Mississippi State University Cognitive Science Doctoral Program Handbook

2017-2018

Table of Contents

Core Faculty In the Program

- Dr. Laura Allen (Laura.Allen@msstate.edu)
- Dr. Gary L. Bradshaw (glb@psychology.msstate.edu)
- Dr. Deborah K. Eakin (deakin@psychology.msstate.edu)
- Dr. Andrew Jarosz (afj62@msstate.edu)
- Dr. Jarrod Moss (Program Director, jmoss@psychology.msstate.edu)
- Dr. Michael Pratte (prattems@psychology.msstate.edu)

Program Website

http://cogsci.psychology.msstate.edu - The program website contains additional information as well as all of our program forms, templates, and checklists.

Program Requirements

Course Requirements

RESEARCH METHODS AND QUANTITATIVE CORE

PSY 8214	Quantitative Methods in Psychology II	4
PSY 8803	Advanced Quantitative Methods for IO and General Psychology	3
PSY 8513	Psychological Research	3

RESEARCH

PSY 9000	Dissertation Research/Dissertation in Psychology	21

COGNITIVE SCIENCE CORE

PSY 8703	Advanced Cognitive Science	3
PSY 8713	Issues and Methods in Cognitive Psychology	3

COGNITIVE SCIENCE INTEGRATION

PSY 8723	Cognitive Models of Skill	3
PSY 8773	Distributed Representations in Cognition	3

COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY INTEGRATION

Select two of the following:		6
PSY 8743	Perception and Attention	
PSY 8753	Advanced Memory	
PSY 8763	Expertise and Cognitive Skill Acquisition	

ADVANCED GRADUATE SEMINARS

PSY 8653	Applied Cognitive Reading Seminar	6

RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

PSY 8683	Cognitive Science Research Skills	3
PSY 8693	Advanced Cognitive Science Research Skills	3
PSY 8783	Cognitive Science Professional Skills	3
PSY 8793	Advanced Cognitive Science Professional Skills	3

COGNITIVE SCIENCE SEMINAR

PSY 8731	Applied Cognitive Science Research Seminar (ACCESS)	5
Total Hours		**72**

Research Requirements

The Cognitive Science program has a set of requirements designed to involve students in research upon entering the program and then facilitate their progress toward publishing their research and completing their dissertation. The purpose and evaluation criteria for these requirements are described below. Students should note that these are the minimum research requirements needed to complete the doctoral degree. Establishing a successful research career will require research products beyond the minimal set required to complete the degree. All requirements have an associated deadline, but this is simply the latest date you can complete the requirement. You are encouraged to complete the requirements ahead of their deadlines.

The faculty cannot stress enough that students (and faculty) are often poor estimators of the time taken to produce research products. Especially as the requirements require more sophisticated writing (e.g., master's thesis and beyond), you are encouraged to start as early as possible. It can take months of revisions to achieve the publication-quality writing needed for these later requirements. Starting your thesis writing a month (or even two months) prior to the deadline is a good indicator that you will not pass your thesis requirement. Good writing takes time and many rounds of revision in consultation with your advisor.

Unless otherwise noted or superseded by other university requirements, all written products required by the program are to be formatted as if they were being submitted for review to a journal. The default journal format will be APA format with figures/tables inline. Dissertations and theses must be formatted per APA and library guidelines.

Unless otherwise specified, you should submit all documents to satisfy requirements to your committee via email or printed copy (depending on the preference of each committee member). All forms should be filled out and signed electronically using a PDF signature.

Failure to meet any deadlines or submit an acceptable research product for any of these requirements is grounds for a recommendation to the graduate school for dismissal from the program. Unless otherwise specified or superseded by the Graduate Catalog, passing a requirement is determined by a majority vote of your committee. Note that the Graduate Catalog specifies that obtaining more than one failing vote for your master's thesis defense, dissertation proposal, or dissertation defense constitutes failure.

Information on Committees

You will form two committees during the program. The first committee will be your master's committee that will serve through your thesis defense. This committee must have three members of which at least half are cognitive science core faculty.

The second committee will be your dissertation committee that will serve from your thesis defense through completion of your dissertation defense. This committee must have four members of which at least half are cognitive science core faculty.

The role of the committee is to provide guidance and feedback as you progress through the degree. As such, committee members are expected to provide timely feedback on written program requirements. In addition to the general expectations of committee members described in the graduate catalog and department handbook, committee members should provide prompt feedback within 10 business days of receiving a written document during the academic year (i.e., excluding weekends, holidays, breaks, and the summer months). If a committee member is

unable to meet this deadline, then he or she should notify the committee chair upon receipt of the document to develop a plan for how to proceed. You should note that most faculty are only on nine-month contracts, and so they will not necessarily be available to perform committee-related duties from May 16-August 15. You should seek prior approval from your committee if you plan to have a proposal or defense in the summer months.

Note that committee members generally are only expected to provide feedback on the penultimate version of any document. The committee may require revisions to a document resulting in a final version or they may accept the version submitted as the final version. Committee members generally do not provide feedback or comments on intermediate drafts. Committee members should submit pass/fail feedback directly to the advisor but not to the student. Committee members should submit comments/suggestions to both the student and advisor whenever possible.

All proposals you complete in the program to submit to your committee should clearly describe what work has already been done and what you are proposing to do. If you are proposing it, then you should not do the work before your committee members have had an opportunity to review it and provide feedback. Your committee might require changes to your research, and if you have already done part of what you are proposing, you will have to repeat this work with the committee's changes implemented.

Requirement 1. Forming a Master's Committee and Establish First-Year Goals

(Deadline: September 30 of 1st Semester)

Incoming students will generally have been admitted to work with an advisor (or possibly co-advisors), but all students will have selected an advisor within the first week of their first semester. Your advisor, along with your committee, will provide guidance throughout your time in the program.

Your advisor has the general responsibility of discussing with you all matters involving the Department and the Office of Graduate Studies. Your advisor is in a sense your primary representative to the Psychology Department, although of course you are free to consult at any time with other members of the Department, your program faculty, the Program Director, and with the Graduate Coordinator and/or Department Head. Your primary advisor must be a core member of the Cognitive Science faculty. You may select a co-advisor who is not a member of the core faculty.

In consultation with your advisor, you should establish an initial research direction for your first-year research project and subsequently your master's thesis. Your committee members should be selected to provide additional expertise and advice on your research leading up to the thesis. Your advisor will help to identify potential faculty to serve as committee members. Your master's committee must have at least three members including your advisor. At least half of the committee must be members of the Cognitive Science faculty.

You will need to meet with potential committee members and be able to briefly describe the area of research you will be pursuing and a possible research question. It is not expected that you will have a detailed understanding of the relevant literature or a detailed research question and hypothesis at this time. The program faculty do expect you to be able to describe the general direction you expect your research to take in the first year so that they can determine in what manner their expertise can contribute to your project.

You may switch advisors at some point in the program. You should consult with your current advisor and the program director prior to initiating any change. Switching advisors can often be difficult, and in the best-case scenario there is another faculty member who is doing research directly aligned with your new research interests who agrees to advise you. Choosing to advise a graduate student is a major decision for a faculty member, and a faculty member's willingness to do so can depend on a number of factors. Simply because you wish to switch advisors does not mean there is a faculty member in the program who is willing to advise you. You cannot continue in the program without an advisor.

At the end of each academic year, you will submit an annual report form to the program director. The purpose of this form is to provide information that allows the program faculty to assess each student's progress in the program. One part of this form asks students to evaluate their progress on the annual goals they set on last year's report. You should establish some reasonable goals with your advisor and complete only the goal setting portion of the form. These are the goals you will assess your progress towards at the end of your second semester.

You complete this requirement by filling out the Committee Request, Program of Study, and Annual Report forms. The first two are available from the graduate school's website. The final form is available from the program's website. A template of the Program of Study is provided on the program's website to aid you and your advisor in completing this form. All signatures should be electronic. After obtaining all signatures, you must submit the forms via email to the program director. It is important that you keep a copy of this signed form for your records as well.

Requirement 2. First-Year Project (FYP) Proposal

(Deadline: Final day of classes of 1st Semester)

During the first year, you must complete a research project. The purpose of this project is to involve you in the research process as early as possible. This project will ideally form the basis for your thesis research that you pursue in your second year. Your advisor should help you to select a suitable project, and this could include assigning you to a planned study in the lab. Projects might include conducting an experiment, developing a computational model of existing data, or learning a complex methodology (e.g., fMRI) via the analysis of an existing unanalyzed data set. One of your goals in conducting this project should be to do something that can be built upon to lead to a publishable master's thesis at the end of the second year. It is not necessarily expected that your first-year research will end in a publishable product, but it might often lead to a conference presentation.

The goal of a doctoral program is to train you to be an independent researcher. As such, you should start to take initiative on developing and executing your project with frequent consultation with your advisor. A common mistake in graduate school is to rely on your advisor to direct the project. This is your research, and you should be taking steps to assume a leadership role in your research. You should discuss how you can best do that in the context of your particular project with your advisor.

Students work with their advisor to create a project proposal. This proposal is due to the student's committee and the program director by 5 p.m. on the last day of instruction in the first semester. The student's committee will review the proposal to determine that it is of sufficient quality to proceed, and the committee will provide feedback no later than the first week of classes in the subsequent semester.

Approved on June 13, 2016

You should use the first-year project proposal template on the cognitive science website to write your proposal. The components of the proposal include: a brief introduction, a statement of your research question and primary hypothesis, a detailed method section, and a brief description of the analysis you will do to assess your primary hypothesis. The introduction will include a summary of 2-3 relevant papers that motivate your research question and should be no longer than 1-2 pages. Your research question and hypothesis can be stated in a paragraph. Your method section will be the most detailed section of the paper, and there is no page length expectation for this section. Most will probably be 3-5 pages. Your proposed analysis may be straightforward enough to state in one paragraph in the case of simple statistics (e.g., ANOVA, t-test) or it could be more complex and take 1-2 pages to describe (e.g., eye tracking or fMRI analyses). You should distribute this document to your committee and the program director by the deadline. The proposal will be evaluated for completeness (i.e., having all required sections) and appropriateness (i.e., it is accomplishable within the expected time frame).

You are required to present your project proposal in ACCESS no later than the end of February in your second semester.

Requirement 3. First-Year Project (FYP) Report

(Deadline: Final day of classes of 2nd Semester)

After completing your FYP research, a project report must be prepared. The FYP report should be an update to your proposal that includes a results section. You should provide some interpretation of your results with respect to your research question and the literature that motivated this question. However, you are not required to have a full discussion section. Finally, you must include a description of the direction you are taking for your thesis. Based on the results of your FYP, you may have had to revise your direction, or you may be conducting a follow-up study to your FYP for your thesis. Regardless of your direction, you should submit a plan of monthly milestones that will lead to your thesis proposal when you submit your FYP report. Your committee will monitor your progress on these milestones.

This report is due by 5 p.m. on the final day of classes of your second semester and will be evaluated by your committee within two weeks. You will also send a copy of your FYP report to the program director via email. Your committee will evaluate the report and provide feedback within two weeks. If the report is not acceptable, you will be allowed to revise it within one month of being notified of the need for revisions. Failure to revise the report in an acceptable manner will result in a recommendation to the graduate school for dismissal from the program.

Requirement 4. Master's Thesis Proposal

(Deadline: November 15 of 3rd semester)

You are required to complete a Master's Thesis demonstrating independent research expertise. Students entering with a Master's degree should review the "Students Entering with a Master's Degree" section later in the handbook. Ideally, the master's thesis will continue the line of research initiated by the FYP, which would facilitate having a publishable product at the end of your second year. However, this is not a requirement. Although you will draw on the assistance of faculty and other university resources, the final thesis must represent your own work. A proposal of this thesis must be presented and defended to your committee by November 15 in your third semester.

Approved on June 13, 2016

You will present a 30 minute thesis topic talk at the beginning of your 3rd semester you will present a thesis topic talk in ACCESS. The first N ACCESS meetings of the semester will be reserved for these talks where N is the number of second-year students in the program. Your committee should be scheduled to meet shortly after this talk. The purpose of this talk is for you to describe the research question you will be addressing in your thesis including relevant motivation and background. You must describe in detail any work you have completed and the work you are proposing to do. You and your committee will then meet and discuss any revisions to the proposed work. Following this meeting, you will complete the written proposal for your thesis (due November 15). Any changes to the proposed work that you make after this committee meeting should be discussed with the committee. The expectation is that the proposed work described in your document accurately reflects the outcome of the discussion of your committee following your thesis topic talk.

A thesis proposal including a review of relevant literature, a description of proposed methods, and planned analyses must be approved by your committee. The committee should receive a copy of the proposal at least two weeks before the scheduled proposal date. Evaluation criteria include clear writing, a clear rationale for the hypothesis grounded in prior literature and appropriate methodology, and analysis techniques. Prior to your thesis proposal meeting your committee will review your written document and ask you questions during the meeting. There will be no oral presentation at this meeting. The purpose of the meeting is for you to explain and defend the proposed work described in the document. Any revisions agreed on by the committee should be written up by you and circulated to the committee in a PDF document that your committee signs. Your proposal meeting should be completed prior to November 15 in your third semester.

Requirement 4. Master's Thesis Defense

(Thesis Document Deadline: September 15 of 5th semester; Thesis Defense Deadline: November 15 of 5th semester; Thesis submission deadline: February 1 of 6th semester)

Once you and your advisor mutually have agreed that the master's thesis has been completed, you may schedule a time for the defense. This defense is an oral examination, scheduled for approximately 1.5-2 hours during which the student offers a presentation of the research for the first 30-45 minutes. The remainder of time is reserved for questions. Most students will present their thesis defense during ACCESS with a committee meeting schedule for the hour following ACCESS to allow for further questions and deliberation among the committee members. Exactly enough ACCESS dates starting on September 15 will be reserved for these defenses. In other words, defenses will start in ACCESS on the first meeting following September 15 and continue for the next N weeks where N equals the number of third-year students in the program. At the completion of the Master's defense, the committee will determine whether the thesis is acceptable and/or whether it requires revisions. You are encouraged to review the requirements of master's thesis and defense in the department handbook and in the Graduate Bulletin. Your advisor should work with the Graduate Coordinator to ensure that the appropriate paperwork is done on time. You are also encouraged to write the thesis in a manner that is appropriate for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. Ideally, you will be able to take your thesis document and simply adjust the formatting to be able to submit to a journal. Evaluation criteria include publication-quality writing, clear rationale for the hypothesis grounded in prior literature, appropriate methodology and analysis techniques, and a discussion that addresses the hypothesis with respect to theories described in prior literature.

Approved on June 13, 2016

If the initial defense is not successful, policies outlined in the Graduate Catalog will be followed. For example, in the 2015-2016 Catalog, a student is allowed to schedule a second defense after a period of four months has elapsed. A failure at the second defense results in a recommendation to the graduate school for dismissal from the program. Note that failing the initial master's thesis defense does not alter any remaining deadlines for program requirements.

Submission of the Thesis. Following the Master's defense, students submit their completed thesis electronically to the graduate school. Only final documents with full internal and external approvals should be submitted. For a copy of the guidelines and to submit an electronic Thesis or Dissertation, visit http://lib.msstate.edu/thesis/process/. You must complete the requirements for graduation with the M.S. in time to graduate the semester after you successfully defend. Relevant deadlines are set by the graduate school, dean, and graduate coordinator.

Requirement 5. Specialty Qualifying Exam

(Dissertation committee deadline: October 15 of 5th semester)

(Deadline: April 15 of 6th semester; Retake Deadline: September 1 of 7th semester)

After submission of your thesis document, you should form a doctoral committee. The doctoral committee is comprised of at least four members of the graduate faculty. It is chosen by you in consultation with your advisor. Most members are likely to be members of the Cognitive Science Program. The committee chair (your advisor) must be a core faculty member of the Cognitive Science Program. At least half of your committee must be faculty members in the Psychology Department who are core faculty in the Cognitive Science Program. In addition, any rules outlined in the Graduate Bulletin for committee composition must be followed. The committee should be constructed so that experts in all aspects of your study will serve as members. If changes in the approved committee become necessary, procedures described in the Graduate Bulletin must be followed.

The specialty exam consists of a written review paper in the style of a *Psychological Bulletin* review article. The specialty paper is ideally the opening chapter to your dissertation. Please see the writing tips under the dissertation proposal topic below. The evaluation criteria are **1) that research must be integrated around a central theme, 2) must provide a critical review, and 3) suggest avenues for future research**. It is very important that you have a specific scope and research question (i.e., central theme) in mind as you write this kind of review paper. Students will develop their topic with the advice and consent of the doctoral committee. A list of articles to be reviewed should be developed in cooperation with the student's advisor and must be submitted within **two months of completion of the master's thesis defense**. The list should start with a 1-page summary of your paper's topic and be organized into groups in such a way that the relevance of the readings to your topic is apparent. This list is simply a starting point and can be added to as the review paper develops. Some papers in the list may also turn out not to be as relevant as expected. It is best to consult with your committee as soon as possible if you determine that a significant departure from the initial list is necessary. While the advisor and committee are available for discussion of the ideas in the paper, the paper should not be reviewed or edited by the committee prior to submission. The paper should be formatted in APA format as if it were being submitted to *Psychological Bulletin* and include all elements of such a paper (e.g., abstract). The exam is due by 5 p.m. on April 15 in your sixth semester. Your committee will evaluate the paper and provide feedback within two weeks. If the paper is not acceptable, you will be allowed to revise it with a deadline of September 1 in your seventh semester. Failure to pass the exam after the revision will result in a recommendation to the graduate school for dismissal from the program.

Approved on June 13, 2016

Requirement 6. Dissertation Proposal (Comprehensive Exam)

(Expected completion date: Last day of classes of 8th semester)

Supervision of Ph.D. research is carried out by your dissertation advisor and your doctoral committee. Prepare a written statement of your dissertation proposal in consultation with your doctoral advisor. The length of the statement will vary with the nature of the problem, the hypotheses under investigation, the design of the research, and the proposed methods of analysis. Set up a proposal meeting with your doctoral committee to review the proposal and decide on any changes. As a general rule, this proposal meeting will constitute the Comprehensive Examination as outlined in the Graduate Bulletin.

During your 8th semester, you will present a dissertation topic talk in ACCESS. Your committee should be scheduled to meet shortly after this talk. The purpose of this talk is for you to describe the research question you will be addressing in your dissertation including relevant motivation and background. You must describe in detail the work you have completed and the work you are proposing to do. You and your committee will then meet and discuss any revisions to the proposed work. Following this meeting, you will complete the written proposal for your dissertation. Any changes to the proposed work that you make after this committee meeting should be discussed with the committee. The expectation is that the proposed work described in your document accurately reflects the outcome of the discussion of your committee following your dissertation topic talk.

At least **3 weeks** before your proposal/comprehensive oral exam meeting, you should notify the program director and Graduate Coordinator of the date of your exam and send a flyer announcing your meeting (see the program website for a template). If your final program of study form has not already been approved, this request must be accompanied by your finalized Program of Study form.

At least **2 weeks** before your proposal/comprehensive oral exam, you should distribute copies of the proposal to your doctoral committee. Your dissertation proposal meeting serves as your comprehensive oral examination. Your committee will review your written document and ask you questions during this meeting. There will be no oral presentation at this meeting. The purpose of the meeting is for you to explain and defend the proposed work described in the document. Any revisions agreed on by the committee should be written up by you and circulated to the committee in a PDF document that your committee signs.

The doctoral committee serves in an advisory capacity throughout the course of your research. It is convened whenever departures from the approved design are contemplated or if other special circumstances make a meeting desirable. Of course, the committee members are available for consultation and discussion as your project progresses.

A certificate of the results (Pass/Fail/Deferred) of the preliminary examination must be completed by the committee and returned to the Office of the Graduate School via the Graduate Coordinator.

Failure to complete this examination (i.e., your dissertation proposal) by the last day of classes in your eighth semester will result in the student being notified of unsatisfactory progress requiring the completion of an unsatisfactory progress plan. Failure to meet or revise the unsatisfactory plan prior to its deadline will result in probation and may ultimately result in a recommendation for dismissal to the graduate school.

Dissertation writing tips. Listed below are some links to resources concerned with writing a dissertation. Here is a brief summary of some key points, but you are should review these resources in detail.

- One of the most difficult sections to write effectively is often the literature review.
    - o Your intended audience is a researcher with graduate training in psychology or cognitive science but not necessarily in your specialized subfield. You therefore need to explain the literature at the correct level of detail for that audience.
    - o Length == Importance. The amount of space you devote to explaining a prior paper should be correlated with the importance of that particular study or theory to your research question. If you are explaining the details of a theory or experiment, then it should be critical for the development of your specific research question.
    - o Your goal is to provide the comprehensive background as motivation for your specific research question. It is not to provide an exhaustive history of study in this field. If a study/theory does not play much of a role in your research question, question how much space to spend on it (if any).
    - o Use figures and tables as much as appropriate.
- Experiments and Results
    - o Explain the choices that you made.
    - o Someone should be able to replicate your study based on your Method section.
    - o Explain the rationale for your choice of analysis techniques.
    - o Use acronyms sparingly and only when they enhance readability. Remember that the audience is not in your specialized subfield.
    - o Use figures as much as possible.
- Discussion
    - o This is perhaps one of the most crucial parts of a doctoral dissertation where you demonstrate your ability to reason about your results in relation to current theories.
- Resources
    - o Bem, D. J. (1995). Writing a review article for Psychological Bulletin. *Psychological Bulletin*, *118*(2), 172.
        - ▪ http://dbem.org/Writing%20Review.pdf
    - o http://people.kmi.open.ac.uk/stefan/thesis-writing.pdf
    - o Excerpts from Hofstee, E. (2006). Constructing a good dissertation. *Johannesburg: EPE*.
        - ▪ http://www.exactica.co.za/book-chapters.php
        - ▪ http://www.exactica.co.za/dn/exactica-book-literature-review.pdf

Requirement 7. Dissertation Defense

(Expected completion date: Last day of classes of 10th semester)

The Dissertation Defense is held upon completion of your dissertation research and your dissertation document. The examination is administered by your doctoral committee.

At least **3 weeks** before your defense meeting, you should notify the program director and Graduate Coordinator of the date of your exam and send a flyer announcing your meeting (see

the program website for a template). If your final program of study form has not already been approved, this request must be accompanied by your finalized Program of Study form.

At least **2 weeks** before your defense meeting, you should distribute copies of the proposal to your doctoral committee.

A certificate of the results (Pass/Fail/Deferred) of the final examination must be completed by the committee and returned to the Office of the Graduate School via the Graduate Coordinator. Remember to review Office of the Graduate School regulations, in addition to the ones given in this handbook and the department handbook, regarding the dissertation and its submission. Following the defense, students must complete any requested revisions for their committee.

Once approved by the committee, the document is provided to the Graduate Coordinator—along with a signed Thesis-Dissertation Requirements checklist—for a review of formatting prior to the deadline set for each graduation period. After these revisions, the document is provided to the dean's office for their review. Finally, the document is provided to the library for the final edits. The post committee editing often adds 2 weeks or more to the timeline. Each student should consult with the committee about providing electronic or printed copies of the completed dissertation. Students must email the final PDF file to the Graduate Coordinator once the library has accepted the completed manuscript. A document describing the regulations governing dissertation preparation is available from the Office of the Graduate School's web page and on the Department of Psychology website. Although this manual provides the definitive guidelines for the preparation of a dissertation, our Graduate Coordinator will provide additional information about the dissertation process via email and the Department website. It is the student's responsibility, in conjunction with the committee chair, to submit a dissertation that conforms to APA guidelines, and the Graduate Coordinator reserves the right to reject any thesis/dissertation in which it is obvious that the student has made little attempt to follow these guidelines. The library is responsible for monitoring OGS guidelines. Failure to do so will slow your progress toward graduation considerably. After the Graduate Coordinator approves your document, the document goes to the Dean for signature, and then to the library, which monitors OGS requirements and oversees any final editorial revisions.

Failure to complete the defense within one year following the completion of the dissertation proposal will result in the student being notified of unsatisfactory progress requiring the completion of an unsatisfactory progress plan. Failure to meet or revise the unsatisfactory plan prior to its deadline will result in probation and may ultimately result in a recommendation for dismissal to the graduate school.

Other Requirements

Applied Cognitive Science Research Seminar (ACCESS)

Each semester you will need to enroll in the PSY 8731 Applied Cognitive Science Research Seminar (ACCESS) or a Professional/Research Skills course but not both. The Skills courses require attending ACCESS as part of the course requirements so you should not register for ACCESS in the semesters you are enrolled in a Skills course.

ACCESS meets once a week, with presentations from program faculty, external faculty members, and students. In your second semester, you will present your first year project proposal. In your third semester, you will present your master's thesis proposal. In your fifth semester, you will present your master's thesis defense. Including these requirements, all students in the program will present at least once in ACCESS each academic year. All student

presentations will be evaluated by the audience in order to provide constructive feedback on how to improve. Students will meet with their advisor or the ACCESS instructor to discuss evaluations as soon after the talk as possible. Although only 5 credit hours of PSY 8731 are required to complete the program of study, all students are required to attend and participate in ACCESS until graduation. All full-time students in the program are required to enroll in ACCESS each semester unless they are enrolled in a Skills course.

Graduate students are expected to participate in the seminar, not simply to attend. Participation includes asking questions of the presenter, participating in debates about issues, providing constructive feedback on evaluations, and making presentations. Participation is an important part of your professional training: Professional jobs often demand good speaking skills and the ability to think critically (both positively and negatively) about research. These skills will be honed through your participation in the research seminar.

Annual Reports

Students will be evaluated on an annual basis by the program faculty. The purpose of this evaluation is more than simply to decide on the quality and work of each student; we also provide guidance to students as they work towards their doctoral degrees and career goals. At the faculty meeting, each student's advisor and/or the Program Director will summarize the student's status in the program. Faculty and other supervisors report on the student's performance, and a consensus is reached on feedback to be given to the student.

In order to facilitate the evaluation, students are required to provide the program faculty with an Annual Report to include information concerning progress through the program. This report is due no later than April 15 each year. In addition, future goals and plans will be included in the letter. An Annual Report form is located on the program web page. A formal guidance letter is written by the Program Director in consultation with your committee, and will be sent to you. You are encouraged to meet with your advisor and/or the Program Director to discuss the feedback.

Department Seminars/Events

During the course of the year, the Psychology Department will sponsor a few seminars. All graduate students, regardless of status in the program, are expected to attend these presentations.

Honor Code

All students are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the Mississippi State University Honor Code (www.honorcode.msstate.edu/), and University policies relating to students (www.msstate.edu/web/security/student_policies.html). Behavior inconsistent with the rules and principles set forth in these documents may result in the immediate dismissal of the student from the Psychology Graduate Program.

Students Entering with a Master's Degree

In some cases, students entering with a thesis-based master's degree can petition the core program faculty for credit for their prior coursework and master's thesis. Each case will be handled on a case-by-base basis, and each petition will be decided by a majority vote of the core program faculty. You should submit prior syllabi including course topics and readings for each course that you are petitioning to receive credit for. Work with your advisor to determine which course you are petitioning to waive from our curriculum.

Approved on June 13, 2016

In cases where a significant amount of coursework can be waived, students can also petition to waive the master's thesis requirement. For example, if you have sufficient coursework that is similar to our program's curriculum (e.g., four courses) then you could consider waiving the master's thesis requirement. Our research requirements described below assume that you are dual-enrolled in the Psychology Master's degree. Waiving the master's thesis is equivalent to waiving the second year of program requirements, and your expected program completion time would be four years. Petition forms for coursework and waiving the master's requirement are available from the program website.

Social Media Policy

In an increasingly technologically connected and public world, students are encouraged to remain mindful of your behavior and its consequences online, including the use of personal website, social networking, blogs, listservs, and email. It is likely that future employers may be interested in searching or accessing online information about you. Although all of the information that may exist about you may not be within your control, students are urged to exercise caution and restraint and to utilize privacy safeguards when possible. Activities online, including those that you may consider purely personal in nature, may unfortunately reflect upon your professional life. With this in mind, you are encouraged to consider the following cautions and suggestions:

With social networking sites such as Facebook, utilize privacy settings to limit access to your pages and personal information. Online photo and video sharing, including within social networking sites, should be considered very public venues; use discretion when posting such information. With email, keep in mind that everything you write may exist perpetually or be retrievable, so be thoughtful about what you write. Emails sent via the MSU email system are considered public records and the property of MSU. Participation in listservs and forums include the peril of inadvertently writing things to a much more public audience than intended, so be cautious with posts to such forums. Email is not an appropriate venue to discuss confidential information, so if such communications are necessary make sure any information is non-identifiable.

It is not the intention of the program to interfere in your personal life or to limit your ability to enjoy the benefits of online activities, express your personality or opinions, or have a little fun. However, as with off-line activity, we encourage you to be mindful of the implications and make efforts to protect your professional image and reputation. Where your connection to MSU is apparent, make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of MSU. If the program becomes aware of online activity that represents a violation of university policies; the APA Code of Ethics; or local, state, or federal laws, such information may be included in evaluation of student progress and may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.

Overview of Applied Cognitive Science Program Requirements and Deadlines
- All deadlines assume starting in a fall semester – in case of rare exceptions to this assumption, see program director

Milestone	Deadline/Expected Completion Date	Form/Completion Requirement
First Year		
Advisor selected	End of first week of classes	Reply to email from program director (only sent if necessary)
Master's committee formed and first-year goals	Sept. 30	Committee Form Program of study (M.S.) Program of study (Ph.D.) Goals section of annual report
FYP proposal	Final day of classes of fall semester	FYP Form
FYP proposal ACCESS presentation	Feb. 28	
Annual review	April 15	Annual review form
FYP report	Final day of classes in spring semester	FYP Form
Second Year		
Master's thesis topic approval	Presentation in ACCESS beginning of 3rd semester	
Master's thesis proposal	Nov. 15 of 3rd semester	Proposal due to committee two weeks prior to proposal
Annual review	April 15	Annual review form
Third Year		
Master's thesis defense	Presentation in ACCESS no later than Nov. 15	Sept. 15 or two weeks prior to defense (whichever is earlier)
Doctoral committee formed	Oct. 15 – This may be prior to your thesis defense	Doctoral committee form
Specialty exam reading list	Two months after date of master's thesis defense	Reading list sent to committee
Annual review	April 15	Annual review form
Specialty exam	April 15	Specialty paper
Fourth Year		
Annual review	April 15	Annual review form
ACCESS presentation	Required annually	
Dissertation topic approval	Prior to final dissertation proposal document	
Dissertation proposal	Final day of classes in spring semester	Proposal Exam Results Form Admission to Candidacy Form
Fifth Year		
Annual review	April 15	Annual review form
ACCESS presentation	Required annually	
Dissertation defense	Final day of classes in spring semester	Dissertation Exam Results Form