TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY®

*The rising* STAR *of Texas*

# Master of Arts in Psychological Research

## Student Handbook
## 2018 – 2019

# Contents

**WELCOME!** ..... **3**
**MISSION STATEMENT** ..... **3**
**GENERAL INFORMATION** ..... **4**
Psychology Department Personnel ..... 4
Making the Most of Your Educational Experience ..... 5
**COURSES AND COURSE SEQUENCE** ..... **6**
**THE THESIS** ..... **6**
Developing a Research Idea/Selecting a Thesis Committee ..... 7
The Thesis Proposal Process ..... 8
Thesis Timeline and Important Forms ..... 11
**THE THESIS DEFENSE** ..... **12**
Before the defense: ..... 13
Day of the defense: ..... 13
After the defense: ..... 13
For online submission (recommended): ..... 14
Policy on Thesis Defense ..... 14
**THESIS EQUIVALENT PROJECT** ..... **15**
Major differences between Thesis and Non-thesis options: ..... 15
**GRADUATION** ..... **16**
**FIRST YEAR MILESTONES** ..... **17**
**SECOND YEAR MILESTONES** ..... **17**
**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION** ..... **18**
Financial Aid ..... 18
Graduate Assistantships ..... 18
Scholarships ..... 18
Graduate Thesis Supplement ..... 18
Graduate Travel Supplement ..... 20
Travel ..... 20
**LIBRARY AND COMPUTER LAB HOURS AND LOCATIONS** ..... **21**
**DEPARTMENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND EXPECTATIONS** ..... **21**
Policy on Grades ..... 21
Policy on Comprehensive Examination ..... 22
Academic and Professional Ethics ..... 22
**GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS** ..... **23**
Procedures for Dealing with Problems with Faculty or Others ..... 24
**STUDENT FITNESS AND PERFORMANCE** ..... **24**
Program Standards ..... 24
Evaluation of Student Fitness and Performance ..... 24
Student Review Process ..... 24
**PROCEDURES FOR WITHDRAWING FROM THE PROGRAM** ..... **25**
Procedures on Dismissal of a Student from the Program ..... 26
**APPENDIX: ONLINE RESOURCES ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY, AND COMMUNITY** ..... **27**

# Welcome!

Welcome to the Master of Arts in Psychological Research at Texas State University. This handbook is designed as a guide for current students, outlining basic policies and facts about the Program. It also provides timelines and survival tips for graduate school. Please feel free to use the contact information and links throughout the handbook to help you answer any specific questions about the program or Texas State. You can also ask the Graduate Director and other faculty members if you have questions concerning program requirements and about your progress in the program.

# Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Master's program in Psychological Research at Texas State University to foster competence in the methodological foundations and conduct of psychological research across a wide variety of settings. Students will gain expertise regarding the relationship of biological, social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral factors to psychological phenomena. Focus is placed on learning interpersonal/research skills and statistical competencies relevant to the responsible and ethical conduct of both basic and applied psychological research.

# Revisions to Handbook

The Master's program in Psychological Research at Texas State University reserves the right to make changes to the requirements in this handbook. If changes are considered necessary, they will become effective immediately and will apply to both prospective students and those already enrolled. Current students should not use old handbooks. All requirements in this handbook must be met.

# General Information

The Master's program in Psychological Research is designed to be a 2-year, full-time program of study. The program has a strong empirical orientation and is designed to foster competence in the methodological foundations and conduct of psychological research. Specifically, the program will emphasize the relationship of biological, social, emotional, and behavioral factors to psychological phenomena. Focus will be placed on learning research skills and statistical competencies relevant to the responsible and ethical conduct of research in Psychology. Individuals with a Master's degree in Psychological Research will be able to work in a variety of settings, including academic, clinical, community, corporate, and government settings. The competencies obtained as a result of the degree plan will also enable individuals to pursue PhDs in clinical- and research-based fields of Psychology. Graduates will learn skills that will enable them to perform a variety of tasks, including the ethical conduct of research, manuscript writing, and program implementation and evaluation.

## Psychology Department Personnel

### Department Chair

Dr. William Kelemen, Undergraduate Academic Center (UAC) 253J, 512-245-2526, wk12@txstate.edu.

### Graduate Program Director and Advisor

Dr. Kelly Haskard-Zolnierek, UAC 256, 512-245-8710, kh36@txstate.edu

### Faculty

For a complete list of faculty:
http://www.psych.txstate.edu/faculty/directory.html

### Support Staff

Ms. Sarah Pollok, Program Specialist (applications, assistantship assignments, overrides, thesis defense scheduling)
UAC 253E
Phone: 512-245-3148
Email: sep79@txstate.edu

# Making the Most of Your Educational Experience

## Faculty Mentors

You will be assigned to a faculty mentor upon acceptance to the program. Mentors are resources to advise and guide you through various aspects of the program, including thesis development and implementation, general adjustment to graduate work, and career trajectories after graduation. Although you may switch mentors at any time, late switches are not recommended because mentors are integral in thesis development and implementation.

## Study and Research Groups

All students are encouraged to develop regular study and research meetings amongst themselves and faculty. These meetings provide informal settings in which to obtain advice, ask questions, discuss relevant topics and explore potential research ideas for theses. Attendance at symposia, colloquia, conferences, and brown bag talks is expected.

## Keep Contact Information Current

All e-mail correspondence will be via your Texas State e-mail (no other e-mail will be used) or by the address or telephone number listed in our database. Updated information must be provided as quickly as possible to Ms. Pollok, and to the University. You will be responsible for any important information you fail to receive due to old and/or inaccurate contact information.

# Courses and Course Sequence

## Year 1

- **Fall 1 (10 credit hours)**
  - PSY 5311 Univariate and Bivariate Statistics (3)
  - PSY 5391 Research Methods and Experimental Design (3)
  - PSY 5198 Graduate seminar 1 (1)
  - Elective (3)** – to be chosen from available courses based on individual interests

- **Spring 1 (10 hours)**
  - PSY 5321 Multivariate Statistics (3)
  - PSY 5324 Biological Bases of Behavior (3)
  - PSY 5198 Graduate seminar 2 (1)
  - Elective (3)** – to be chosen from available courses based on individual interests

## Year 2

- **Fall 2 (9 hours)**
  - PSY 5399A Thesis 1 or PSY 5366 Non-thesis option - independent study (3)
  - Elective (3)**
  - Elective (3)**

- **Spring 2 (9 hours)**
  - PSY 5399B Thesis 2 or PSY 5366 non-thesis option (3)
  - Elective (3)**
  - Elective (3)**

# The Thesis

The Master's thesis or thesis equivalent is a key requirement of the program. As such, the Department of Psychology has high standards for theses and thesis-equivalent research projects. These are reports of original empirical research conducted by students. Theses must conform to Graduate College formatting guidelines; non-thesis papers must be in APA manuscript format.

Students must begin planning for their thesis in the first semester and complete their thesis proposals by the end of the Spring semester of their first year. Thesis students must enroll in PSY 5399A (Thesis I) the first semester they begin systematic work on their thesis, and must remain continuously enrolled in PSY 5399B (Thesis II) each semester thereafter until completion[1]. Students must be

[1] Students also may have the option of enrolling in more or less than 3 credits for their thesis, depending on their enrollment status. Please contact the Graduate Director for more information.

enrolled in PSY 5399B during the semester in which their degrees are conferred. The only grades assigned for these courses are PR (progress), CR (credit), W (withdrew), and F (if failing).

Here are some helpful links for the Thesis implementation process

- Examples of successful theses: https://digital.library.txstate.edu
- One-time $40 fee reduction in final semester[2]:
- Graduate College Guide to Preparing and Submitting a Thesis
- http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/Thesis_Diss_Guide.pdf

## Developing a Research Idea/Selecting a Thesis Committee

Students should begin thinking about thesis topics during their first semester in the program. Below are the sequenced steps students should take:

- Schedule regular meetings with your faculty mentor to discuss mutual research interests.
- Make contacts with faculty members to learn research interests and discuss ideas for thesis research.
- Conduct literature reviews to gain further information on topics of interest and determine what has already been done.

Consult with your thesis supervisor to select two additional committee members with expertise in areas of research closely related to thesis topic. (*Committee members must be on Texas State's graduate faculty list. Professionals who are external to the university can be added if they meet the Graduate College criteria. If you decide to include a member on your committee who is **NOT** a faculty member at the university, this person must be designated by the university as an *adjunct faculty member* before they can be approved to serve on your committee - Please see: http://www.provost.txstate.edu/pps/policy-and-procedure-statements/7-personnel-employ-comp/pps7-03.html ).

- Notify the Graduate Director ASAP regarding your committee by completing the departmental thesis committee form (http://www.psych.txstate.edu/degrees-programs/graduate/mapr/gradformshandbook.html).

[2] Students who have completed both 5399A and B, but have not yet defended their theses may apply for this waiver in their final semester. Please contact the Graduate Director or Graduate College for more information.

- Once the chair and committee members are selected, students should work closely with their committee to design a study. Specifics such as methods, materials, number of participants, and timeline for data collection, etc., will vary depending on the project. The thesis committee should be chosen by the end of the first semester of the first year.

## The Thesis Proposal Process

After deciding on a topic and selecting the thesis committee in the first semester, the student will work with the chair and committee members to develop and design a thesis research project, submit a proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and prepare a proposal (ideally by the end of the second semester). The steps involved in this process are described in further detail below.

- Before submitting a proposal to the IRB, students are required to complete human participants training. At this time, Texas State University requires the training course of the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). Information about this training is available at: http://www.txstate.edu/research/orc/IRB-Resources/Training.html

- As with any research involving data from human participants, students must obtain IRB approval or exemption before beginning their thesis research. This is required, even if a student intends to use archival data (i.e., perform secondary analysis on a database previously collected for a different purpose). Once the committee has approved the general design of the thesis research, students should begin to work on their IRB materials. Students should work closely with their thesis chair to complete and submit the IRB materials and forms: http://www.txstate.edu/research/orc/IRB-Resources.html.

- It is important to receive approval regarding experimental methods and design from the entire thesis committee prior to submitting IRB. To expedite the proposal approval process, students are encouraged to receive IRB approval from their committees as quickly as possible (i.e., prior to approval of the formal proposal).

- Sometimes issues will arise during the IRB approval process and/or the pre-testing of the study which will necessitate further changes in the study. If this is the case, committee members should be consulted for their approval of these changes. Committee members should also be kept informed of a student's progress on the thesis project through regular updates by the student.

- Students should work closely with their thesis supervisors to develop their research proposals. During this process, it may be necessary to consult with other committee members in addition to your thesis supervisor. The thesis proposal should include:

- a synopsis of the thesis topic
- a review of relevant literature
- a research hypothesis(es) and prediction(s)
- a description of methods (including analytic strategy)
- predicted results
- relevance of results to the field

- The committee must approve the completed thesis research proposal, and sign a Proposed Thesis Research Form http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/thesis-proposal.pdf
- The Proposed Thesis Research Form serves as a record of proposal approval, and must bear the original signatures of the student, the student's thesis committee members, the Department Chair, and the Graduate Director or Designee. Students are responsible for obtaining Dean of the Graduate College approval and signature. This form, along with the proposal, a Thesis Committee Selection Form, and the IRB approval certificate are submitted directly to the Graduate College.

- This signed Proposed Thesis Research Form serves as a commitment between the student and the university. The Graduate College will return a copy of the approved thesis proposal form to the student (and the committee chair) who will forward this information to the Graduate Director for tracking purposes. The Office of the Graduate College will retain the original approved proposal form with attached thesis project description. Students are also required to provide a copy to the Program Specialist to place in their files.

- The IRB application for the thesis research approval and the Proposed Research Form submission should be completed no later than the Fall semester of the second year to remain on pace for a Spring graduation. The proposal must be approved by the Thesis Committee prior to starting data collection. Once the student and committee have agreed upon the overall design of the thesis research, it is recommended to submit the proposal to the IRB as quickly as possible. The Proposed Thesis Research Form can be submitted to the Graduate College while the IRB approval is pending. However, the Graduate College will give only tentative approval of the proposed thesis project until the IRB approval and approval number are obtained.

- Thesis workshops are offered every semester and provide valuable assistance and tools in the process. Information on the current semester's workshops can be found here: http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/events/shoptalks.html

Practical Considerations

Please keep practical considerations and limitations on resources in mind as you plan your thesis research.

- Most students recruit participants via the Psychology Department Human Subjects Pool. More information about the subject pool can be found at: http://www.psych.txstate.edu/research/SubjectsPool/

- As you work through the thesis process, it is important to remember that faculty members have many responsibilities.

    - Consider their schedules while planning yours (especially in the summer – many faculty are unavailable during this time, and defenses during this time may not always be possible)

    - Remember that because of other responsibilities, professors may require more time to read over and edit drafts, especially at the end of the semester.

- Be aware of the financial limitations of your project

    - If you have a project that requires funding or special equipment, you should talk to your thesis chair about potential funding sources (limited funding is available through the Department) or try to redesign the project.

- Keep in mind that there are limited resources available for collecting data

    - Be mindful about the costs of your project (e.g., supplies, participant payments, specialized software or equipment)

    - Consider the practicality of your project with respect to the source(s) of your participants and the number of participants that you will need (this is especially important if you plan to collect your data during the summer or at off-campus sites).

- Be mindful of practical considerations and time constraints on graduation given by the Graduate College

Note that you must turn in your completed, committee-approved thesis **several weeks** before the semester ends in order to graduate in that semester (http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/commencement.html). The Graduate College may require additional changes (generally formatting) that you must make before your thesis is accepted. Therefore, you are strongly encouraged to plan ahead and finish your thesis by the deadline posted by the Graduate College for the semester in which you plan to graduate (see: http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/deadlines.html. Failure to submit your thesis to your committee by posted deadlines may delay graduation and

result in you having to enroll in the thesis course (e.g., 5199B, 5299B or 5399B) for an additional semester.

Keep in mind that theses always take longer than expected and that it can be extremely difficult to organize your thesis defense during the summer. Finishing a thesis becomes even more difficult after you are out of an academic environment.

## Thesis Timeline and Important Forms

**First Year, Fall semester:**

- Formulate a potential thesis topic
- Select a committee chair and members
- Notify the Graduate Director or Designee of your committee composition
- Begin to review the literature in your selected "area"
- Complete Human Subjects Protection Training http://www.txstate.edu/research/orc/IRB-Resources/Training.html

**First Year, Spring semester:**

- Continue to review the literature relevant to your thesis topic.
- Work with the thesis committee to complete the thesis research proposal
- Design your study and begin working on IRB proposal materials, ideally to submit in Spring of the first year, or by the Summer of the first year at the latest.

**Second Year, Fall semester:**

- Enroll in the first thesis course, PSY 5399A (If you sign up for PSY 5399A one semester, you MUST sign up for a Thesis B course in all subsequent semesters until the thesis is completed.)
- Complete the IRB application process
- Submit the Graduate College Proposed Thesis Research Form http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/thesis-proposal.pdf
- Begin writing and editing the introduction (including literature review) and methods sections of the thesis (Fall of Year 2). If you have written a thorough proposal, the majority of this should already be done.
- Plan to start data collection as soon as your thesis research is approved by the Graduate College, ideally in the Fall of Year 2 (but not later than early in the spring semester of your second year).

> *N.B.: The proposed thesis project must be approved by all committee members and submitted to the Dean of the Graduate College for approval prior to starting data collection for your thesis research.*

**Second Year Spring Semester:**

- Enroll in PSY 5399B
- Apply for graduation if you plan to defend in the Spring semester https://tim.txstate.edu/studentgraduationapplication/Home/Standard-Authentication
- Analyze data (if not already done in the previous semester).
- Finish the first draft of your thesis
- Initial drafts are submitted to your committee chair by **February**. (http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/Thesis_Diss_Guide.pdf).
- Once your chair has approved your thesis and you have completed any necessary edits, a final thesis draft should be submitted to all committee members. This will be the thesis that will serve as the document for the thesis defense. The date for submitting your thesis to your committee varies from year to year, but is typically in early March. Failure to meet this deadline will delay your graduation. Please check the Graduate College website for deadlines: http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/deadlines.
- Schedule the oral defense of your thesis before the deadline posted by the Graduate College for the semester in which you plan to graduate (see below for more information re: thesis completion and defense).

*N.B.: In case you do **not** complete your thesis by the end of your first semester enrolled in PSY 5399B, you must continue to register for thesis courses (e.g., PSY 5199B, PSY 5299B, or PSY 5399B) every Fall and Spring until you are ready to defend. You must be registered in one of the aforementioned Thesis B courses in the semester that you defend your thesis.*

## The Thesis Defense

Students should work with their thesis committee chairs to create a final copy of their thesis. This document may have to be revised many times with the thesis chair before it is determined to be acceptable for presentation to the committee members and to the department chair.

It is the thesis chair's job to determine that the student is ready and able to defend the thesis, and he/she should not allow the student to schedule a meeting until this is the case. Once approved by the committee chair, the thesis should be forwarded to other committee members for comment, and then provided to the department chair for final approval. Students MUST distribute the final version of the thesis to committee members by the date posted on the Graduate College website for the semester in which they plan to graduate so the committee members have adequate time to review it. Failure to meet this deadline will result in delays in graduation, requiring you to register for at least an additional semester to complete the thesis requirement.

When you are ready to defend the following steps are necessary before during and after your defense:

## Before the defense:

- Make sure that you have applied for graduation: https://tim.txstate.edu/studentgraduationapplication/Home/Standard-Authentication
- Ensure that the format of the thesis conforms to Graduate College guidelines at: Graduate College thesis guide for formatting at: http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/Thesis_Diss_Guide.pdf
    - Improper formatting prior to submission to the Graduate College could result in graduation delays and unnecessary tuition fees.
- Consult with the Thesis Chair and committee to schedule the date/time of defense. Deadlines can be found at: http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/deadlines
- Complete a room reservation request at: http://www.psych.txstate.edu/graduate/mapr/gradformshandbook/formthesisdefensereques.html
    - Special presentation needs beyond standard computer/projector needs (e.g., tele-/video-conferencing ability) should be specified in the request. Advance notice in such circumstances is required.
- After thesis is approved by thesis chair, distribute thesis to committee members for review at least two weeks before defense (any deviations from this timeline, especially late distribution, must be approved by all members for the committee, or there may be delays in defense/graduation).
- Prepare a 35-45 minute oral presentation of your research.

## Day of the defense:

- Ensure that the Thesis Chair has copies of the Learning Outcomes and Comprehensive Exam forms. http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/comp-exam-report.pdf
- Provide Thesis Submission Approval Form http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/thesis-submission-approval.pdf

*The defense consists of 2 phases: an open oral presentation (open to the public) and a closed question period/defense (candidate and committee members only).*

## After the defense:

- Edit thesis to address committee concerns (if applicable).
- Ensure that all committee members sign off on the thesis/sign the Committee Approval Form before the Graduate College deadline.

- Submit one copy of thesis via Vireo to the Graduate College for review (see Appendix B in Graduate College thesis guide for formatting at: http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/Thesis_Diss_Guide.pdf
- Make required revisions as per Graduate College requests
- Resubmit thesis to Graduate College to verify formatting/edits
    - The completed thesis and paperwork must be received by the Graduate College by the final deadline: http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/deadlines.html

After the Dean of the Graduate College approves the thesis, the process is as follows:

## online submission:

- Complete all required revisions (check deadline dates). http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/deadlines.htmlFollow the steps outlined in Appendix B of The Graduate College to Preparing and Submitting a Thesis or Dissertation (http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/Thesis_Diss_Guide.pdf)
- When you receive an email in Vireo that states “your document has been approved”, the student does not need to take any further action.
- Optional: Take an additional printed copy plus any for personal use on thesis quality paper to the circulation desk in the Alkek Library. Pay the binding fee

## Policy on Thesis Defense

The thesis defense and public presentation are to be scheduled in accordance with policies and timelines of the Graduate College. All thesis committee members are expected to attend the thesis defense. However, there are times when a member may not be physically present.

In these situations, the following options are available (pending approval by the thesis chair):

1. Replace the absent member(s). This would require the Committee Chair to submit a written request (e-mail request is acceptable) via the Department Chair to the Dean of the Graduate College for approval. If the member to be replaced is the Committee Chair, a new Thesis Proposal Form must be completed and routed to the Dean of the Graduate College for approval.
2. The absent member(s) may participate via Skype or other videoconferencing program.
3. The absent member(s) may participate via conference call

Any other options must be approved by the Graduate Director and the Department Chair.

With the written permission (e-mail is acceptable) of the absent committee member, the Department Chair or designee may sign the absent committee member's name followed by his or her own initials on the Thesis Signature Page and the Master's Comprehensive Examination Form.

## Thesis equivalent project

For students enrolled in the MA in Psychological Research, a thesis is expected. However, students failing to make timely progress (in the absence of mitigating circumstances) on their theses during Year 1 may opt to complete a thesis equivalent research project in lieu of a thesis. Students have the choice of pursuing this option in order to graduate within the 2 year period typically required for the degree.

Student will be assigned to an existing research project (with the direction/advice of the mentor) and will participate in literature review, data collection, analysis, and dissemination of the study results over a 2 semester period (Fall and Spring of year 2). The student will enroll in 2 consecutive independent studies in lieu of thesis courses. The independent study can be an extension/continuation of the First Year project (a requirement of the first year seminar), and could include placements outside the Department of Psychology (pending approval of the Graduate Director and student's mentor). The student will also choose a second reader to assess the manuscript (particularly with regard to Graduate Learning Outcomes, which will apply to both thesis and non-thesis work). The Graduate Director will serve as the third reader on the manuscript.

## Major differences between Thesis and Non-thesis options:

No proposal is required for the thesis equivalent option – students will be assigned to a project at the discretion of the mentor. Nevertheless, the students will be responsible for drafting the literature review and methods sections of the research project by the end of Fall of Year 2 in order to receive a PR (progress) on this element.

For the thesis equivalent option, IRB approval will either be in place (initiated by the mentor prior to assignment of a student to a project) or will be submitted by the mentor in collaboration with the student by the first semester of the second year (Fall of Year 2).

The deadline for submission of the research project will be determined by the mentor and the student, but will typically be at the end of the Spring semester, near the end of April. Therefore, the deadline for the non-thesis option will be a few weeks later than that for the thesis.

The format of the non-thesis research paper will be left to the discretion of the mentor and student. For example, a lengthier document more similar to a thesis may result. However, in the event that the student and mentor wish to submit their results for publication to a particular journal, the final product would then

conform to standards specified by that journal. In the case where formatting is not specified (e.g., the student and mentor chose not to submit the manuscript to a journal), the default format for the document will conform to APA style (6th Ed.)

## Graduation

Students who wish to participate in commencement ceremonies must carefully plan ahead. Important deadlines for application for graduation, and dates for completion of the Comprehensive Examination and/or Thesis are listed on the Graduate College Web page at:

Graduation Application Deadline:
http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/deadlines

It is the student's responsibility to apply for graduation at:
https://tim.txstate.edu/studentgraduationapplication/Home/Standard-Authentication

## First Year Milestones

| | |
|---|---|
| Fall | • Choose research topic and supervisor; start first year project (mentored research project or major area paper/lit review)<br>• Assemble committee and develop thesis research; begin work on thesis proposal |
| Spring | • Complete First Year Research Project or Major Area Paper (literature review for thesis proposal)<br>• Complete thesis proposal<br>• Submit documents for IRB approval; receive committee approval on proposal. If completed, the student will proceed with thesis research in Year 2. |
| Summer | • If the above steps are not completed by the end of the summer of Year 1, students will be encouraged to pursue the non-thesis option (independent study and research paper) or advised that extra time will be necessary to complete the thesis. |

## Second Year Milestones

| | |
|---|---|
| Fall | • If applicable, submit abstract of first year project to conference (local or international).<br>**Thesis option**<br>• Thesis proposal approved by committee (beginning of the semester), data collection starts/ends, begin data analysis<br>**Non-thesis option**<br>• Assignment to project and mentors (beginning of the semester), work on literature review/methods, data collection starts/ends, begin data analysis |
| Spring | **Thesis option**<br>• Finish data collection/analysis, final write-up: edit proposal (introduction and methods) for final draft, add results and discussion, format thesis; thesis defense.<br>• COMPLETED THESIS DRAFT IS DUE TO COMMITTEE BY DATE SPECIFIED IN THE GRADUATE CALENDAR (failure to meet this deadline will result in delays in thesis defense/graduation<br>**Non-thesis option**<br>• Finish data collection/analysis, final write-up (in APA format), and approval of document by mentors, presentation of results |

# Other Important Information

## Financial Aid

Submit your Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible for financial aid assistance (for summer sessions, you will have to fill out a Texas State University-San Marcos form in the Financial Aid Office by late February/ early March). For further information, please contact the Financial Aid Office at 512-245-2315, or visit http://www.finaid.txstate.edu/.

## Graduate Assistantships

The Psychology Department has a limited number of graduate assistantships, and the number may vary each year. Students who have been accepted unconditionally are eligible for these employment opportunities. Efforts are made to provide 20 hour assistantships to students admitted from out-of-state so that they may become eligible for in-state tuition, though many are given to students admitted from Texas.

Students who receive a graduate assistantship must maintain an average GPA of 3.0. They must also enroll in PSY 5105 Teaching Psychology for which they will receive tuition reimbursement, and they are required to assist in administering faculty evaluations in the Fall and Spring. All students selected for these positions must complete required employment paperwork within 10 days after the semester begins so that they can be included on the payroll. Paperwork should be obtained from and returned to Ms. Sarah Pollok.

These are employment positions and students receiving assistantships should conduct themselves in a professional manner with faculty, students, staff, and other student workers.

## Scholarships

- Students are encouraged to apply for graduate scholarships (up to $1,000 per semester), which typically have Spring application deadlines.
- Contact the Graduate College at 512-245-2315 or visit www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/scholarships.html for the most current information.

The Department also offers limited funding opportunities:

## Graduate Thesis Supplement - MAPR

Depending on funding availability, thesis supplements will be awarded to support graduate thesis research. For students in the 2018 cohort and beyond, students must first apply for the Graduate College Thesis Supplement Fellowship **and** receive notification of that award prior to applying for the MAPR Thesis Supplement. MAPR thesis supplement applications are accepted on a rolling

basis. Supplements will be in the form of supplies (e.g., software, salivary analysis kits, ERP supplies, self-report inventories) and equipment that are necessary for thesis completion*. In special cases, funds may be used for participant payment, but additional justification is required. Funds may not be used for travel, graduate or undergraduate wages, or conference submission/registration.

Graduate College Thesis Supplement Fellowship Application is available here: http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/funding/scholarships/thesis-research.html Please note that the Graduate College Thesis Supplement Fellowship has two application periods: the fall semester round from April 15-June 30 and the spring semester round from September 15-November 15. Your thesis proposal must be formally approved by the Graduate College a minimum of one business day prior to the close of the application period.

### *Eligibility Criteria*

Supplements are available to currently enrolled graduate students in the MAPR program, who have received proposal approval and expect to graduate according to the requirements of the Graduate College and the Department of Psychology. Students are eligible for the Department supplemental funds after applying for and receiving notification about the Graduate College Thesis Research Support Fellowship.

Applicants must demonstrate academic competence and maintain a semester grade point average of at least 3.3 or above.

In addition to the online application form, applicants are required to submit a 500 word abstract describing how the supplement is necessary for the proposed research. If funds are required for participant payment, additional justification (200 words max.) and consent of the thesis supervisor are required.

### *Application Procedures and Deadlines*

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Only completed applications (online application and abstract) will be considered.

### *Adjudication Process*

Completed proposals will be evaluated by the Graduate Committee, who will make recommendations re: the appropriation of funds for final approval by the Department Chair.

**all equipment and supplies will remain the property of the Department of Psychology after graduation*

## Graduate Travel Supplement

Depending on funding availability, graduate student travel supplements (up to $500) will be awarded to support graduate student travel to present at scientific conferences and annual meetings. In order to be eligible for this award, students must be the first (i.e., presenting) author of the poster or talk, and must provide documented proof of abstract acceptance at the time of application. Funds will be used to reimburse travel expenses (e.g., registration, flight or mileage, hotel, and per diem food costs) and will be awarded upon submission of receipts after the conference or meeting. Separate funds are available for printing costs related to poster presentations.

There are no deadlines for these applications.

### *Eligibility Criteria*

Supplements are available to currently enrolled graduate students in the MAPR program, who are presenting authors at scientific meetings and who expect to graduate according to the requirements of the Graduate College and the Department of Psychology.

Applicants must demonstrate academic competence and maintain a semester grade point average of at least 3.3 or above.

In addition to the online application form, applicants are required to submit proof of abstract acceptance.

### *Application Procedures and Deadlines*

There are no deadlines for this award. Only completed applications (online application and proof of acceptance) will be considered.

### *Adjudication Process*

Completed proposals will be evaluated by the Graduate Committee, who will make recommendations re: the appropriation of funds for final approval by the Department Chair.

## Travel

In order to qualify for reimbursement for travel expenses, all Texas State students and faculty must submit a travel application. To begin this process, please complete and submit a travel application (http://www.psych.txstate.edu/faculty/requests/travel.html). If you have any questions about this process, please contact Ms. Pollok.

In addition to departmental funding, money for travel is also available through the Graduate College, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Rising Stars Travel (STAR) Grant via the Associated Student Government. For more information on how to apply for these funds and how to estimate your travel expenses, please see our website: http://www.psych.txstate.edu/graduate/mapr/C---New-Sept-2017-FundingTravel.html

# Library and Computer Lab Hours and Locations

Library hours and other information can be found at http://www.library.txstate.edu/

# Department Policies, Procedures, and Expectations

## Policy on Grades

The University expects graduate students in degree programs to maintain high academic standards. The minimum University standards and consequences for unsatisfactory performances are specified in the Probation and Suspension section of the 2018- 2019 Graduate Catalog.

In addition to meeting the University standards, students are required to follow department policies. The policy of the department on grades is that a student must complete all required courses with a grade of B or above. Students who make a grade of C or lower in a required course will be required to retake the course. A student will be placed on probation for receiving two grades of C or lower in the program. A student whose current degree audit reflects 3 Cs in required courses will be dismissed.

At the midpoint of each semester, faculty will be asked to provide information to the Graduate Director regarding any students having potential problems with grades. The Graduate Director or Designee will meet with students in danger of making Cs or lower in their program courses.

The Graduate Director or Designee will review all students' grades at the end of each semester and send written notification to those students who make grades of C or lower explaining their status and any required actions.

The Student Grade Appeals Procedures for Liberal Arts Courses can be found at http://www.liberalarts.txstate.edu/Current-Students/policies/gradeappeals.html

## Policy on Comprehensive Examination

All students in the Psychological Research Program are required by the University to take and pass a comprehensive examination in order to graduate. Thesis students will have their Comprehensive Examination administered orally as part of their thesis defense. Thesis equivalent students will be evaluated on the basis of their final project in the same manner as thesis students.

## Academic and Professional Ethics

The purpose of the MA program in Psychological Research is to prepare students for careers in research across a wide variety of contexts. The professional practice of psychology is guided by the American Psychological Association's (APA) "Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct" (APA, 2010). Because students in our graduate program are preparing for professional roles in psychology, they are expected to be knowledgeable about the APA ethical principles and behave according to the ethical principles and code of conduct in their academic and professional activities (e.g., coursework, research, class, and public presentations and writing, take home or in-class tests). The complete "Ethical Principles" can be found at http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx. It is the student's responsibility to consult with faculty members if he or she should have any questions about these principles or about her/his behavior in relation to them. Students in Psychology held to a higher standard of professional conduct than is required by the university's regulations.

Because the master's thesis and other written work constitute a substantial portion of the requirements toward the M.A. degree, students must clearly understand that academic honesty is expected. The Texas State University Honor Code is published in the 2018- 2019 Graduate Catalog at http://mycatalog.txstate.edu/graduate/academic-grading-policies/honor-code/. The APA "ethical principles" further state that "psychologists do not present substantial portions or elements of another's work or data as their own, even if the other work or data source is cited occasionally" (standard 8.11, p. 11; APA, 2010).

It is the student's responsibility to cite reference sources in accordance with the discipline's, University's, and course instructor's/thesis chair's expectations and to seek clarification from the thesis chair, course instructor, etc. on what constitutes appropriate citation if there are any questions. Pleading ignorance of proper citation methods or lack of intent to violate accepted standards is/will not be an acceptable defense. There is no such thing as "accidental plagiarism" on the part of a graduate student. Again, if you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, check with a faculty member.

Beyond ensuring that their own conduct is consistent with the University's regulations and with the APA "Ethical Principles," graduate students in the MAPR

Program have a responsibility to help uphold professional standards of conduct in the graduate program as a whole. Principle B of the APA "Ethical Principles" states that "Psychologists are concerned about the ethical compliance of their colleagues' scientific and professional conduct" (p. 3; APA, 2010). Consistent with Principle B and with articles 1.04 and 1.05 of the "Ethical Principles" regarding the reporting of ethical violations (p. 4; APA, 2010), graduate students who are aware of ethical violations on the part of other students **are expected to report** the violations to the Graduate Director or Designee.

## General Expectations of Graduate Students

**Please be aware that expectations for graduate students are substantially higher than those for undergraduates.**

- Graduate students can expect to put in significantly more hours of studying and research than they did as undergraduates. To complete course and thesis requirements in a timely manner, students should be in full-time attendance of the program.
- Graduate students are expected to be active members of the department. This means seeking a well-rounded education by going above and beyond course and thesis requirements.
    - Students should actively participate in department activities, including colloquia, graduate brown bag seminars, and other scheduled talks.
    - Students should also develop an active program of research with faculty members that is reflected in publications and presentations at research conferences.
    - Graduate students often make presentations at regional and national conferences such as the Southwestern Psychological Association (SWPA), Texas Psychological Association (TPA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the American Psychological Society (APS). Talk with your thesis chair and/or Graduate Director or Designee about other appropriate venues for your research.
- It is also expected that graduate students will become active members of the psychological community. Consider joining APA, APS, TPA, SWPA, and/or other professional organizations. Talk to your committee chair and/or the Graduate Director for further information on appropriate societies.
- Organization newsletters and professional contacts can be a valuable source of information and opportunities for students. There are several excellent student-run organizations, such as the American Psychological Association's Graduate Student Organization (APAGS), the Texas Psychological Association Student Division, and the American Psychological Society's Student Caucus, which were developed to provide graduate students with helpful tips, contacts, and funding/grant information.
- In general, the more time and effort students put into their graduate studies, the more competitive and successful they will be on the job market or in admissions to doctoral programs. Faculty members are here to help in students' professional development, so do not hesitate to consult them.

## Procedures for Dealing with Problems with Faculty or Others

Hopefully you will not have problems with faculty members or other students in the program, but occasionally these things do occur. Your first step if you have an issue or concern related to an instructor, supervisor, or other faculty member is to try to talk with the faculty member privately about the problem. If this doesn't work or you don't feel comfortable doing this, a second step is to talk with the Graduate Director or Designee. Try to take care of the problem as soon as possible. Keep in mind that while the Graduate Director or Designee will do their best to respect your wishes in terms of reporting the incident, keeping it confidential, etc., there are some cases where they are required by Texas State policy to file a formal report (e.g., cases of alleged sexual harassment).

# Student Fitness and Performance

**Program Standards** – Students enrolled in all academic programs in the Graduate College must maintain high scholastic standards and develop a mastery of the knowledge and methods of their respective discipline. Students are expected to demonstrate emotional and mental fitness in their interactions with others, use skills and methods that are generally accepted by others in the profession, and conform to the code of ethics of their respective discipline, and the university's honor code. A student's acceptance in any program does not guarantee the student's fitness to remain in that program. The faculty is responsible for verifying that only those students who continue to meet program standards are allowed to continue in any program.

**Evaluation of Student Fitness and Performance**– Members of the faculty, using their professional judgments, evaluate student fitness and performance continuously. The criteria used by the faculty to make such judgments include instructors' observations of student performance in class or in activities related to courses. Students who are not making satisfactory progress or who are not meeting program standards should consider withdrawing from the program.

In this context, the term "satisfactory progress" refers to an academic judgment made regarding the student's fitness and performance. It is a judgment that the student has failed to meet program standards rather than a judgment made on the basis of the student's violation of valid rules of conduct. Disciplinary matters are referred to Student Justice.

**Student Review Process** – If a faculty member believes that a student is not making satisfactory progress or meeting program standards, he or she should discuss the situation with the student. If the faculty member believes that the student's performance cannot improve to acceptable standards, the faculty

member should refer the student to the Program Standards Committee of the appropriate department. The Program Standards Committee consists of three faculty members appointed by the Department Chair in consultation with the department's senior faculty.

The Committee will notify the student of the reasons that he or she is not making satisfactory progress or meeting program standards and will give the student an opportunity to meet with the Committee to respond and to present information and witnesses to the committee. The Committee will also meet with the faculty member who referred the student to the Committee. After considering the matter, and within ten working days of meeting with the student, the Committee will report to the student and the Department Chair. The Committee will recommend that the student either be allowed to remain in the program or be removed from the program. The committee may make other recommendations, such as placing restrictions or conditions on the student's continuing in the program. Within ten working days of receiving the Committee's recommendations, the student will notified of the Department Chair's decision (acceptance or rejection of the committee's recommendation).

Within ten working days of receiving the Committee's recommendation, the Chair will make a decision as to the student's continued presence in the program. Before making the decision, the student will have the opportunity to meet with the Chair and to offer information on his/her behalf. However, the Chair need not meet with the student before making a decision if the Chair has given the student a reasonable opportunity to meet, and the student has either failed or refused to meet. The Chair will notify the student of the decision.

If the student is dissatisfied with the Chair's decision, he or she may appeal to the Dean of the Graduate College. However, in order for an appeal to be considered, the student must submit a written notice for an appeal to the Chair and to the Dean within ten working days of receiving the Chair's decision. The Dean will consider the matter based on information compiled by the Chair and notify the student of his or her decision within ten working days of the Dean's receipt of the appeal from the Chair. The Dean may meet with the student and give the student an opportunity to address the issues. The Dean's decision is final.

## Procedures for Withdrawing from the Program

Students who are thinking about withdrawing from the program are urged to discuss their concerns with faculty members they choose and with the Graduate Director or Designee. The roles of the faculty, director and advisor are to help students make informed decisions. If a student should decide to withdraw from the program, he/she should follow the "Withdrawal" actions specified in the 2018-2019 Texas State Graduate Catalog, which can be seen online at http://mycatalog.txstate.edu/graduate/registration-course-credit/

## Procedures on Dismissal of a Student from the Program

Students who are dismissed from the program will receive written notification of their dismissal from the Graduate Director or Designee. Required paperwork will be filed with the Graduate College to bar them from registering in the future.

# Appendix: Online Resources about the Department, University, and Community

**Texas State Home Page** http://www.txstate.edu/
Contains information about the university, including academic calendars, registration information, maps, and directories.

**Department of Psychology Web Page** http://www.psych.txstate.edu/
Contains information about the department, including course offerings, faculty office hours, and links to faculty web pages.

**College of Liberal Arts Web Page** http://www.liberalarts.txstate.edu/
Contains information about the Liberal Arts College and its programs.

**Texas State Schedule of Classes**
http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Current_Students/Schedule
Shows course listings, openings, etc.

**Graduate College Web Page** http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/
Contains important information about graduate requirements, scholarships, thesis requirements, graduation, etc.

**Graduate College Orientation**
http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Orientation.html

**Graduate Catalog (Admissions information and Courses):**
http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Grad_Cats/2013-2015.html

**Tuition and Fees:**
http://www.sbs.txstate.edu/billing.html

**Financial Aid and Scholarships:**
http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Prospect_Students/Fin_Grad_Ed.html

**Graduate College Thesis Information**
http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss_Info.html

**International Services Office** http://www.international.txstate.edu/

**Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion** http://www.sdi.txstate.edu/

**Texas State Technology Resources** http://www.tr.txstate.edu/
Contains information about e-mail, TRACS, etc.

**Texas State Institutional Review Board**
http://www.txstate.edu/research/orc/IRB-Resources.html

**Texas State Writing Center** http://writingcenter.english.txstate.edu/
Contains information on support available to assist in developing writing skills.

**Texas State Counseling Center** http://www.counseling.txstate.edu/home.html
Services include individual, group, and couples counseling. These services are included in your student fees.

**Texas State Office of Disability Services** http://www.ods.txstate.edu/

**Texas State Health Center** http://www.healthcenter.txstate.edu/

**Texas State Allies** http://www.sdi.txstate.edu/Support-and-Empowerment/LGBTQIA-and-Allies.html
Resources for LGBT

**Office of Equity and Access** http://www.txstate.edu/oea/

**On-Campus Residence Life** http://www.reslife.txstate.edu/
Contains information on housing and dining options on campus.

**On-Campus Involvement** http://www.lbjsc.txstate.edu/caso/soc/

**Graduate House**
http://studentgovernment.dos.txstate.edu/graduatehouse/officers.html

**Texas State Parking** http://www.parking.txstate.edu/Student.htm

**San Marcos Web Page** http://www.sanmarcostexas.com/

**Austin Web Page** http://www.austintexas.org/

**San Antonio Web Page** http://www.sanantoniocvb.com/