



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI.**

---

# **Brain & Behavior**

## **Ph.D. Program**

2018-2019  
Program Handbook

Alen Hajnal, Ph.D.  
Director of Training

Welcome to the doctoral program in Brain and Behavior at The University of Southern Mississippi. We are pleased that you have agreed to become part of rigorous our research science program and hope that you find your experience with us to be both challenging and rewarding.

This handbook will include all of the relevant policies and procedures developed by the School of Psychology and the Brain & Behavior program faculty. You are expected to be aware of and comply with all aspects of this handbook. Consider this handbook a contract between faculty and students. This handbook is designed to provide you with all the information you will need to successfully complete the doctoral program and is meant to supplement the policies outlined in the Graduate Bulletin. Changes to program or School policy will be provided in writing to all students. Please keep a copy of this handbook as a reference during your time as a student here and use this as a reference after graduation as you pursue employment. Links are embedded throughout this document which link to the appropriate form found on this site.

Beginning a doctoral graduate program can be an exciting and often overwhelming process. We hope that you utilize your time here in our program to develop strong professional relationships. As such, you will find that while you learn a great deal attending class and completing program requirements, much of your ‘learning’ will take place outside of formal class settings. Please plan to be present and actively involved in all program and School activities. Attend workshops, consult with faculty, and develop good working relationships with your peers. You will find that these experiences are equally influential in shaping your development as a psychologist and similarly rewarding. We hope that as you acculturate yourself to our program and environment that you find this a welcoming and supportive place to learn. Ask for help often and seek advice from your Major Professor, Director of Training and other faculty. We anticipate your success and are here to support you in achieving the program training goals.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions, concerns, need clarification or additional information about this program. I am happy to help!

Best of luck to you,

Alen Hajnal, Ph.D.  
Director, Brain and Behavior Graduate Program  
The School of Psychology  
118 College Drive, #5025  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-5025  
Phone: (601) 266-4617  
Fax: (601) 266-5580  
Email: alen.hajnal@usm.edu

## **The University**

The University of Southern Mississippi is one of three comprehensive universities, along with the University of Mississippi and Mississippi State University in the state system of higher education. Although the "youngest" of the three major universities (university status granted in 1962), enrollments at Southern Miss have steadily grown to become one of the state's larger institutions with a combined enrollment (Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast campuses) of about 15,000 students. The majority were enrolled on the Hattiesburg campus. The student body is diverse with ethnic minorities constituting almost 30% of the Hattiesburg student body. The University of Southern Mississippi offers over 90 bachelor's degree programs, over 60 master's degree programs, two specialist's degree programs, and 24 doctoral degree programs. The School of Psychology at Southern Miss is one of the very few departments nationwide, currently offering three APA-accredited programs (Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychology).

## **The School of Psychology**

The School of Psychology is administratively housed in the College of Education and Human Sciences and is located in the Owings-McQuagge Building near the center of the Southern Miss campus. The School offers advanced degrees in four areas: Clinical, Counseling, Brain & Behavior, and School Psychology and has a terminal master's program in Counseling Psychology and Applied Behavior Analysis. The School, Clinical, and Counseling doctoral training programs are fully accredited by the American Psychological Association. The School is composed of about 30 full time faculty members in Hattiesburg and 5 full time faculty members on at the Gulf Coast campus. The core faculty members for the Brain and Behavior Program provide primary leadership and direction for that program. However, other psychology faculty members may teach foundations courses and/or serve on research committees, broadening the scope of mentors and faculty resources available to students.

The faculty at USM generally have an open door policy. We strongly encourage students to get to know their faculty, both within and outside of their emphasis area. Much mentoring and learning occurs outside the classroom in other formal as well as informal interactions with faculty. Such opportunities, however, cannot occur if a student only attends required classes and meetings and is rarely in the department.

# The Brain & Behavior Doctoral Program

Our doctoral training program is designed for those planning careers as instructors/researchers in academic settings and researchers in nonacademic settings. All students are expected to (1) gain understanding of the fundamental areas of psychology (2) acquire a high level of sophistication in statistics, experimental design, data analysis, psychological measurement and quantitative methods, (3) gain expertise and conduct research in a specialized area of study, (4) develop capacity for course design and instruction, and (5) develop skills in research mentorship to facilitate research development of undergraduate students.

## Program Goals and Objectives

The Brain and Behavior program strives to achieve two primary training goals:

- Goal 1: To develop psychologists who are competent researchers.
  - Gain understanding of fundamental areas of psychology.
  - Acquire high level of sophistication in statistics, experimental design, data analysis, psychological measurement and quantitative methods.
  - Gain expertise and conduct research in a specialized area of study.
- Goal 2: To develop psychologists who are competent instructors and mentors.
  - Develop capacity for course design and instruction.
  - Develop skills in research mentorship to facilitate research development of undergraduate students.

Courses and research training are developmentally sequenced to provide you with challenges appropriate to your level of training. Developing expertise in an area of research, as well as competency in advanced methodology and statistics are emphasized and begin early in the program. Brain and Behavior students are expected to conduct independent research in collaboration with their research adviser. Students are also encouraged to develop professional collaborations with various other faculty and graduate students. Most of our students are expected to teach undergraduate courses while pursuing their doctoral degree. Thus, success in our program necessitates the development of both research and instructional competency.

### **Goal 1: To develop psychologists who are competent researchers.**

Objective 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate literature and complete empirical studies independently by engaging in research activities which exemplify their identity as an empirical researcher in psychological science.

*Outcome 1:* Students will successfully conduct an empirical project which demonstrates a critical evaluation of the literature in one of the core areas of the Brain and Behavior program represented by the major professor.

Objective 2: Students will make active contributions to the field by engaging in professional presentations and publications in core areas of the Brain and Behavior program.

*Outcome 2:* Students will prepare at least one manuscript for publication.

*Outcome 3:* Students will engage in at least one professional presentation of their research at a conference relevant to Brain and Behavior core themes.

Objective 3: Students will demonstrate professional competence in their role as researchers.

*Outcome 4:* Students will engage in ethically sound decision making relevant to their role as researchers.

*Outcome 5:* Students will be effective research colleagues as evidenced by such things as active participation on research teams, willingness to accept feedback, adherence to program/ team deadlines and/or strong leadership skills.

### **Goal 2: To develop psychologists who are competent instructors and mentors.**

*Objective 4:* Students will develop competence in all areas of course instruction including preparing syllabi, creating lectures and other course materials, and in managing student outcomes.

*Outcome 6:* Students will be responsive to the roles assigned to them with respect to the faculty member they are a teaching assistant for. Responsibilities may include grading student assignments (exams, papers), inputting student grades (Excel, Canvas), conducting course lectures, responding to student emails, and holding office hours to meet with students.

*Objective 5:* Students are expected to develop research mentoring skills during their graduate training.

*Outcome 7:* Students should consistently be engaged in research mentorship, which could include tasks such as training research assistants in their faculty advisor's lab, mentoring student research projects, facilitating student acquisition of skills related to research design, data analysis, and results reporting.

## Research Training

Psychologists with training in the brain and behavioral sciences strive to develop basic theory that explains how organisms successfully interact with their physical and social environments. This includes a study of behavior, the vast variety of responses an organism has to its environment, and brains, the biological foundation primarily responsible for behavior. As such, students are expected to have a basic understanding of how neural activity and brain anatomy are related to psychological processes, and how psychological processes influence behavior. Areas of specialization within the Brain and Behavior area are quite broad, and include the study of basic perception and cognition, social cognition, learning and memory, neuroscience, and social behavior, to name a few. Program requirements are structured so as to best model this integration. This happens in the following ways:

- **Coursework** will expose students to the process and products of scientific research. Coursework includes topical classes that focus on a particular area of psychology, such as neuroscience, social psychology, learning and memory, or perception. These courses are designed to communicate state-of-the-art knowledge about critical theoretical developments and empirical findings in a given area of psychology. It is common for these courses to require students to develop a research proposal and associated methodology to test an important research hypothesis. Additional courses focus specifically on the development of research aptitude as it relates to methodology and data analysis. In these courses, students are expected to develop an understanding of the most effective methodologies for answering experimental psychology research questions and to develop data analytic competency in a variety of statistical procedures.
- Students accepted into the Brain and Behavior doctoral program have selected a preferred faculty mentor they intend to work with. In the majority of cases, this faculty mentor serves as the student's adviser throughout their doctoral training. By working with a faculty mentor, students are able to become active in a research lab immediately, thereby facilitating efficient acquisition of research training. Because admission into the program is made based on faculty selecting applicants to work in their research laboratory, students are expected to participate in the major professor's research as they work toward completion of a thesis and dissertation. Nonetheless, students are also encouraged to develop additional collaborations with other faculty as their interests develop throughout their graduate training. Research participation is a part of the annual evaluation of all graduate students. **NOTE: Because students are assigned to a specific faculty mentor at the beginning of their graduate training, decisions about collaborations both within the lab and outside of the lab should be discussed first with the major professor. The major professor must approve all collaborations and are contingent on successful progress to degree.**
- **Responsible Conduct in Research (CITI Training).** The University of Southern Mississippi is committed to promoting, supporting, and educating relative to the ethical and responsible conduct of research on our campuses. In order to achieve this goal, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) have authorized mandatory education in the Responsible Conduct in

Research (RCR). The RCR curriculum is intended to follow the National Institute of Health's (NIH) November 2009 update on its requirement of training in the RCR and the National Science Foundation's (NSF) execution of the America COMPETES Act. The online tutorial and quizzes are organized into modules. Your Director of Training will assist you in being sure you complete the required modules for your research area. RCR trainings must be completed by the end of the first semester of graduate training (preferably prior to October advising) and a copy of the certificate should be filed in the student's school file. For directions to access and enroll to the CITI web site and USM's required courses, follow this link: <http://www.usm.edu/research/program-requirements>.

- Students are expected to identify a thesis topic and complete a first draft of the literature review by the conclusion of the fall semester of Year 1. Topics are selected in collaboration with the major professor and are expected to complement the work of the research team. The length of the literature review and specific due dates will be established with the major professor. More stringent requirements may be set by the major professor.
- Students are expected to propose the **thesis** no later than the end of the Fall semester of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of enrollment. **Students who do not propose a thesis by the end of the Fall semester of Year 2 will be placed on probation. The terms of the probationary semester (Spring, Year 2) may include a loss of funding and/or students may not be permitted to enroll in additional coursework. Based on the concerns with the student's performance at this point, the student may be considered for dismissal from the doctoral program. On occasion a terminal master's degree option may be available. This option, while rare, will be determined by a consensus of the B&B faculty that will review the circumstances related to the specific case.**
- Thesis projects are data-driven under the close supervision of the major professor and in conjunction with a thesis committee of two additional members, at least one of which is also in the Brain & Behavior psychology program. The thesis is intended to be in manuscript style and the student is expected to be able to demonstrate competency with the research process at its conclusion during the oral defense.
- Students are required to propose an original study for their **dissertation** by the end of their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of coursework. A dissertation is intended to include a comprehensive review of the literature and include a data driven project which is directed by the student. An oral defense of the dissertation is required where the student is expected to provide a sound and empirically-driven defense of the project and its contribution to the literature. *A manuscript-length paper based on the dissertation is expected following the completion of a successful defense.* The dissertation should be completed by the end of Year 4. Students who do not complete their dissertation by the end of their fourth year will receive formal evaluation by B&B faculty. If the B&B faculty 1) deem that the student has made significant progress on their dissertation and 2) funding is available, the student may receive an extension in order to complete their dissertation (up to 1 year of additional funding, pending approval from Program Director and Chair). However, if the B&B faculty conclude that the student has not made significant progress toward completion of their dissertation at the end of their fourth year, the student will be placed on probation. The terms of the probationary semester may include loss of funding. Based on the concerns with the student's performance at this point, the student may be considered for dismissal from the doctoral program. A terminal master's degree option may be available.
- Following a successful thesis defense students must be enrolled in dissertation credits in subsequent semesters. Students making acceptable progress on their dissertation receive a "Satisfactory grade." Upon completion of the dissertation project and approval of the graduate reader, students receive a "Passing grade." If students do not make significant progress on their dissertation project, they will earn an "Unsatisfactory grade." Students who earn an "Unsatisfactory grade" then have one semester to remediate this grade, or the Graduate School will terminate them from the program.

- **Any exception to the thesis and dissertation requirements outlined above must be approved by the Brain and Behavior faculty by written request from the student to the Training Director**
- Additional opportunities for publication and presentation may be available as part of collaborations with the major professor or with the major professor's research team. Typically, doctoral students work closely with faculty to publish research and/or to present at professional conferences (e.g., Association for Psychological Science, Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Psychonomic Society, Vision Sciences Society). All research products should be completed under the supervision and approval of the major professor, and students may not submit material to professional conferences or for publication without faculty involvement, review and approval.

## Thesis and Dissertation Requirements

### Form and Style of Theses and Dissertations

The style for the thesis or dissertation must conform to the standards set forth in the most recent *Publication Manual* of the American Psychological Association and the University of Southern Mississippi [Graduate School](#). Final thesis and dissertation documents must conform to the Graduate Reader Guidelines, so it is in the student's best interest to prepare their document using these guidelines to avoid significant delays. There are a number of resources that are available to guide students in the development of theses and dissertations. The Graduate School publishes a manual, which may be obtained at the Office of the Graduate Dean in the McCain Library. In addition, the publication, *Dissertations and Theses From Start to Finish* (Cone & Foster, 2006) is an excellent resource.

Thesis and dissertation projects are intended to be thorough, well-designed and subject to critical review during the proposal and defense process. Students should be well informed about their chosen topics, the statistical techniques used and the implications their study has on the field of psychology and their specific area of research. As research scientists, it is expected that students will develop competency with the process of research (thesis) and with a specific area of study (dissertation). Theses and dissertations are intended to be manuscript style and length. Dissertations, however, may require a more thorough review of the literature and are therefore, will likely be longer in length to account for this potentially more comprehensive literature review.

Topics for the thesis and dissertation should be selected in collaboration with the major professor. Acceptable research designs are described below:

1. **True Experimental Design** - To investigate possible cause-and-effect relationships by exposing one or more experimental groups to one or more treatment conditions and comparing the results to one or more control groups which have not received the treatment. Random assignment to treatment/control conditions is an essential component of this design.
2. **Quasi-experimental Design** - (including single case/multiple-baseline behavioral designs) - To approximate the conditions of the true experimental design in a setting which does not allow the control and/or manipulation of all relevant variables. The researcher must clearly understand what compromises exist in the internal and external validity of this design and proceed within these limitations.
3. **Instrument development** – To create a new instrument or improve an existing instrument to measure a psychological construct(s). Appropriate use of this design will depend on the nature of the project but may include specific procedures to develop or refine the scale items and steps to estimate reliability and validity of the item.
4. **Qualitative Design** – To explore phenomena using non-numerical data, such as words and images,

garnered from participant interviews and/or ethnographic observations. The researcher must clearly articulate their philosophical paradigm (e.g., grounded theory), source(s) of data, measures (e.g., interview protocol), coding process, evaluative criteria, and rigor enhancing strategies.

5. **Correlational Design** - To investigate the extent to which variations in one or more factors correspond with variations in one or more other factors based on correlation coefficients. Appropriate use of this design could include multiple regression, discriminant function analysis, or other multivariate techniques.
6. **Meta-analysis, mega-analysis, or systematic review.** To investigate the area of study in your area, meta-analysis, mega-analysis, or extensive systematic reviews may be allowed if approved by your Major Professor.

Archival data sets may be considered for thesis and dissertation data pending prior approval from the committee. The following designs are not acceptable under any conditions: historical, descriptive, case study (excluding single-case and multiple-baseline designs) and field, or "ex post facto." While developmental designs are of great value, they are usually seen as inappropriate for students in the School, given the longitudinal nature of the data collection process. Students will need permission from their Major Professor to conduct longitudinal designs that span more than 6 months. Definitions and examples of all the designs covered above can be found in Leong & Austin (2005). *The psychology research handbook: A guide for graduate students and research assistants*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

### The Thesis/ Dissertation Process

Four major milestones make up the thesis/dissertation process:

1. **Writing the Proposal** - The thesis/dissertation proposal includes two common elements: Literature Review and Methods. Both sections should clearly articulate an understanding of the previous literature and a set of clearly developed research questions and accompanying methodology as described above. The proposal typically is revised several times in collaboration with the major professor and should be in its final form prior to presenting to the committee members. Development of sound research proposals can take several months and typically take longer than most students have spent writing papers or working on other similar assignments; students are encouraged to plan ahead in an effort to stay on track. Committees should be selected with the advice and approval of the major professor and should include faculty members who contribute to the development of the project. Committee members are typically asked to read, edit and make suggestions to the improvement of the project, although some take a more active role in project development. Thesis projects include 3 member committees (the major professor and two additional members); Dissertation committees include 4 members (the major professor and 3 additional members). Each committee should include at least 2 Brain and Behavior faculty. The Graduate School requires submission of the [Committee Request Form](#) which can be found on the [Graduate School](#) website.
2. **The Proposal Meeting** - The proposal meeting includes the student, major professor and committee members. The research presentation and question/answer portions of the meeting can be open for student attendance as well. Committee members receive a copy of the thesis/ dissertation draft from the major professor giving each member at least 10 working days to indicate the proposal's readiness to move forward (i.e., schedule a meeting). Should any member indicate that the draft is not ready for proposal, the student will revise the draft as necessary and with the approval of the major professor, resubmit it to all committee members with a new cover sheet and an additional 10 days to review and provide comments.

With the approval of the committee members, students can plan a proposal meeting. Meetings are scheduled at times agreed upon by the committee. Students should be mindful of the university calendar when scheduling meetings and work to accommodate faculty schedules when suggesting meeting times. Since most faculty members are less available during the first and last parts of the semester, and may be unavailable during the summer and university breaks, students are strongly encouraged to obtain



confirmation that all committee members will be available to review and schedule meetings which fall outside of the standard academic year. Please be familiar with the [Academic Calendar](#) and the deadlines posted through the [Graduate School](#) when scheduling meetings.

Ultimately, the format for your dissertation proposal meeting and defense is up to the discretion of your dissertation chair. Typically, meetings should include a brief overview of the literature and presentation of the research questions, hypotheses and methods (e.g., 10 minutes) and then expect to respond to questions and discussion (e.g., 45 minutes). Proposal meetings are intended to be ‘working meetings’ whereby committee members discuss the proposed project, make suggestions for improvement and facilitate the development of the project. Commonly, revisions are part of this process.

The [Thesis and Dissertation approval Forms](#) are completed by the chair and the committee members. The proposal, once approved, is considered a contract between the student and the committee. Substantive changes to the research project require the approval of the committee. If unsuccessful (i.e., the student did not demonstrate adequate readiness to carry out proposed project), a remediation plan will be developed in collaboration with the program faculty and the student will be given one additional opportunity to propose before considered for dismissal.

3. **Carrying Out The Research** - Following successful completion of the thesis/ dissertation proposal meeting, and approval to proceed, the student works with the major professor to submit an application to the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects Review, for studies involving human subjects data collection (<http://www.usm.edu/research/institutional-review-board>), or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee for studies involving non-human subjects data collection (<https://www.usm.edu/research/institutional-animal-care-and-use-committee>). Data collection cannot begin until final approval from either the IRB or IACUC review boards. Copies of the IRB and IACUC approval letter are to be included in the final thesis/dissertation document. (Note: IRB approval may not be required for projects that utilize archival data; determination of necessity of IRB approval in such cases should be decided in consultation with the thesis/dissertation chair.)
4. **The Defense Meeting** - The final draft of the thesis/dissertation includes Literature Review, Methods, Results, and Discussion. The final draft of the thesis/dissertation should include all revisions from the proposal meeting and should be worded in past tense. Following approval of the major professor, the final draft is distributed using the same process as described above and the meeting scheduled using the same guidelines. The overall goal of a successful thesis/dissertation defense is to demonstrate the ability to orally communicate and defend the execution and understanding of an independent research project to a group of informed professionals.

**Oral Defense of Thesis/Dissertation** – The oral defense of the thesis and dissertation both include a brief presentation of the research followed by a question and answer period. Both are intended to be public meetings, however the Chair will decide the format and guidelines around including the audience. Students should prepare to answer questions regarding details of the research, including methodology, statistics and theoretical implications. Further, as the dissertation defense acts as the oral examination of their research competency, the student can expect to receive questions related to their knowledge of the field, research methodology, and implications of findings for their field of research. Seek guidance from the major professor when preparing for this meeting. Successful completion of this meeting is noted by majority vote of the committee as reflected in their signatures on the [Thesis/Dissertation Oral Defense Form](#) and in compliance with University regulations, as noted by their signatures on three copies of the title page (see [www.usm.edu/graduate-school](http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school) for more information about appropriate documentation).

A signed [Comprehensive Exam Form](#) is submitted by the major professor upon successful defense of the Thesis and Dissertation project; the Thesis defense serves as the master’s comprehensive exam and the

Dissertation proposal meeting serves as the comprehensive exam for the Brain & Behavior Psychology program.

## 5. Submit Required Paperwork

These forms are each completed by the Major Professor, however it is the student's responsibility to ensure each form is completed and on file in both the School and with the Graduate School. Failure to do so may delay processing of graduation paperwork.

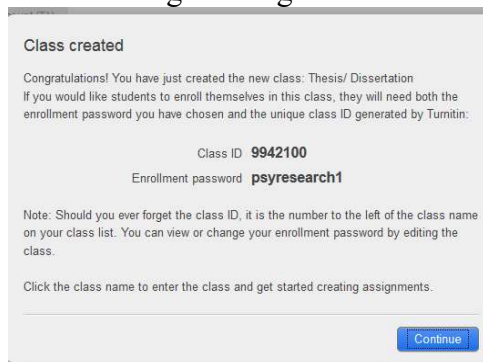
- a. Thesis/ Dissertation Defense Form
- b. Comprehensive Examination Form (Thesis only)
- c. Plagiarism Verification

TurnItIn is now required for all final drafts of the Thesis or Dissertation prior to being submitted to the Graduate Reviewer. It is suggested that students make final edits following the defense meetings and then upon approval from the Major Professor, take the following steps to check for plagiarism. It will be the student's responsibility to provide the Major Professor with the final document and the Originality Report from TurnItIn *prior* to sending the document to the Graduate School. The Major Professor should determine what, if any, action needs to be taken after reviewing the Originality Report. The steps for the Student and the Major Professor are described below. Contact [bonnie.nicholson@usm.edu](mailto:bonnie.nicholson@usm.edu) (school administrator for Turnitin software) if you encounter any problems.

### Students:

1. Prior to submitting the final draft of the thesis or dissertation to the Graduate Reviewer, the student will be responsible for generating an Originality Report on TurnItIn.

- a. Go to: [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)
- b. Log in using your e-mail and password (if you have not previously used turnitin, please create an account)
- c. Click the tab "Enroll in a Class"
- d. Log in using the class ID and Enrollment password pictured below.



- e. Find the Assignment labeled: **Thesis/ Dissertation** & submit your thesis or dissertation file as a Microsoft word document.
- f. Wait until the "Similarity" section changes from "Processing" to a bar with the % similar reported.
- g. Click "View" and upon receiving the Originality Report, print and/or send to your Major Professor (On the bottom left of the Originality Report, click the printer symbol. You can choose to download a PDF to save to your computer to e-mail to your major).

### Major Professors:

2. The Major Professor should receive the Originality Report in an email and review the report. Bibliographic references and quotes have been excluded. Please do not simply refer to the percentage noted on the first page. It is important to review the entire document. Take whatever action may be necessary at

this time to finalize the document for submission. Students can be required to submit the document again if changes are required. Resubmission follows the same steps as outlined above. Note: the documents do not become part of the TurnItIn repository.

3. At this point the student can be instructed to submit their final draft to the Graduate Reviewer following the steps found here: <https://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/theses-dissertations-and-nursing-capstone-projects>.

**All students are required to submit their final drafts to the Graduate Reader in the same semester in which they defended.** The Dissertation is not considered “completed” until all revisions have been completed with the Graduate Reader. Please be aware that such revisions may be time-consuming and are subject to Graduate School posted deadlines. Doctoral students are strongly encouraged to plan ahead and be knowledgeable about the process to avoid paying for additional credits of tuition. **A manuscript is expected to be developed from the thesis and dissertation project; students will be required to develop this paper in conjunction with the committee chair/ major professor shortly upon successfully defending the project.**

Required Credits:

- PSY 698: Master’s Thesis (6 credits)
  - The Graduate School requires that students register for 1 credit of PSY 698 in the semester that they defend (and the semester that they graduate, if different). Six credits are required for completion of the MA degree.
- PSY 898: Dissertation (12 credits)
  - Students are required to register for at least 1 credit of PSY 898: Dissertation, during the semester they defend the dissertation (and the semester that they graduate, if different) and completes all required edits with the Graduate Reader. Please be mindful of Graduate School deadlines with respect to submitting and completing revisions of this document in compliance with the Graduate Reader. Failure to adhere to the Graduate School deadlines in any given semester may result in additional credits the following semester.

Timeline to Completion of Research Competencies

*Note: The following table provides a general guideline to assist students in developing research goals each semester and to allow for timely completion of program requirements. Only those dates which are **underlined and in bold font** are firm, program-specific deadlines. Major professors may establish more stringent guidelines related, so please consult with your major professor related to their expectations. Students are encouraged to meet these deadlines prior to the proposed dates.*

<b>Year 1</b>	
Upon Admission	Major Professor assigned; Topic development in progress
Fall	First draft of literature review due to major professor no later than the last day of the Fall semester (note: faculty may set earlier deadlines)
Spring	Measures and research questions selected;
Summer	Complete draft of literature review & methods
<b>Year 2</b>	
Fall	Thesis proposal submitted to committee Successful proposal meeting
Spring	Data collection; final thesis draft prepared <b>Note:</b> Students who do not propose the thesis by the end of the Fall semester of Year 2 will not be permitted to enroll in additional coursework until the thesis is proposed and significant progress is made. This is in addition to being placed on probationary status. Funding is contingent on remaining in good academic standing.

Summer	Thesis Manuscript for publication in preparation Note: It is expected that students will complete the thesis by the end of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> year and failure to maintain this timeline may result in probationary status, restrictions in coursework, and funding. Demonstration of consistent progress on the thesis project is necessary to avoid these sanctions.
<b>Year 3</b>	
Fall	Dissertation topic selected Students are encouraged that the Thesis Manuscript be submitted to a Peer Reviewed Journal
Spring	Preparation of Dissertation Proposal (note: please plan to develop a timeline with your major professor with regard to development of the proposal if you are hoping to meet the October 15 deadline below).  <b>Note: <u>The MA thesis defense is required by the semester deadlines specified by the Graduate School, typically mid-March. Failure to have successfully defended the MA thesis may result in probationary status, restrictions in coursework, and funding.</u></b>
Summer	Students are encouraged that they prepare Job Materials For Approval By Adviser (i.e., cover letter, CV, teaching statement/philosophy, research statement)
<b>Year 4</b>	
Fall	Final draft of dissertation proposal submitted to committee Successful dissertation proposal <b><u>required by Oct. 15</u></b> Begin job application process.
Spring	Dissertation defended by the end of the semester.

#### Master's Equivalent Projects for Students Admitted with completed Master's degree

Students admitted with a completed master's degree in experimental psychology, or a closely related field, are required to either:

1. Demonstrate successful completion of a Master's Thesis from previous graduate program subject to the review and approval of the Director of Training and Major Professor, or
2. Complete a **Master's Equivalent Research Project** by the conclusion of the first year of academic coursework (end of summer, Year 1). The Master's Equivalent Research Project is meant to be an opportunity for students to be exposed to the research process in a developmentally appropriate way in preparation for the doctoral dissertation. Master's Equivalency Projects are negotiated between the student and the major professor and should include a data-driven project with an identified work product at their conclusion (e.g., manuscript submitted for publication; paper or poster presentation). **Project goals and a timeline should be submitted in writing to the Director of Training by the midpoint of the first fall semester.** In an effort to be mindful of the impending deadlines associated with the dissertation process, **students are required to have completed the Master's Equivalency project by the end of the first year of academic coursework or will be placed on probation.** Successful completion of this requirement should be noted in written form to the Director of Training to be placed in the student's file.

## Coursework

Coursework is sequentially and developmentally arranged – students are strongly encouraged to attend to course sequencing and to stay on track in their program of study. This should be discussed with major advisor who can provide guidance and handout of recommended sequence.

During the period of full-time study, students are expected to carry a course load of 9 to 13 credit hours per semester during the academic year and up to six (6) hours during the summer term (or as determined by the Director of Training) and participate in a variety of school activities including professional seminars, research activities, and other related professional activities. Students should be aware that they are financially responsible for maintaining this load regardless of funding status. Exceptions to this full time load require the approval of the Brain and Behavior psychology faculty.

## **Curriculum Planning**

Students who have completed a master's degree in experimental psychology or related fields are eligible to petition the Director of Training for a waiver of certain degree requirements. A Course Transfer/Waiver Form (available from the Training Director) must be completed prior to the start of the first fall semester to determine which courses will likely be waived and which will be completed during the doctoral program. Syllabi and transcripts are required for the course review process, however additional materials (i.e., reading lists, tests, papers) may be required. The Director of Training will review the Course Waiver Form and distribute to all parties involved as deemed appropriate. The thesis, if applicable, should be submitted for review by the Director of Training and the Major Professor and if approved, the student will waive the thesis requirement. Students entering with master's degrees in fields not related to psychology should not expect to have any degree requirements waived and should begin at the Year 1 level as indicated on the Program Plan. For students with graduate credit not related to completion of a degree, no more than six hours may be transferred for credit. The Course Transfer/Waiver Form will also be used for this purpose, following the same procedure as outlined above.

Advising is done at least twice annually with the major professor and in consultation with the Training Director. Because adherence to the curriculum plan is encouraged, little deviation from the course sequencing is expected. The Director of Training is available anytime during the semester to discuss program concerns and academic issues.

## **Major Professor**

Students are assigned a Major Professor prior to entering the program. This Major Professor serves as a student's primary mentor and source of communication between the program and the student. The student should work to communicate often with the Major Professor and should plan to consult first with the Major Professor before consulting with the Director of Training, Chair, or other faculty. In an effort to present clear and consistent information to the students, the Major Professor should be the first point of contact on all matters including advising regarding class schedules. If the matter cannot be resolved with the Major Professor, then the Director of Training should be consulted. If the matter continues to be unresolved, then the School Director should be consulted. Proceeding out of this order creates a climate of confusion that is counterproductive to the problem solving process.

The Major Professor serves as the students' mentor and is also the primary research supervisor (including chairperson of the thesis and dissertation committee) during the student's graduate program. Admission to the program is contingent upon the student's agreement to work with a specific Major Professor through completion of the master's equivalency project or thesis and at the discretion of the Major Professor. As research supervisors, the Major Professor should be consulted regarding interests in presenting or publishing; students are not permitted to submit presentation or publication proposals without the consent of the Major Professor. Additionally, the Major Professor should approve requests to engage in additional professional development activities (e.g., helping a peer with data collection).

Any requests to change to a new major professor should be in writing and include the signature of both the current and new major professors. It is recommended that changes to major professors happen during naturally occurring program transitions (e.g., upon completion of the thesis) which protects both the student and faculty members from difficulties with transition of incomplete projects.

## Program Requirements

### **Ph.D. IN PSYCHOLOGY: BRAIN AND BEHAVIOR EMPHASIS**

Minimum course requirements for the Ph.D. in Psychology (Brain and Behavior Emphasis) are described as follows. The following represents the minimum necessary to graduate, however students may find that they accrue far more hours as they matriculate through the program. The following courses represent 84 total credit hours, which includes the MA degree requirements. Course substitutions may be made at the discretion of the Director of Training.

## Common Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

---

### Research Tool(s)

Research tools are completed as part of the master's in psychology (MA) earned en route to the doctorate.

[PSY 661 - Research Evaluation in the Behavioral Sciences](#) 3 hrs.

[PSY 662 - Quantitative Methods I](#) 3 hrs. or [REF 762 - Quantitative Analysis II](#) 3 hrs.

[PSY 663 - Quantitative Methods II](#) 3 hrs. or [REF 830 - Multivariate Analysis](#) 3 hrs.

Thesis, [PSY 698 - Thesis](#) 6 hrs.

### School Courses:

---

#### Psychological Foundations:

---

Completion of 3 of the following 4 content areas is required for the MA in Psychology earned en route to the doctorate: (Completion of the remaining 4<sup>th</sup> content area is required for the doctoral degree.)

#### Biological area:

---

- [PSY 624 - Advanced Behavioral Neuroscience](#) 3 hrs. or
- [PSY 726 - Perception](#) 3 hrs.

#### Cognitive area:

---

- [PSY 621 - Theories of Learning](#) 3 hrs. or
- [PSY 722 - Cognitive Processes](#) 3 hrs.

#### Social area:

---

- [PSY 750 - Advanced Social Psychology](#) 3 hrs.

#### Individual Differences and Life Span Development area:

- 
- [PSY 679 - Advanced Developmental Psychology](#) 3 hrs.

## Other School Requirements

---

- [PSY 718 - History of Modern Psychology](#) 3 hrs.
- [PSY 898 - Dissertation](#) 12 hrs.

**Note:** All choices between core courses as well as selection of elective courses must be approved by the student's major advisor and the emphasis area director of training.

## Requirements for an Emphasis in Brain and Behavior Psychology

---

In addition to the requirements listed under common requirements for the doctor of philosophy degree, the student must take the following:

### School Courses:

---

- [PSY 701 - Seminar in Teaching of Psychology](#) 1 hr.
- [PSY 702 - Practicum in Teaching Psychology](#) 3-6 hrs. (3 hrs. required)
- [PSY 728 - Advanced Experimental Psychology I, II, III](#) 3-9 hrs. (9 hrs. required)
- Electives 27 hrs.

**Note:** All electives must be approved by the student's major adviser and emphasis area director of training. PSY691 and PSY791 can qualify as electives. Graduate courses offered in other departments may count as electives if relevant to the Brain and Behavior PhD degree. The relevance of a potential elective from other departments should be determined by the major professor in consultation with the Program Director.

## Comprehensive Examinations

### Master's Comprehensive Examination

A successful Thesis defense is considered the equivalent of the master's comprehensive exam. No additional examination is required. Major professors are expected to submit the Comprehensive Exam Results [Form](#) to the Director of Training upon successful completion of the thesis defense.

### Doctoral Comprehensive Examination

A successful Dissertation proposal is considered the equivalent of the doctoral comprehensive exam. No additional examination is required. Major professors are expected to submit the Comprehensive Exam Results [Form](#) to the Director of Training upon successful completion of the dissertation proposal meeting.

## Continuous Enrollment Policy

Doctoral students must enroll in a minimum of one hour of coursework (e.g., PSY 791 or PSY 798) each Fall and Spring semester until the semester they defend the dissertation, at which time they are required to register for up to three (3) hours of 898. Failure to meet the continuous enrollment policy can result in the student being placed on inactive status and dismissed from the program.

## Time to Completion

Since graduate assistantships are not guaranteed beyond the 4<sup>th</sup> year, students are highly encouraged to complete the doctoral degree within 4 years. Per Graduate School rules the student must complete the doctoral degree within eight (8) calendar years from the date of initial enrollment in a doctoral program. Six years is the maximum age allowed for course work and the comprehensive exam, other than dissertation and research hours toward a graduate degree. The Graduate School, under extenuating circumstances and special petition, may approve revalidation of over-age credit hours if the original credit was earned at The University of Southern Mississippi and if the school director approves the revalidation. The revalidation is secured by the student's successfully passing a special examination on the course. However, any student who fails to complete the doctoral degree program within the eight-year time period becomes subject to any changes in degree requirements made at any date eight years prior to graduation. The fee charged for the special revalidation examination is to be paid before the revalidation examination is taken. Over-age extension courses cannot be revalidated. Revalidation forms are available in the Graduate School.

## Evaluation

Students and trainees in the Brain and Behavior doctoral program should know—prior to program entry, and at the outset of training—that faculty, supervisors, and administrators have a professional, ethical, and potentially legal obligation to: (a) establish criteria and methods through which aspects of competence other than, and in addition to, a student-trainee's knowledge or skills may be assessed (including, but not limited to, emotional stability and well being, interpersonal skills, professional development); and, (b) ensure—insofar as possible—that the student-trainees who complete their programs are competent to manage future relationships (e.g., collegial, professional, public, scholarly, supervisory, teaching) in an effective and appropriate manner. Because of this commitment, and within the parameters of their administrative authority, faculty, training staff, supervisors, and administrators strive not to advance, recommend, or graduate students or trainees with demonstrable problems (e.g., cognitive, emotional, psychological, interpersonal, technical, and ethical) that may interfere with professional competence to other programs, the profession, employers, or the public at large.

As such, within a developmental framework, and with due regard for the inherent power difference between students and faculty, students and trainees should know that their faculty, training staff, and supervisors will evaluate their competence in areas other than, and in addition to, coursework, seminars, scholarship, comprehensive examinations, or related program requirements. These evaluative areas include, but are not limited to, demonstration of sufficient: (a) interpersonal and professional competence (e.g., the ways in which student-trainees relate to peers, faculty, allied professionals, the public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds or histories); (b) self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-evaluation (e.g., knowledge of the content and potential impact of one's own beliefs and values on peers, faculty, allied professionals, the public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds or histories); (c) openness to processes of mentorship (e.g., the ability and willingness to explore issues that either interfere with, or impede professional development or functioning); and (d) resolution of issues or problems that interfere with professional development or functioning in a satisfactory manner (e.g., by responding constructively to feedback from mentors or program faculty; by the successful completion of remediation plans; by participating in personal therapy in order to resolve issues or problems).

This policy is applicable to settings and contexts in which evaluation would appropriately occur (e.g., coursework, research), rather than settings and contexts that are unrelated to the formal process of education and training (e.g., non-academic, social contexts). However, irrespective of setting or context, when a student-trainee's conduct clearly and demonstrably (a) impacts the performance, development, or functioning of the student-trainee, (b) raises questions of an ethical nature, (c) represents a risk to public safety, or (d) damages the representation of psychology to the profession or public, appropriate representatives of the program may review such conduct within the context of the program's evaluation processes.



Evaluations in the program are ongoing. Students should expect to be evaluated each semester in the following ways:

1. **Course grades**
2. **Assistantship evaluations** are completed each semester by the assistantship/ work study supervisor
3. **Teaching evaluations** – when students are primary instructors for a course, they receive feedback from their students in the form of course evaluations, and additionally will be supervised, observed and evaluated by a Brain and Behavior program faculty supervisor; written feedback is provided
4. **Thesis and Dissertation** defense meetings provide an opportunity for students to present their research work products as well as orally defend their knowledge of the research topic, methodology and process.
5. **Annual Evaluation** – completed once annually and offered as a summative integration of all evaluation points into a clear description of the student’s progress and suggested areas for growth during the coming year.

## **Annual Evaluation**

A student's advancement through his or her academic program from one semester to the next is contingent upon satisfactory progress each semester. Student advancement in the program is intended to ensure that each student maintains adequate progress in gaining knowledge, skills, competencies, and behaviors required for graduation and subsequent employment.

Formal evaluations are conducted by the faculty at least one time per year. In the spring of each year of resident study, students will be asked to develop and update their annual evaluation materials which provide a summary of progress for the year and establish training goals for the coming year using the Annual Evaluation Cover Sheet. The faculty consider the evaluation process an important opportunity for integrating feedback, reflecting on progress, and for setting goals for the coming year. Data collected each year will be integrated into the following year’s annual evaluation materials, providing a ‘big picture’ and attention to the developmental aspects of the evaluation process. As such, students are expected to strongly assert their strengths and present compelling data which demonstrates success in multiple areas. Similarly, using self-reflection and insight, students are encouraged to make use of formative evaluations to assist in the development of goals which are responsive to feedback and attentive to needed areas of improvement.

The Annual Evaluation materials will be maintained in electronic format on a university server shared among all Brain and Behavior faculty with the following sections: (It is the student’s responsibility to assure they have gathered all necessary forms, information, and paperwork to create the information required in the Annual Evaluation.)

### Section 1 – Evaluation Overview

1. A cover letter (no longer than 1.5 pages) which should include the following:
  - a. Strengths and areas for growth within the five broad categories of Coursework, Research, Teaching, Mentorship and Professionalism.
  - b. Goals for the upcoming year which should include detailed and specific timelines when appropriate (e.g., research deadlines).
2. Updated Curriculum Vita (see Major Professor or Training Director for examples)

### Section 2 – Research Competency

This section should include evidence of your research activities:

1. Copies of article reprints, posters/ papers presented
2. Any grants, fellowships applied for and/or awarded
3. Membership in scientific organizations (APA, APS, etc.)

### Section 3 – Professionalism

1. Assistantship Evaluations
2. Teaching Evaluations (both from the faculty supervisor and from the students)

### Section 4 – Support Materials

Previous feedback, remediation plans (if any)

Annual Evaluation materials should be organized according to each section as defined above. The Annual Evaluation materials will be sent electronically and presented to the major professor. The deadline for submission materials will be announced annually by the Program director.

The Major Professor will review the materials and then will present the student's progress to the faculty for formal input during regularly scheduled faculty meetings. Student's progress in each of the three areas of competency (i.e., coursework, research, and professionalism) will be evaluated by the Brain and Behavior Program faculty on the following scale: Exceptional/exceeds expectations, Satisfactory/ meets expectations, Unsatisfactory/ does not meet minimal expectations (see below) using the Annual Evaluation Cover Sheet.

Any substantive or outcome area which is deemed unsatisfactory will include a remediation plan developed by the faculty which details specific areas for improvement and the student will be placed on probation (see Probation policy detailed elsewhere in this handbook). Additionally, even areas which may be deemed Satisfactory might be accompanied by constructive feedback, suggestions for improvement and other evaluative comments which are meant to aid in facilitating the student's growth in that area.

The student will receive written feedback from the Major Professor and Director of Training one month after the submission deadline, which assesses student's performance in each area. The student will be offered an opportunity to register a written response and this will also be placed in the file. Any appeal of the annual evaluation is subject to the appeal process as detailed elsewhere in this handbook.

The following details possible criteria to be used in determining the annual evaluation rating in each of the four areas assessed. This list is not meant to be exhaustive however and therefore final judgment of the assessment of progress is left to the discretion of the faculty.

## **Annual Evaluation Rating Criteria**

### **Coursework**

- Exceptional  
Student has completed coursework in a timely manner with high grades (A or A-)
- Satisfactory  
Student has completed coursework in a timely manner with at least a B+ average  
Student successfully completed comprehensive exams (if applicable)
- Unsatisfactory  
Student's grade point average fell below the minimum 3.0  
Student obtained a grade of U, C+, or lower in any coursework  
Student is on academic probation  
Student failed to pass comprehensive examination  
Student has failed to meet criteria of remediation plan  
Documented evidence of academic dishonesty

### **Research**

- Exceptional

Student has been an active contributor to the Research Team  
Student has exceeded all research milestones  
Student has submitted at least one article for publication  
Student has at least one national/ regional research presentation

- Satisfactory

Student has regularly participated in Research Team activities  
Student has met most research milestones

- Unsatisfactory

Student has minimal participation and/or no attendance on research team  
Student has failed to make adequate progress on research project(s)  
Student failed the oral defense (thesis or dissertation)

Note: student has to meet all criteria in order to meet said level

## Professionalism

- Exceptional

Student demonstrates exceptional level of insight and self-awareness; sets appropriate goals  
Interpersonal behaviors have been noted to be exceptional  
Student receives exceptional assistantship evaluations  
Student receives exceptional (above school average) teaching evaluations

- Satisfactory

Student demonstrates some self-awareness; goals seem consistent with feedback  
No interpersonal difficulties have been documented  
Student receives at least satisfactory assistantship evaluations  
Student receives at least satisfactory (at school average) teaching evaluations

- Unsatisfactory

Interpersonal behavior difficulties have been noted by faculty or other informed parties  
Student received unsatisfactory assistantship evaluations  
Student received unsatisfactory (below school average) teaching evaluations

### Statement on the Evaluation of Non-academic Difficulties

In addition to maintaining satisfactory academic performance and research productivity, training programs in psychology are also obliged to evaluate interpersonal competencies as they relate to one's professional work. This section describes the ways in which problem behaviors, impairment, incompetence and ethical violations are assessed and evaluated.

In addition to problems identified during the annual evaluation, any faculty member, supervisor, or student may raise an issue at any time. Students who have a concern about a fellow student should first discuss the issue with their own major professor, who will then raise the issue with the other Program faculty. Advisors and faculty members will protect the confidentiality of the student reporting the potential problem, but they may request that the student meet with them to provide additional information. The Program faculty will briefly discuss the potential problem during the meeting in which it is raised, and if necessary the Major Professor and/or Director of Training will gather additional data and will report to the Program faculty within one week. If the concern appears valid, a formal review will take place as described below.

### *Review Procedures for Possible Problems*

When a possible impairment or problematic behavior has been identified, the faculty will meet with the student to review the evaluation, and to determine whether a problem actually exists. This discussion can take place in the context of the annual review process, but may occur at any other time during graduate training. In addition to the original report of the problem, information will be gathered from formal written and/or verbal evaluations

of the student and from informal sources, including observations of students or reports from other interested parties.

Areas to be reviewed and discussed include the nature, severity, and consequences of the reported impairment or problem behavior. The following questions will be posed at this stage (adapted from Lamb, Cochran, & Jackson, 1991):

- What are the actual behaviors that are of concern, and how are those behaviors related to the goals of the program?
- How and in what settings have these behaviors been manifested?
- What were the negative consequences for the training agency or others (e.g., other students) of the problematic behaviors?
- Who observed the behaviors in question?
- Who or what was affected by the behavior?
- What was the frequency of this behavior?
- Has the student been made aware of this behavior before the meeting, and if so, how did he or she respond?
- Has the feedback regarding the behavior been documented in any way?
- How serious is this behavior on the continuum of ethical and professional behavior?
- What are the student's ideas about how the problem may be remediated?

While each case is different and requires individual assessment, the following factors may indicate that the problem is more serious and may represent a more serious impairment rather than a problematic behavior that is easier to remediate:

- The student does not acknowledge, understand or address the problematic behavior when it is identified.
- The problematic behavior is not merely a reflection of a skill deficit that can be rectified by training.
- The quality of service delivered by the person suffers.
- The problematic behavior is not restricted to one area of professional functioning.
- The behavior has the potential for ethical or legal ramifications if not addressed.
- A disproportionate amount of attention by training personnel is required.
- Behavior that does not change as a function of feedback.
- Behavior negatively affects the public image of the university.

After the initial meeting with the student, the faculty will meet to determine whether problematic behavior exists. If the faculty determines that there is a problem, the student will be placed on probation and develop a written plan for remediation or may be dismissed from the program (see Probation and Dismissal sections elsewhere in this handbook).

## **Selective Retention Policy**

### **School Grade Policy**

A grade of "B-" or better is required to be considered "passing" for all required graduate courses.

Graduate students are required to maintain an overall GPA of 3.0. An overall GPA of < 3.0 will result in a review of the student's status by program faculty. Additionally, as is summarized in the table below, a grade of C (including a C+) will result in a letter from the Program Director warning of risk for termination. A second C or a grade of D at any time will result in a termination review by the program faculty and the student will be placed on probation by the School Director. Students earning three C's, lower grades (C + D, 2 D's) or an F will receive a termination letter from the School Director.

<b>Warning</b>	<b>Probation/Termination Review</b>	<b>Termination</b>
1 C	2 C's	3 C's
	1 D	C + D
	1 U	2 D's or 2 U's
		F

Students placed on probation will be required to have a remediation plan that is developed with and has the approval of their program faculty. The director of the program will provide the School Director with a written report of the remediation plan.

A student receiving a letter of termination on the basis of grades has the right of appeal. The appeal of termination on the basis of grades must begin with the School Director and must be filed **in writing** within seven working days of receipt of the written notification of termination. The School Director will appoint an appeals committee consisting of faculty from each of the graduate studies programs. During the appeals process, the student is discontinued from the program. If the student succeeds in the appeal, the student is then reinstated into the program.

In most cases, termination from the school on the basis of grades will occur at the end of a semester, after grades are assigned. However, the school and individual programs may recommend a student for immediate dismissal (i.e., at any point during a semester) for egregious violations of program, school, university, or APA policies/ethical standards.

Programs may have more restrictive grade policies. This policy also does not preclude an emphasis area from requiring a student to retake **any** course considered essential to their training program. However, retaking a course will not result in the removal of the original grade from a student's record.

**Students are reminded that they have the right to appeal academic decisions. These rights are discussed in the Grievance of Due Process section of this handbook.**

### Additional Program Grade Policy

Brain and Behavior program policies require that students earn at least a B- or better **in all required courses**.

### Probation and Remediation

A student may be placed on program probation for unsatisfactory academic progress or for unsatisfactory performance in other training domains, including but not limited to graduate assistantship or work-study duties, research-related duties, and/or professional, academic or ethical violations or behavioral concerns.

Resulting from formal annual evaluation or from informal evaluation, probation is considered in the following circumstances (including but not limited to):

1. Failure to maintain minimum academic standards
2. Academic misconduct or dishonesty
3. Criminal conviction of misconduct that affects ability to perform job duties in psychological science.
4. Failure to comply with established university or program timetables and requirements, including research laboratory policies and procedures
5. Unethical practices and/or unprofessional conduct

When a Brain and Behavior program student is placed on probation, the basis for the probation, the term of the

probationary period, and the conditions which must be met in order to be removed from probationary status will be specified in writing using the Remediation Plan. Failure to meet the conditions of the probation will result in dismissal from the program (see below). When a student experiences difficulties in the training program, remediation may include, but is not limited to, (a) reducing the student's course load, (b) approving a request for a leave-of-absence, (c) referring a student for medical treatment or psychological therapy, and (d) providing additional faculty mentoring and encouragement.

A student placed on probation will remain on probation for a minimum of one semester. A student placed on probation for unacceptable grades must successfully remediate the unacceptable grade and meet the requirements of his/her remediation plan, without incurring any additional complaints or problems, in order for probationary status to be removed. However, removal of probationary status will not prevent termination from the program in the event the student earns a subsequent failing grade (a grade of C or lower).

A student placed on probation for nonacademic impairment must demonstrate progress in remediation of deficits by the end of the probationary semester in order for the probation to continue or for the student to be removed from probation. Otherwise, the student will be considered for dismissal. Removal of probationary status will not prevent dismissal from the program in a subsequent event and/or if subsequent academic deficiencies arise.

A meeting with all available Brain and Behavior program faculty and the student may be held to discuss the concerns and to present the remediation plan. The student should expect to meet regularly with the major professor during the probationary semester to evaluate progress and reassess the remediation plan if necessary. A formal review of the student's progress in achieving the goals of the remediation plan will be held at the first faculty meeting of the semester following the probationary semester and a student's status in the program will be reviewed. The student is charged with having met with the Major Professor to review his/her progress with this remediation plan prior to this meeting and presenting any written comment to the Major Professor at this time. At this point, probation will either be suspended, continued, or the student will be considered for dismissal from the program.

The student has the right to appeal the decision to place the student on probation and/or the terms of the probation following the appeals procedures outlined elsewhere in this handbook.

### **Protocol for Dismissal of a Student from a Graduate Program**

The following are some reasons for dismissal of a student with **regular status** from a graduate program:

- The student did not return to good academic standing following probationary semester(s).
  - A GPA of 3.0 was not achieved. (Some programs have more rigorous standards).
  - The student did not earn the required improved grade on a retaken course.
  - The student failed to meet other remediation criteria.
- The student earned grades that made it impossible to return to good academic standing, thus rendering graduation impossible.
  - The student earned a grade of C- or below that could not be retaken because the one allowable retake was used to replace a prior low grade.
  - The student earned the 7<sup>th</sup> hour of C+ or below that could not be retaken because the one allowable retake was used to replace a prior low grade.
- The student failed to show acceptable improvement in research/scholarly progress after a probationary semester.
- The student exceeded the time limit for the degree program without completing the degree.
- The student was proven to have committed academic/research misconduct or other ethical violation.
- The student violated the Code of Student Conduct and required disciplinary action. (In this case dismissal follows review by the Dean of Students).

- The student failed to demonstrate professional competency and/or exhibited conduct inappropriate to the profession.
- The student failed a qualifying exam, comprehensive exam, or defense twice.
- Other (Departments may have discipline-specific policies which stipulate reasons for dismissal).

Dismissals will normally be initiated at the end of a semester following the posting of grades unless the dismissal is a result of academic misconduct or unethical/unprofessional behavior.

Dismissal must be initiated using the following protocol:

- 1) The student's advisor and/or school director will schedule a termination review with the student. The purpose of this meeting is to communicate the justification for dismissal with the student and to allow the student to provide written documentation of any extenuating circumstances that should be considered in a decision to dismiss. This meeting should be conducted face to face if possible. If the student cannot meet face to face, the meeting should take place via telephone, videoconference, or conference call. Email is acceptable but should be used only if personal communication is not possible.
- 2) If the school chooses to move forward with a dismissal following a termination review, the following items must be submitted to the dean of the Graduate School either electronically as a pdf with electronic signatures or as a hard copy with original signatures:
  - a. A letter addressed to the student articulating the reason(s) for dismissal.
  - b. A completed dismissal form indicating the reason(s) for dismissal and signed by the advisor, school director, and the college dean.
- 3) Upon receiving notice of the dismissal, the dean of the Graduate School will send the student a formal letter of dismissal along with a copy of the letter of rationale from the school as an attachment. The dean's letter will inform the student of the following:
  - a. That scheduled classes (including current semester classes and future classes for which the student is pre-registered) must be dropped using the withdrawal process within seven (7) working days of receiving the dismissal letter from the dean of the Graduate School and that if he/she does not withdraw from classes the Graduate School will initiate the withdrawal.
  - b. The impact of dismissal on a graduate assistantship, insurance, and tuition.
  - c. The student's right to appeal the dismissal and instructions for filing an appeal.

The letter will be sent to the student by certified mail through the U.S. Postal Service and by email using the student's official USM email address.

### **Detailed Protocol for Grievances and Appeals**

If the student chooses to appeal a dismissal, the following protocol will be applied. This procedure follows the Grievance and Appeals Procedures included in the Graduate Bulletin and gives the student due process.

1. School Level. The student will submit a signed letter to the chair or director within **fifteen (15)** working days of notification of dismissal from the Dean of the Graduate School or other action that prompts a grievance or appeal. The letter must state the action for which the student is filing an appeal or grievance and explain the basis of the appeal or grievance. The chair/director will review all pertinent material, interview the student and relevant faculty member(s), and render a decision on the appeal/grievance, normally within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal/grievance. The decision of the chair/director will be submitted to the student via certified mail and the student's official USM email account. This correspondence will also be copied to the dean of the Graduate School.

2. Dean of the College Level. If the student chooses to appeal the school decision, he/she must submit a written appeal within ten (10) working days of the emailed notification of the school decision to the dean of the college. The dean will review the appeal and render a decision on the appeal, normally within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the college dean will be submitted to the student via certified mail and the student's official USM email account. This correspondence will also be copied to the Dean of the Graduate School.
3. Dean of the Graduate School Level. If the student chooses to appeal the academic dean's decision, he/she must submit a written appeal within ten (10) working days of the emailed notification of the academic dean's decision to the dean of the Graduate School. The graduate dean will convene a Graduate School Appeals Committee (made up of faculty who are members of the Graduate Council and one graduate student) which will review all pertinent materials and hold an official hearing on the appeal. Normally, the hearing will be held within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the written appeal as long as the university is in session or within ten (10) working days of the university beginning a session. The student may attend the hearing and a representative of the school may also attend the hearing or respond to the appeal in writing. The Appeals Committee will submit a letter detailing their decision to the dean of the Graduate School. The dean will send the student a letter indicating the Committee's decision via certified mail and the student's official USM email account.
4. Provost Level. If the student chooses to appeal the Graduate School Appeals Committee's decision, he/she must submit a written appeal within ten (10) working days of the emailed notification of the committee's decision to the Provost. The Provost will review all appeal materials and render a decision on the appeal, normally within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Provost will be submitted to the student via certified mail and the student's official USM email account. This correspondence will also be copied to the dean of the Graduate School.
5. President Level. If the student chooses to appeal the Provost's decision, he/she must submit a written appeal within ten (10) working days of the emailed notification of the Provost's decision to the President. The President will review all appeal materials and render a final decision on the appeal, normally within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the President will be submitted to the student via certified mail and the student's official USM email account. This correspondence will also be copied to the dean of the Graduate School. The decision of the President is final.

#### Appeal of Grades

Grade appeals are governed by University policy. A description of the formal process may be found at: <https://www.usm.edu/student-handbook> .

#### Appeal of Academic Decisions

Decisions pertaining to a student's status or progress in a program are delegated to the program faculty (e.g., admission to a program, permission to apply for a practicum or internship, approval for graduation). The first step in any appeal is to appeal to your program's training committee. Students wishing to appeal a program decision should first submit a written request to appeal to the Director of Training. The Director of Training will assemble an appeal meeting where the student will be permitted to present his/her case to the program faculty. Program faculty will then consider the evidence presented and render a decision. Students considering appeal should be aware that it is their responsibility to provide evidence that there were extenuating circumstances that should be considered. Dissatisfaction with a program decision does not justify engaging in the appeal process.

Should the student be dissatisfied with the decision of the faculty at this stage in the appeal process, they may then appeal to the School Director in writing. The Chair will appoint a faculty committee from the School of Psychology to hear the appeal and make recommendations.



If a decision at the school level is unsatisfactory or the complaint or grievance is against the chair, the student may appeal to the Dean of the College of Education and Psychology. **Note: Appeals regarding admission to a graduate program are filed with the Dean of the Graduate School.**

#### University Grievance Policy

The University Grievance Policy is available in the USM Student Handbook: <https://www.usm.edu/student-handbook> for a description of the process.

#### University Sexual Harassment Policy

Sexual Harassment policies can be found in the USM Student Handbook at: <https://www.usm.edu/student-handbook> for a description of the process.

### ABD Policy

The student must complete the doctoral degree within eight (8) calendar years from the date of initial enrollment in a doctoral program. Six years is the maximum age allowed for course work and the comprehensive exam, other than dissertation and research hours toward a graduate degree. Please note that if the thesis is not completed by the end of the second year, students may be placed on probation. Failure to complete the doctoral degree within these time periods will result in the student being placed in an inactive status. Reinstatement will necessitate a re-application to the program. If granted, the core faculty of the respective program may require re-validation of courses, completion of another comprehensive examination and/or other training experiences as deemed appropriate and beneficial. In cases of reinstatement, the core faculty will designate a final deadline for program completion.

Students who are ABD **must** demonstrate continuing progress toward completion of the dissertation (and the doctorate) in order to remain in an active status. As a minimum, ABD students must:

- a. Register for one hour of PSY 898 each semester/term until the degree is completed (as per *Graduate School* requirements), but, as per university policy, students must register for one hour during the semester that they are defending their dissertation.
- b. File a written plan for degree completion (including time lines) with the training director immediately following the semester in which all course requirements and the internship are completed; and
- c. File written progress reports with the Director of Training each January 1 and July 1 until the dissertation is defended.

An ABD student who does not comply with 1 a., b., c. and/or who does not demonstrate progress toward completion of the dissertation during any 6 month period will be placed on probation. Failure to remove the “probationary” status by the next semester will result in the student being placed in an inactive status. After being placed in an inactive status, a student who wishes to reactivate a program must file a written request for reinstatement with the School Director. The request should be accompanied by a plan for completion (with timelines). The School Director will base reinstatement on a positive recommendation from the core faculty and an endorsement.

### Educational Leave Policy

A student who experiences unusual personal or health problems of such nature and extent that would prevent timely progress toward degree completion may petition the core faculty for a leave period up to one year and/or

extension to their program completion deadline. The petition must be filed prior to or concurrent with the initiation of the presenting problem, and documentation must be provided that substantiates the nature and impact of the condition on degree completion. Program faculty must approve the request. At the end of the year if significant extenuating circumstances result in additional leave, the student must again request, in writing, the need for the leave.

## Student Support and Expectations

### Financial Aid and Assistantships

Traditionally, all students admitted to the doctoral program have been offered financial assistance in the form of graduate work-study program, graduate assistantships, and/or research grants. Except in a very few cases with special circumstances, it is anticipated that all students admitted to the doctoral program will be offered financial assistance in the form of graduate assistantships, and/or research grants. It is anticipated that this practice will continue in the future though it cannot be absolutely guaranteed due to yearly budget allocations. Assistantships include both a stipend (currently at a rate of \$7200 for 9 month assistantships) **and a waiver of tuition**. Tuition waivers earned during the academic semesters may continue through the summer even if the student is not being funded. Summer funding and summer tuition waivers are not guaranteed, and are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. School funding (stipend and tuition waiver) is rarely awarded beyond the 4<sup>th</sup> year of training. Students need to complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) each year prior to the posted deadlines. Information on school assistantships will be shared during the on-campus interviews. Names of students who are offered program positions are automatically included in assistantship requests submitted to the school. There is no separate application for school assistantships.

According to university guidelines, students may not hold more than one GA position in any year. The School of Psychology prioritizes the funding of doctoral students and therefore, doctoral students are expected to maintain a GA position with the School of Psychology unless such a position is not available, or unless prior approval has been obtained. Such exceptions may be granted if the position offers a unique training opportunity which benefits the students' educational experience and/or of if the School of Psychology cannot offer a GA position. Generally, all Brain and Behavior students are funded by School of Psychology GA positions or Brain and Behavior faculty grants.

Due to the demands of doctoral study, part-time employment which might be undertaken outside of the organized training program will be strongly discouraged until all program requirements are completed. Requests for exceptions to these guidelines in response to unexpected financial or personal crises must be approved by the doctoral program faculty. Students should submit a request in writing to the Program Director which includes a clear justification to request an exception to this rule. Brain and Behavior faculty will review the request, the student's progress toward degree and any other factors which will help determine whether an exception is warranted.

### Teaching Undergraduate Courses

The School of Psychology affords opportunities for doctoral students to teach undergraduate classes at USM. Graduate students must have completed 18 hours in their discipline before teaching undergraduate classes. Therefore, Brain and Behavior program students are eligible to teach by the summer semester following their first year. All Brain and Behavior program students, whether they intend to teach or not, are also required to take PSY 701: Seminar in Teaching of Psychology (1 hr). For the first semester that a student is the instructor of record for a course, the student is required to enroll in PSY 702 (Practicum in Teaching of Psychology) with your Major Professor or another Brain & Behavior faculty, who will serve as your direct supervisor for teaching. Students will be evaluated at least once during the semester they are teaching and written evaluations

will be placed in the student's file and submitted to the student by the conclusion of the semester. Instructors of record will also receive written student evaluations available the following semester in SOAR and should maintain both the faculty supervisor's written feedback and the class evaluations for the Annual Evaluation.

Students are expected to perform effectively as TAs for faculty courses or teach courses as the instructor of record during their graduate training. The number of different courses taught (or facilitated as a teaching assistant) and frequency of teaching responsibilities will vary based on school need.

Students will be expected to be responsible for all roles associated with being a teaching assistant or instructor. Such responsibilities include, but are not limited to, arriving on time for all scheduled class meetings, dressing professionally, being prepared to lecture on course material for each class period, responding to student concerns, holding office hours, creating evaluation materials for the course (e.g., tests and assignments), grading all course tests and assignments in a timely manner, and inputting grades on time (e.g., NA rosters, interim grades, final grades). Students are eligible to teach 100, 200, or 300 level courses; however, students must meet specific qualifications in order to teach. Students' eligibility to teach will be determined by the School Director in conjunction with the B&B training director. Qualifications to teach undergraduate courses are based on university guidelines in compliance with SACSOC. Generally students will need to have completed graduate coursework or demonstrated competency in a particular area before teaching that course. Approval for all instructors is sought through the Provost's office. Generally, graduate students will have completed a master's degree before teaching most 300-level and any 400-level undergraduate course. Frequently graduate students teach PSY 360: Behavioral Statistics in their 2nd year after completing the statistics and research sequence. As an instructor, the student is responsible for having a syllabus for the course approved by their faculty adviser and submitted to the psychology office at least one week before the start of class for that semester. Student instructors are to be observed at least once over the course of the semester during lecture by their faculty adviser in order to facilitate evaluation and improvement of teaching.

### Letters of Recommendation

Students often request letters of recommendation from program faculty for employment. As the disclosure of student educational records is restricted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), we must have written authorization in order to provide such information. Because it is not always feasible to obtain necessary authorization in a timely manner (e.g., a student conducting research out of state lists a faculty member as a reference for a job), this requirement can create a hardship for students. Therefore, we request that all students sign a waiver authorizing program faculty to consult their academic records in writing recommendation letters or otherwise communicating their impressions as requested by the student. This Recommendation Waiver may be revised as needed, pending re-authorization by the signatory.

Please be aware that program faculty may disclose student records, without consent, to other school or university personnel with legitimate educational interest (34 CFR § 99.31). In addition, we may solicit and receive information from other parties involved in students' education or professional development (e.g., off-site supervisors, etc.).

### Graduate Student Workspace

Due to the unique nature of the mentorship in the Brain and Behavior program all graduate students are assigned to a faculty mentor's lab space. Professional conduct rules should be established by the individual lab directors.

### USM Email Accounts

Free email accounts are offered to each student available in the [iTech](#) office in library. Please plan to utilize this account as it facilitates communication between students and faculty. You can set up your USM email account to forward all email to another personal email account at your preference – please see iTech personnel for assistance with establishing this account. All official correspondence (e.g., teaching, research, supervision) must be sent from the [@usm.edu](#) account. DO NOT send email from your personal account to students in your class or other university faculty/ personnel. The bbstudents listserv connects all B&B masters and doctoral students and faculty. Important messages are also posted on this listserv, and all students are expected to register at: <https://mailman.usm.edu/mailman/listinfo/bbstudents> .

### Social Networking Sites

Students should be mindful of how the use of social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.) may be perceived by colleagues, faculty and other professionals. As such students should make every effort to minimize material that may be deemed inappropriate for a professional psychologist. Additionally, students should set all security settings to private and should avoid posting information that may jeopardize their professional image. Students should consider limiting the amount of personal information posted on these sites. Students should never include undergraduate students for who you served as an instructor, as part of their social network on these sites. *Program faculty will regularly check Facebook and other sites to be sure that students are in compliance with these recommendations.*

### Policy on the Use of Laptops and other Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Student use of laptop computers is permitted in class insofar as they are used for note-taking and in compliance with course syllabi and instructor guidelines. The use of laptops for other purposes (e.g., instant messaging, video chat, playing games, Internet browsing, etc.), except as explicitly authorized by the course instructor, constitutes unprofessional behavior. The use of other electronic devices during class is prohibited. Students misusing laptops or using other electronic devices during class (e.g., texting on cell phones, etc.) may be dismissed from class and may receive other disciplinary consequences at the discretion of the instructor and/or the B&B program faculty. Students are reminded that professional behavior constitutes an important domain in faculty evaluation of student performance.

## University Library Facilities

University Library resources and services are provided through the library's extensive website and at facilities located in Hattiesburg and the Gulf Coast. University Libraries' collections include print, microform, and audio visual items and provide online access to electronic journals, books, and databases. Services and resources provided by University Libraries include classes and workshops in the use of the library, online reference, self-paced online tutorials, Turnitin plagiarism detection software, electronic reserves, and online and physical delivery of library materials for students enrolled in distance education classes. Additionally, Cook Library provides over 150 student use computers, checkout of laptop computers, and access to teacher education materials in the Curriculum Materials Center. Students also have access to the University of Mississippi Medical Center Library in Jackson.

Private research carrels are available to assignment to graduate students on a space-available basis at a rental fee of \$50.00 per semester. Additional information regarding the university libraries and available services for students may be found at <http://lib.usm.edu> .

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is scholarly theft, and it is defined as the unacknowledged use of secondary sources. More specifically, any written presentation in which the writer does not distinguish clearly between original and borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Because students, as scholars, must make frequent use of the concepts

and facts developed by other scholars, plagiarism is not the mere use of another's facts and ideas. However, it is plagiarism when students present the work of the other scholars as if it were their own work. Plagiarism is a serious offense. *An act of plagiarism may lead to a failing grade on the paper and in the course as well as other sanctions.*

To ensure that students understand the nature of plagiarism students must complete the tutorial found at [http://lib.usm.edu/plagiarism\\_tutorial.html](http://lib.usm.edu/plagiarism_tutorial.html) and have the results of the quiz e-mailed to the Director of Training by September 1 of their first year in the program.

Thesis and dissertation documents are also checked for plagiarism. See the Research section of this handbook for details.

For more information on plagiarism and academic misconduct, and consequences of violations of academic integrity, see the following link for the specific university policies and procedures:

<https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-acaf-pro-012>

## USM Office of Disability Accommodations

The primary function and mission of the [Office for Disability Accommodations](#) (ODA), located at 114 Bond Hall (entrance on the south side), is to provide those services necessary to assure equal educational opportunity to all students pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you feel you have a disability that qualifies for accommodations under Section 504 or the ADA, please contact Disability Accommodations at 601-266-5024.

## Health Services

The USM Student Health Services Clinic provides students, faculty, and staff with general medical services including laboratory testing, x-ray, pharmacy, dietary counseling, and educational services. The clinic is staffed by several physicians and nurse practitioners. The clinic is located on the west side of Kennard-Washington Hall. All students registered for classes at The University of Southern Mississippi are eligible to use the Student Health Services. Spouses of eligible students, who are not students themselves, and dependent children above the age of 12 may receive health care at Student Health Service on a fee-for-service basis. Students must present their student ID at time of service. Additional information, including information about mandatory student health insurance, may be obtained at <https://www.usm.edu/student-health-services>.

## Personal Counseling Services

Numerous services are available in the areas of personal, social, and marital counseling, and psychotherapy. On-campus services include the [University Counseling Center](#), which is located in Room 200 of Kennard-Washington Hall. Off-campus facilities include [Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Resources](#) which is a publicly supported mental health facility, as well as a number of private practitioners in psychology and psychiatry.

## Colloquia and Seminars

The school, the brain and behavior program, and other school entities, sponsor speakers, colloquia, and seminars throughout the year. All brain and behavior psychology graduate students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of those opportunities for learning and professional development. Attendance at such functions will not only expand students' knowledge of areas outside of the brain and behavior program but also foster a greater sense of membership in the School. Attendance at such events should be noted on the CV and included as part of the annual evaluation materials.

## Professional Development

Doctoral students in Brain and Behavior are encouraged to become active in professional associations, such as the [American Psychological Association](#) (APA), the [American Psychological Association of Graduate Students](#) (APAGS), and others. Participation in these organizations provides an excellent way to connect with other students and psychologists at the state and national levels. Student membership fees for these organizations are nominal, and most memberships provide one or more publications as a benefit.

## Important University Services & Contact Information

### Financial Aid

- David Williamson, Director, Financial Aid  
Kennard Washington Hall, 101; 266.4774
- <http://www.usm.edu/financialaid/>

### ID Card

- Photo Services, Thad Cochran Center Lower Level
- 266.4149

### Institutional Research Board

- Betty Ann Morgan, IRB Administrator & Compliance Officer  
Weathersby Hall, Suite 215; 266.6820
- <http://www.usm.edu/irb/>

### IACUC Administrative Assistant

- 118 College Drive #5116; Hattiesburg, MS 39406
- 601-266-6791
- <https://www.usm.edu/research/institutional-animal-care-and-use-committee>

### iTech

- HUB 104, 266.4357(HELP)
- Cook Library, 209 Help Desk
- <http://www.usm.edu/itech/>

### Office of Disability Accommodations

- 114 Bond Hall, 266.5024, TTY 266.6837
- <http://www.usm.edu/oda/>

### Graduate School

- Dr. Karen Coats, Dean
- McCain Library; 266.4369
- <http://www.usm.edu/graduateschool>

### Payne Center & Recreation Services

- Free to all students
- Information, 266.5405
- <http://www.usm.edu/recsports>

### Student Health Services

- Located on West Side of Kennard-Washington Hall; 266.5390
- <http://www.usm.edu/healthservice/>

### Parking Management

- Located in 164 McLemore Hall; 266.5447
- <http://www.usm.edu/parking/>

## Brain and Behavior Program Faculty

**Tammy Greer**, Ph.D. Tulane University, Associate Professor. Teaches courses on statistics at the undergraduate and graduate level. Research interests include the use of alternative therapies such as yoga and meditation for stress reduction; impact of religiosity on attitudes and behaviors; using Monte-Carlo simulation techniques to model behavior of statistics when assumptions are violated. ([tammy.greer@usm.edu](mailto:tammy.greer@usm.edu))

**Alen Hajnal**, Ph.D., University of Connecticut, 2007. Associate Professor. Teaches courses on perception and cognition, as well as statistics, research methodology and computer programming. Research focuses on perception and action, affordances, behavioral dynamics, time series analysis of perceptual, motor and physiological processes. Dr. Hajnal regularly publishes in and conducts ad hoc peer review for the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, *Attention, Perception, and Psychophysics*, *Ecological Psychology*, *Experimental Brain Research*, and others. ([alen.hajnal@usm.edu](mailto:alen.hajnal@usm.edu))

**Mark J. Huff**, Ph.D., University of Calgary, 2013. Assistant Professor of Psychology. Teaches courses in introductory psychology, research methodology, memory, and cognitive psychology. Research program focuses on memory distortion and memory errors, distinctiveness effects on memory encoding and monitoring, testing/test expectancy effects, attentional control, and cognitive aging. Dr. Huff regularly publishes in *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, *Memory & Cognition*, *Psychology and Aging* and others. ([mark.huff@usm.edu](mailto:mark.huff@usm.edu)).

**Lucas A. Keefer**, Ph.D., University of Kansas, 2014. Assistant Professor. Currently teaches courses in introductory psychology, psychology of language, personality, and history and systems. Research explores conceptual metaphor, psychological threat and defense, attachment, and political psychology. Dr. Keefer regularly publishes in and reviews for *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *Metaphor & Symbol*, and the *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*. ([lucas.keefe@usm.edu](mailto:lucas.keefe@usm.edu))

**Lawrence Patihis**, Ph.D., University of California, Irvine, 2015. Assistant Professor. Teaches courses on general psychology and cognitive psychology. Research focuses on memory malleability, including false memories, traumatic memory, and memory for long term relationships. Dr. Patihis has published in peer review journals such as *Psychological Science*, *PNAS*, *Memory*, & *Applied Cognitive Psychology*. Dr. Patihis serves as an ad hoc reviewer for several peer reviewed journals, such as *Memory* and *Memory and Cognition*. ([L.Patihis@usm.edu](mailto:L.Patihis@usm.edu))

**Donald F. Sacco**, Ph.D., Miami University, 2010. Assistant Professor of Social Psychology. Teaches courses on evolutionary and social psychology, as well as research methodology. Research focuses on motivated social cognition and evolutionary processes as they relate to social psychology, personality, and face perception. Dr. Sacco serves on the Editorial Board of *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice* and *The Journal of Social Psychology*. ([Donald.Sacco@usm.edu](mailto:Donald.Sacco@usm.edu))

**Elena V. Stepanova**, Ph.D., Washington University in Saint Louis, 2010. Assistant Professor. Teaches courses on social psychology, statistics and an integrative capstone course for psychology majors. Research focuses on social categorization, prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination, implicit and explicit ethnic and racial attitudes, and cross-cultural work. Dr. Stepanova serves as a Consulting Editor for *The Journal of Social Psychology*. ([Elena.Stepanova@usm.edu](mailto:Elena.Stepanova@usm.edu))

Please visit <https://www.usm.edu/brain-and-behavior> to find links to individual research pages.



## Informed Consent Agreement

The course content and experiential activities involved in the programs offered by the School of Psychology are designed to afford students the opportunity to advance their personal, intellectual, and professional development and functioning. Through the program of study, you will be given feedback concerning your personal, academic, and professional strengths, weaknesses, and performance. This feedback will come from faculty, supervisors, peers, and clients. You will be expected to deal with this feedback in a mature and professional manner. By signing this agreement below, you recognize that as part of your professional training, the Director of Training and Brain and Behavior Program faculty will discuss your progress with interested parties including, but not limited to, graduate faculty, previous and current assistantship supervisors, staff, and other parties in a position to comment on your personal and/or professional behavior.

The School of Psychology and Brain and Behavior program faculty members believe they have a responsibility to dismiss students who are unable to render competent service due to academic or personal limitations. They also recognize their obligation to assist students in obtaining remedial assistance as needed, to consult with colleagues and document their decision to refer students for assistance or to request that students be dismissed from the program, and to assure that students have adequate recourse to address decisions made.

If in the professional judgment of a faculty member, a student's behavior is deemed substandard, unethical, illegal, and/or professionally unbecoming at any time during the course of training (including course work, research, and internships), a faculty review committee will be called to review the performance and behavior of the student and to make recommendations to the School Director.

*I, \_\_\_\_\_ (student name) have read the Brain and Behavior Doctoral Program Handbook. I agree that the faculty of the Brain and Behavior Program and the School of Psychology have the right and responsibility to monitor my academic and professional ethical behavior.*

*I am willing to participate fully in the courses and requirements delineated in the Handbook. I also agree to abide by the policies set forth in the Handbook.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date