware of the following:
  - As faculty we are all equal peers within the Department and even Department Chair is only one of those peers and does not have powers to act individually on personnel matters. Personnel actions get made at the level of the Executive Committee (EC) of the Department, which is made up of all tenured faculty. No single faculty member can effect change on a personnel matter.
  - There are legal guidelines for all personnel actions that the EC must follow.
  - Some faculty behavior is governed by laws regarding academic freedom.
  - If remediation is not demonstrated, additional formal action could take place by referral of the concern to the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee for investigation.
  - Some concerns rise to the level for involvement of the Title IX or EDS departments, in which case the Psychology Department Executive Committee is likely not involved and is likely to receive minimal (if any) communication about any resolution.