



# UW-Milwaukee Neuroscience PhD in Psychology Overview

## Program Objective

The goal of our Neuroscience doctoral program in Psychology is to train scholar-scientists of the highest caliber who value both the creation and dissemination of knowledge about the brain and behavior.

## Faculty Mentor

All students enter the program with a faculty mentor. Students work in their mentor's lab, and the mentor guides the student through the program milestones and provides training to help the student become an independent scientist. Research mentor selection is determined through the admissions process based on a match between an applicant's research background and interests and those of recruiting faculty members. It is also encouraged for students to collaborate across labs, and it is possible to switch faculty mentors if needed.

## Required Coursework

- Proseminar in Biological Psychology taken in first semester.
- Three core neuroscience courses: Cellular & Molecular Neuroscience, Behavioral Neuroscience, and Cognitive Neuroscience.
- At least one graduate-level course in statistics, more encouraged.
- Three semesters of the Seminar in Neuroscience.
- Four graduate level elective courses.
- Research credits.

## Program Milestones

- **Master's Thesis.** Students must propose a research project to be completed within their first three years in the program. The Master's proposal is reviewed and approved by a Master's committee before the student begins the project. When the research is completed, the student writes the Master's thesis describing the research project and defends it in a meeting of the Master's committee. With the successful defense of the Master's thesis and completion of 30 course credits, the student earns a Master's of Science degree in Psychology.
- **Preliminary Examination.** The purpose of the preliminary exam is for the student to demonstrate that they have the requisite knowledge in their research area to advance to dissertator status and begin working on their dissertation. The exam involves identifying the subset of the scientific literature that is most relevant to a student's line of research, reading that literature, creating an exam product that communicates the major points from those readings, and meeting with a committee to answer questions and receive feedback. Students are eligible to take the exam once they have passed the Master's thesis defense and completed the required neuroscience courses. Students must complete the preliminary exam within five years of entering the program.
- **Dissertation.** The process for the dissertation project is similar to the process for the Master's project: the student proposes a research project to their Dissertation committee. The Dissertation committee reviews and approves the project. The student completes the research, prepares the dissertation document, and defends it to the committee. While the process is similar to the Master's thesis, the expectations for the scope and potential impact of the dissertation project are generally higher based on the student's accumulated experience in the program. Students are eligible to begin their dissertation project once they have passed the preliminary exam and must successfully defend within 7 years of entering the program.