Welcome!

Welcome to the Master of Arts in Health Psychology Program at Texas State University-San Marcos. This handbook is designed as a guide for our prospective and current students. It outlines basic policies and facts about the Program and provides timelines and key survival essentials for the graduate experience. Please feel free to use the contact information and links throughout the handbook for any specific questions that you may have.

As a developing psychological professional, you are expected to uphold and abide by the ethical principles and standards as determined by the American Psychological Association. While these will be covered in more detail throughout your career here at Texas State, you should study these items on your own as well. These guiding principles and standards can be found at http://www.apa.org/ethics/code.html

This handbook is designed to provide you with the basic information you need about our program. Please read it carefully. Feel free to ask faculty members when you have questions concerning program requirements and about your progress in the program.

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Master of Arts in Health Psychology Program at Texas State University-San Marcos to provide students with the best preparation to meet the challenges of the healthcare environment through educational experiences that focus on promoting healthy life styles, preventing illnesses, enhancing the rehabilitation of those who suffer serious diseases or injuries, and designing, implementing, and evaluating the effectiveness of prevention and treatment programs.
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  ** Students will be assessed for academic readiness for PSY 5320 during the Fall of their first year. Students deemed to be underprepared will be required to enroll in PSY 5300 instead of PSY 5320 during Spring of their first year. PSY 5320 will be offered and is strongly recommended for these students during the Summer session, otherwise PSY 5320 must be taken in the Fall of the second year. PSY 5300 does not count toward the hours required for the degree. ..................................................................................... 33
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General Information

The Health Psychology Program is designed to be a 2-year, full-time program of study, currently excluding summers. Although the program does not require summer courses, some students might find it necessary to take courses in the summer in order to complete the program in two years. It has a strong empirical orientation and is designed to provide students with (a) advanced knowledge of the scientific foundations of health psychology; (b) competence in psychological service delivery (for students in the Clinical Approaches tracks); and/or (c) skills in research methodology (Applied Research track).

2008/2009 Academic Year Tracks

There are three basic tracks for students to choose in personalizing their educational experience in the Master of Arts in Health Psychology Program. They are: Applied Research Track, Clinical Approaches Non-Thesis Track, and Clinical Approaches + Thesis Track. Students may also take additional coursework for two additional options: Clinical Approaches + Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) Option, and Clinical Approaches + Thesis + LPC Option. See Appendix A for course sequences for all tracks and options.

Clinical Approaches Tracks

There are 2 options for Clinical Approaches: Non-thesis and Thesis. Students choosing these tracks learn to provide direct services to clients, employees, and patients in a variety of settings such as rehabilitation centers, primary care centers, and hospices. In addition to the core courses, students in these tracks learn clinical and cognitive-behavioral techniques and assessment. Students who complete a clinical approaches track may qualify to apply for licensure in Texas as a Licensed Psychological Associate (LPA) or, with additional coursework, as a Licensed Professional Counselor. Further information on these options is provided in later sections of this handbook.

Applied Research Track

Students choosing this track may focus on working with businesses and organizations (non-profits, etc.) to promote healthy workplace environments and/or evaluation of health education and prevention programs. This track will teach students how to design, implement, and evaluate interventions and programs in organizations.
Psychology Department Personnel

Department Chair

Dr. Shirley Ogletree is the Interim Department Chair. Her office is in Room 208 and can be reached at (512) 245-2526 or so01@txstate.edu.

Graduate Program Director and Practicum Coordinator

Dr. Ollie J. Seay is the Director of the Health Psychology Program and the Practicum Coordinator. Her office is in Room 216E and can be reached at (512) 245-3167 or os12@txstate.edu (email is preferred and usually the fastest way of communicating with Dr. Seay).

Graduate Advisor

Dr. Maria Czyzewksa is the Graduate Advisor. Her office is in Room 214C and can be reached at (512) 245-3160 or MC07@txstate.edu (email is preferred and usually the fastest way of communicating with the Graduate Advisor).

Faculty

The Psychology Department has 25 full-time faculty members and 3 part-time faculty members. For a complete list of faculty, please see the Department Directory at http://www.psych.txstate.edu/directory.php

Support Staff

There are two full-time support staff for the Psychology Department. Ms. Chantelle Elder serves as Administrative Assistant III, and Ms. April Torres serves as the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant II. In terms of the graduate program, Ms. Elder handles the hiring paperwork for assistantships, while Ms. Torres handles most other administrative issues related to the program (e.g. processing of incoming applications, course approvals and overrides, etc.)

Making the Most of Your Educational Experience

Faculty Mentors

All students are encouraged to seek faculty mentors for the duration of the program. The mentors can advise and guide the student in various aspects of the program, including thesis development, track selection, and general adjustment to the rigors of graduate work. For students who will be completing a
thesis, you should choose a mentor who is at the assistant, associate, or full professor rank.

**Student Representatives**

All master’s classes will have a designated representative that is elected or designated. This representative will serve as a class spokesperson to faculty and graduate committee meetings as assigned, and is responsible for communicating any news or concerns between the students and faculty. Barring any unusual circumstances, the class representative will serve for both years in the program. The representative will be elected/designated in the first few weeks of the fall semester. If you are interested in serving as a representative, please contact either the Director of the Graduate Program or Graduate Advisor.

**Study and Research Groups**

All students are encouraged to develop regular study and research meetings amongst themselves and faculty. These meetings are intended to provide informal settings in which to discuss clinical topics and potential research ideas for theses. These meetings also allow students the opportunity to hear faculty discuss their own practice and research experiences, and to connect with those faculty with whom they are interested in working.

**Keep Contact Information Current**

You will be contacted by the program faculty and staff via your Texas State e-mail (no other e-mail will be used) or by your address or telephone number. When you enter the program, please give the student representative and Ms. Torres your address and phone number where we can contact you outside of class. If and when you get new contact information, make sure you update the information with these individuals. You should also update this information with the University. You will be responsible for any important information you fail to receive due to old and inaccurate contact information.

**The Master of Arts in Health Psychology**

**Major Program and Options**

The Master of Arts in Health Psychology Program is designed to prepare students who wish to promote wellness in individuals and within organizations, enhance the rehabilitation of those who suffer disease or injury, and evaluate the effectiveness of prevention and treatment programs. The degree program currently consists of 42 semester hours, including 21 hours of common core
courses, and 21 track hours (clinical approaches or applied research) which includes either 6 hours of practicum (for clinical approaches tracks) or 6 hours of thesis (applied research). This represents a 2-year, full-time course of study, currently excluding summers within the basic program. In addition, the Health Psychology Program has an agreement with the Professional Counseling Program that will allow interested students in the clinical approaches tracks to take additional courses within their curriculum and the Psychology Department's graduate course offerings that may lead to licensure in Texas as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). Students pursuing LPC licensure should be prepared to spend an additional year in graduate school, including summers (see Appendix A with required courses for different degree options within the program).

**Courses Offered**

Current graduate course offerings can be found on the Department's Graduate Courses webpage at [http://www.psych.txstate.edu/courses/graduate.php](http://www.psych.txstate.edu/courses/graduate.php)

**The Practicum Experience (for Students on the Clinical Approaches Tracks)**

**Foremost Responsibility**

Participating in a practicum is not a given in our Master's Program. Admission to the program and successful completion of the first year does not guarantee placement in a practicum site. Working in an organization and providing services to the public requires preparation and carries enormous responsibilities. Students must complete all of the specified core and clinical approaches track courses with a B or better, complete a brief physical, and carry professional liability insurance. Most importantly, students are expected to conduct themselves professionally and to perform their duties and tasks responsibly. But in the end, placement and continuation at any site rests with the Practicum Coordinator and the Supervisor at the site. Students who do not display professional behavior or who are unable to perform their assigned duties may be dismissed or removed from a practicum site. Should a student be found inappropriate for clinical placement and not finish practicum placement, there may be an option of switching to the Applied Research track, though this would involve taking additional coursework.
**Physical Examination and Immunization Requirements**

Texas State University-San Marcos agrees to require that all students participating in clinical training, internships, or field experiences for a healthcare, social work, or psychology program submit to their appropriate Practicum Coordinator a physical examination/health report completed by a physician. The physical examination/health report will indicate completion of immunization for poliomyelitis, mumps, measles, tetanus and a chest x-ray or TAB test. Additionally, all students must submit proof that they have taken the Hepatitis B vaccine series, or submit a completed Certification of Declination to the Practicum Coordinator. If you use the University Health Center, just tell them that you have the same requirements as students in Health Professions. The paperwork is the same. Proof of immunization must be provided to the Practicum Coordinator by **August 22nd each year** before you intend to begin your practicum.

**Professional Liability Insurance Requirement**

All students participating in clinical training for health care programs must be insured or purchase liability insurance at least in the amount of $1,000,000 per claim/$3,000,000 in the aggregate of coverage prior to attendance in any clinical training. Students must either carry their own insurance and furnish proof of such to the Practicum Coordinator, or Texas State University-San Marcos will offer the opportunity to purchase professional liability insurance under a blanket policy for all students enrolled in health care programs. Please contact the Practicum Coordinator to acquire insurance if you do not already have a policy of your own. Insurance purchased from Texas State University-San Marcos ($14.50 for the academic year) is to be **paid via money order to Texas State University-San Marcos. Deadline for getting your money order to the practicum coordinator is August 22nd**.

**Practicum Assignment**

Please confer with the Health Psychology Program’s Practicum Coordinator before you make any contact with the site’s psychologist/supervisor. The Practicum Coordinator should have a listing of currently available and active practicum sites. While contact information may be provided for the sites, the process of getting practicum assignment is as follows:

1. Ensure that you have completed all the clinical approaches track and core courses required to go on practicum with a B or better
2. Confer with the Practicum Coordinator to review your choices
3. When your site has been designated, contact the site supervisor for a preliminary interview/site tour
4. If there is a good initial match, you will negotiate the dates/times for practicum with your supervisor.
5. Placement at any site must ultimately be decided by the Practicum Coordinator and the Supervisor at the site.

For details on the general experiences expected at a practicum site and other issues like time requirements, contact the Practicum Coordinator to see the expectations of practicum students and a list of practicum sites. Practicum starts in the Fall of the second year and continues for two semesters. In general, plan ahead for your practicum.

**Time Requirements**

Practicum students must fulfill a minimum of 450 clock hours for their site, including supervision and contact hours (at least 100, and preferably 150, contact hours should be in direct client/patient contact). For practica taking place over 2 semesters, students will be expected to work approximately 16 to 17 hours per week:

- 225 hours per semester
  
  16 hrs/wk X ~ 3.5 months = ~224 hours

This schedule is flexible enough to provide for any negotiation between the practicum site and the student regarding vacation time, etc. Students and supervisors should document the time spent in the practicum, so that both parties receive the appropriate amount of work from each other (See Practicum Timesheet on the Psychology Department website at http://www.psych.txstate.edu/graduate/policiesandforms.php).

**Practicum Opportunities and Requirements**

While each clinical practicum site can vary tremendously, we expect that each site can follow several essential guidelines to ensure our students receive a broad educational experience.

**Observation/Shadowing Opportunities**

Students should have the opportunity to follow supervisors and other psychology professionals in their daily activities. This will give students a hands-on experience in seeing how to develop and maintain rapport, how to address consultations with other health professionals, and how to generally conduct him or herself in a professional and ethical manner.
Professional Opportunities

Students benefit enormously from experiencing different aspects of the administrative process. Students should have access to select team meetings, clinical case conferences, psychoeducational opportunities and special group meetings (among psychologists, staff, etc.) provided that they are not breaking client/patient confidentiality. The particularly motivated student can also benefit from presenting or discussing a case they have followed in such meetings.

Scholarly Opportunities

All students entering the practicum will have much to learn about the field of health psychology, and supervisors can enhance this educational experience by directing students to read particular articles, book chapters, and other materials relevant to the practicum site’s population, specialty, and/or mission. The practicum site might create an opportunity for conducting a research project for theses. If a student is considering research at a practicum site, contacting the site before their placement in the fall of the second year is strongly encouraged.

Opportunities Specific to Site

Your site will undoubtedly offer many exciting clinical opportunities unique to your setting (biofeedback, psychoeducation, hypnosis, relaxation training, collecting data, participating in research, etc.). Students would benefit greatly by observing, learning, and/or participating in such opportunities as they arise.

Personnel Requirements

Each site must have a licensed psychologist or other approved licensed professional available to oversee the students’ supervision. Due to the educational nature of many settings (military medical centers, etc.), there may be psychology post-doctoral fellows or interns available for providing the day to day supervision. However, the licensed psychologist or other approved licensed professional must be primarily responsible for the student and be available to sign off on any paperwork required for the student’s completion of the practicum.

Evaluations

Supervisors and students will be required to evaluate each other twice during the practicum, at the middle and the end of the 450 practicum hours. This is to ensure that the student is performing to the supervisor’s standards and expectations, and that the supervisor is providing appropriate guidance and
Individual and Group Supervision

In addition to supervision at the practicum site, you will be required to attend monthly group supervision with all other practicum students and monthly individual supervision with the Practicum Coordinator. Times will be arranged once classes get started each semester. You are to bring a completed Supervision Form (See this form on the Psychology Department website at http://www.psych.txstate.edu/graduate/policiesandforms.php) with you to each individual supervision session.

Practicum Portfolio or Special Project

Students completing practicum are required to turn in portfolio of their work at the practicum site along with a description of the site and the opportunities available there. If you are the first student to be at a new practicum site, this description should be in great detail so that it is useful for other students who may want to know more about the site in the future. If your site has had students in the past, you will be asked to work with the site to do a special project that gives back to the site. The Practicum Coordinator will discuss this in group and individual supervision sessions.

Display Case

In the Spring semester, practicum students showcase their practicum experiences by providing information and photos for the large display case in the hall on the second floor of the Psychology Building.

Taking Courses in the Professional Counseling Program (for Students on the Clinical Approaches Track Seeking the LPC Credential)

Before taking any courses in the Professional Counseling Program, students should read and follow the instructions in The Health Psychology Student’s Guide to the Professional Counseling Program which is posted on the Psychology Department website at
Internship (for Students on the Applied Research Track)

Students in the Applied Research Track will generally take PSY 5398 Internship in Applied Health Psychology in their final semester of the program. The focus of this 120 hour internship is program evaluation of a health promotion and wellness in an organizational setting, either of a program that the student helps implement or of a program the internship site has ongoing.

The Thesis

The Master’s thesis is one of the most important requirements of the Applied Research Track for the M.A. degree. As such, the Department of Psychology has high standards for theses. The thesis is an APA-style report of an original empirical study conducted by the student. Examples of successful theses are available on eCommons at [http://ecommons.txstate.edu/](http://ecommons.txstate.edu/).

Students must enroll in PSY 5399A Thesis I the first semester they begin a systematic work on their thesis completion, and must remain continuously enrolled in PSY 5399B Thesis II each semester thereafter until the thesis is completed. The only grades assigned for these courses are PR (progress), CR (credit), W (withdrew), and F (if failing). Students must be enrolled in PSY 5399B during the semester in which their degrees are conferred. Students are also entitled to a one-time $40 fee reduction in their final semester if they have met all deadlines associated with completion and submission of the thesis (see [http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss_Info/T-D_Guide/Ch_V.html](http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss_Info/T-D_Guide/Ch_V.html)).

Important: Guidelines for the M.A. thesis are found in the Graduate College Thesis Manual. An online version of this manual is available at [http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss_Info.html](http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss_Info.html).

Students should read this manual carefully and follow all of the guidelines. Additional information about theses is described below.

Comment [MC1]: They need to begin earlier if they plan to finish in 2 years…
**Developing a Research Idea/Selecting a Thesis Committee**

Students should begin thinking about thesis topics during their first semester in the program. Students are encouraged to make contacts with faculty members to learn about their research interests and discuss ideas for thesis research. In addition, students are encouraged to do literature reviews to gain further information on topics of interest and determine what has already been done. The informal meetings and research discussions with faculty should lead to the identification of a thesis committee chair and members. Students should ask prospective faculty members to serve on their committee and if the agreement is reached, notify the Graduate Advisor about the thesis committee selection (see Thesis Committee Selection Form at http://www.psych.txstate.edu/graduate/policiesandforms.php). The committee chair must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member from the Department of Psychology. Students should consult with their thesis chair to select two additional committee members. Most students select committee members with expertise in areas of research closely related to the 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. Once the chair and committee members are selected, students should work closely with their thesis committee to design a study. Specifics such as methods, materials, number of participants, timeline for data collection, etc., will vary depending on the project. The thesis committee chair and members should be chosen no later than the end of the Spring semester of the first year.

**The Thesis Proposal Process**

After deciding on a topic and selecting the thesis committee, the student will work with the chair and committee members to develop a thesis research project. After the committee has accepted the thesis research project, the student should obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the study. In addition, one copy of the Proposed Thesis Research Form (see form on Graduate College website at http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/Proposed_Thesis_Research.doc) with the thesis project description attached needs to be submitted to the Graduate College. The IRB application for the thesis research approval and the Proposed Research Form submission should be completed not later than the Fall semester of the second year. It should be noted that in order to expedite the process, 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. The thesis proposal must include a brief synopsis of the thesis topic and relevant literature, description of methods, and
expected results. The form must bear original signatures of the student, the student's thesis committee members, the Department Chair, and Graduate Advisor. The chair will forward the signed forms to the Dean of the Graduate College for approval and signature. 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 committee chair. The Office of the Graduate College will retain the original approved proposal form with attached thesis project description.

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, the 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.

Outline of Thesis Proposal

You will find below a useful outline of the content of a thesis proposal. Not all areas in this outline will be relevant for all theses, but the outline is intended as a guide. Try to complete as many areas as possible. The more that you can complete at proposal time, the less likely you will have major problems during your thesis research. You need to think carefully about your research question, methods, data collection and needed instruments before you submit a proposal. Work closely with your committee members during this critical proposal stage.

1. Introduction
   - Statement of the research problem
   - Significance of the problem to Health Psychology
   - Research question(s) and hypothesis(es)
   - Brief discussion of research directly relevant to proposed research questions and hypothesis

2. Method
   - Description of the sample/participants
   - Overview of research design
   - Proposed assessment instruments (questionnaires, experimental tasks etc..)
   - Proposed data collection procedure

3. Anticipated outcomes
   - Discuss statistical analyses (i.e., what statistical tests will be performed) and expected outcomes
   - Outline interpretation of expected results
Institutional Review Board Approval

As with any research project involving collection of data from human participants, students must obtain IRB approval before beginning their thesis study. This may be the case even if a student intends to use archival data (i.e., perform secondary analysis on a database previously collected for a different purpose). Students should work closely with their thesis chair to complete the IRB form (see http://www.txstate.edu/research/irb/index.php). Before submitting a proposal to the IRB, students are required to complete human participants training. At this time, Texas State University-San Marcos requires the training course of the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) that is available on the web at https://www.citiprogram.org/.

Practical Considerations

Please keep practical considerations and limitations on resources in mind as you plan your thesis project. First, remember that faculty members have many responsibilities and you need to consider their schedules while planning yours. This is especially the case in the summer. Most faculty are not paid in the summer, and so technically they have no Texas State duties or responsibilities during that time. Most faculty are willing to work with students over the summer, but the student should not assume that they will have unlimited access to the faculty member. Many faculty leave town or have other obligations (e.g., grant writing, publications) that must be completed during the summer. Second, it is important to remember 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 sources or try to redesign the project. Third, there are limited resources available for collecting data. In an active department, researchers must be concerned about the cost of their project not only in dollars, but also in terms of the source and number of participants. During the summer, there are very limited sources on-campus for participants. Finally, there are practical considerations and time constraints on graduation given by the Graduate College. Note that you must turn in your completed, signed-off thesis several weeks before the semester ends in order to graduate in that semester. 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 try to finish your thesis as soon as possible, preferably by the beginning of April for May graduation in your second year. Keep in mind that theses always take longer than expected, and be aware that it can be extremely difficult to organize your thesis defense during the summer months. Finishing the thesis becomes more difficult after you are out of the program and have possibly moved away.
Thesis Timeline and Important Forms

First steps:

- By the end of the Spring semester of your first year – formulate a potential thesis topic and select a committee chair and members
- If you decide to include a member on your committee who is **NOT** a faculty 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.txstate.edu/academicaffairs/pps/pps7/7-03.htm).
- Submit the Thesis Committee Selection Form to the Graduate Advisor
- Begin to review the literature in your selected “area.”
- Begin working with the thesis committee on developing the thesis research proposal

Second steps:

- Enroll in the first thesis course, PSY 5399A, in the Fall of your second year (Note: Students must select a thesis chair prior to registering for PSY 5399A)
- If you sign up for the first thesis course, PSY 5399A one semester, you MUST sign up for the second thesis course PSY 5399B in all subsequent semesters until the thesis is completed. (If you have not yet submitted your thesis proposal form, you will need to get special permission from the Graduate Advisor to register for PSY 5399B. Therefore, we **strongly recommend** that you take PSY 5399A only if you are certain that you can fulfill all requirements for submitting a proposal by the end of the semester.)
- Complete the IRB application and the Graduate College Proposed Thesis Research Form (see form at http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/Proposed_Thesis_Research.doc).

  Note: The proposed thesis project must be approved by all committee members and be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate College for tentative approval at the same time the proposed project is submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for consideration. Once the IRB approval and approval number have been obtained, they should be provided to the Dean of the Graduate College for final approval.

- Submission of the project the Institutional Review Board requires that you complete a Human Subjects Protection training module before submitting IRB application (See http://www.txstate.edu/research/irb/index.php). We recommend that you take the training program months before you are
ready to submit your thesis proposal to the IRB. Applicants who complete the training module have to submit IRB application and receive IRB approval before they can begin collecting data. The IRB application process consists of two steps (for more details visit the IRB website):

1. Complete an IRB Application Data Sheet. Wait to receive a REFERENCE NUMBER. It can take a few days before you receive an e-mail with the reference number from the IRB.
2. Submit your REFERENCE NUMBER, a consent form, surveys or instruments, a synopsis of your project and any additional documents to the IRB electronically via email. It is important to make sure that the REFERENCE NUMBER is on all materials you submit. Wait for approval.

**Third steps:**

- Plan to start data collection as soon as your thesis research is approved by the Graduate College but not later than at the beginning of the spring semester of your second year.
- Begin writing the literature review and methods section of the thesis

**Fourth steps:**

- Enroll in PSY 5399B during the spring semester of your second year.
- Analyze your data and finish the first draft of your thesis to be submitted to your committee chair. Subsequent drafts should be submitted to all committee members.
- Schedule the oral defense of your thesis by the end of the second thesis course, PSY 5399B.

*Note*: 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 PSY 5399B every Fall and Spring until you are ready to defend. You must be registered for PSY 5399B in the semester that you defend your thesis.

When you are ready to defend the following steps are highly recommended:

1. Reserve a room and time in the Psychology Building at least three weeks prior to the date of your defense. Delays in scheduling may result in a delay in your defense and subsequent graduation. If you require any a/v aids such as a projector, you must speak with the main office in advance to secure the equipment.
2. Schedule the defense with consultation with the chair of your committee. Thesis defenses will take place ONLY on weekdays.
3. Contact the Program Director to announce the time, place and date of your oral defense at least two weeks prior.
4. Provide your committee members a copy of the thesis at least one week before the defense date.
5. If the defense of your thesis falls at the end of the semester that you plan to graduate, check with the Graduate College for the deadlines (usually, the completed thesis must be submitted to the Graduate College twenty days before graduation and the thesis defended ten days before graduation).

6. At the defense, the chair of your committee must bring a comprehensive exam report to be signed by all committee members (See form at http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/Comp_Exam_Masters.doc); and you must bring:
   a. copies of your completed thesis for all committee members; and
   b. any additional audiovisual aids that you require for your presentation.

Fifth step:

- Congratulations! Now you must ensure that you have completed all forms required by the Graduate College to graduate on time, and to ensure that your thesis is bound for the university. You can view the most up-to-date regulations and deadlines on the Graduate College website http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu.
- As always, these are general guidelines. You must continually consult with your thesis committee chair on any additional requirements they may have for your successful defense. The better you stay in touch with them and the rest of your committee, the smoother the thesis process will be.

The Completed Thesis

Students should work with their thesis committee chairs to create a final copy of their thesis to be given to their committee members for comment, then provided to the department chair for final approval. This document will 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. Students should distribute the final version of the thesis to committee members at least one week before the defense date so the committee members have adequate time to review it.

Final Copies of the Thesis

Students must follow the guidelines and submission dates in the Graduate College Thesis Manual. Note that there are options for both traditional written submission as well as electronic submission. Though initial submission to the
Graduate College for review can be on non-archival quality paper, signature pages and subsequent copies must be on archival quality paper. After the thesis signatures have been obtained, one copy of the thesis should be taken to the Graduate College for review. They will contact the student with any changes that need to be made. After this copy is approved, the student should submit two copies of the thesis to the library. Additional copies may be submitted if the student wants them bound. Note that it must be on file with the library by 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday one week prior to graduation. One bound copy should be provided to the Psychology Department.

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: http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Current_Students/Graduation.html#Applying_for_Graduation

Other Important Information

Online Information about the Department, the University, and the Community

This information is included in Appendix B.

Financial Aid

FAFSA – Submit your Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible for financial aid assistance (for the 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)

Ψ For further and up-to-date information please contact the Financial Aid Office at 512-245-2315, or visit their website at http://www.finaid.txstate.edu/

Scholarships

Ψ Graduate scholarships up to $2,500 per semester are awarded competitively, March 1 is the application deadline
Contact the graduate college at 512-245-2315 or visit their website at www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/scholarships.html for the most current information.

Library and Computer Lab Hours and Locations

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

Computer locations and information about access can be found at http://www.its.txstate.edu/departments/computer_labs.html

Department Policies, Procedures, and Expectations

Policy on Selecting an Academic Track

Students are required to choose the track they intend to pursue in the program and inform the Graduate Advisor about their decision no later than the departmental orientation session for incoming Health Psychology graduate students. In case a student does not attend the orientation, he/she is responsible for contacting the Graduate Advisor to provide this information before the start of classes for the first semester of the program.

Policy on Switching Academic Tracks

Students who want to change tracks within the program must submit a written request to the Graduate Advisor. The request to switch from the Applied Research track to a Clinical Approaches Track, or from a Clinical Approaches track to the Applied Research track, must be made no later than the end the first year in the program. Note that switching tracks might require taking additional courses to meet the new track graduation requirements. A student may not switch from the Clinical Approaches + Thesis track to the Clinical Approaches Non-Thesis Track in the same semester they intend to take the Comprehensive Examination.
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 on pages 45-46 of the 2007-2009 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 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 Director of the Masters Program regarding any students having potential problems with grades. The Graduate Advisor and/or the Director of the Masters Program will meet with students in danger of making Cs or lower in their program courses.

The Graduate Advisor and/or Director of the Master's Program 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.

This policy is posted on the Department website at: http://www.psych.txstate.edu/graduate/policies.php

The Student Grade Appeals Procedures for Liberal Arts Courses can be found at http://www.liberalarts.txstate.edu/services/policies/gradeappeals.html. These procedures state:

A student who questions a grade received in a Liberal Arts course should first speak with the faculty member who assigned the grade to determine whether the two may arrive at a mutual understanding.

If a student's concerns are not satisfied after this discussion, he/she may elect to initiate procedures to appeal the grade.

The procedures that follow apply to all Liberal Arts programs except those identified below as having separate appeals processes.

1) A student must put the appeal to change a grade into writing, stating
briefly and clearly the action requested and the reason(s) for the requested change. The student must present the written appeal to the faculty member who assigned the grade in question.

2) After reviewing the student’s written appeal, the faculty member will make a decision. If the appeal is approved, the faculty member will submit a grade change form to initiate the “change of grade” process. If the appeal is denied, the student may appeal in writing to the departmental chair. Departmental chairs and the Dean or the Dean’s representative, like the faculty member, will not review an appeal that is not made in writing.

Students must state clearly the specific request being made and include a brief statement of the reasons for the proposed change.

3) After reviewing the student’s written statement and after consulting with the faculty member, the departmental chair will make a decision regarding the grade appeal.

In reviewing a student’s appeal, the departmental chair will consider whether the professor adhered to guidelines for equitable treatment and to evaluation procedures identified on the course syllabus. Appeals must focus on specific departures from guidelines listed on the syllabus.

4) If a student is dissatisfied with the departmental chair’s decision, he or she may appeal in writing to the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs in Liberal Arts, who will confer with the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts to arrive at a final decision.

Policy on Comprehensive Examination

All students in the Health Psychology Program are required by the University to take and pass a comprehensive examination in order to graduate. Students on the Applied Research or Clinical Approaches+Thesis Tracks have their Comprehensive Examination administered orally as part of their thesis defense. Students on the Clinical Approaches Non-Thesis Track are permitted to take and pass a written comprehensive examination over material from core courses. The Graduate Student Handbook in effect when the student entered the program will have a list of those core courses.

A student may not switch to the Clinical Approaches Non-Thesis Track in the same semester they take the Comprehensive Examination. See the Policy on Changing Tracks.

The written Comprehensive Examination will only be given in the Fall and Spring semesters. Students must notify the Program Director of their intent to take or
retake the Comprehensive Examination no later than the date posted by the University Registrar for applying for graduation in the Fall or Spring semester in which the student plans to take the Comprehensive Examination.

The steps in the written Comprehensive Examination process are:

- Faculty members who have taught the courses covered on the examination over the last two years are asked to provide a reading list to be posted at the end of the semester before the examination is administered.

- The faculty members then write 2 essay examination questions and return them to the Director of the Master’s Program in the month before the examination is scheduled.

- Comprehensive Examinations are given only in fall and spring semesters. Students planning on taking the Comprehensive Examination must notify the Director of the Master’s Program in writing by the date posted by the University Registrar for application for graduation that semester.

- The exam is scheduled for an entire day the month before the end of the semester.

- On the day of the examination:
  - Students report to the Department Computer Lab at 8:30 a.m.,
  - Students sign in on a numbered sign-in sheet and use their assigned number as identification on their typed answer pages. Faculty administering the examination do not observe the sign in, and a student places the sign in sheet inside a sealed envelope that is only opened by the Director of the Master’s Program after the Director’s portion of the examination is graded.
  - Students are provided 2 questions for each of the 7 sections and are given a few moments to read each then chose one question to answer. The other question is returned to the test proctor (a member of the graduate faculty or designee of the Director of the Master’s Program).
  - One hour per question is allotted in 2 time blocks (8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. & 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.)

- After the examination, the Director of the Master’s Program distributes the answers to the respective faculty members for grading.

- Grades are Pass/Fail for each section and graded questions are due to the Director of the Master’s Program no later than one week after the Comprehensive Examination is administered.
• Independent faculty member(s) may also be asked to provide a grade for a section when there is some question regarding whether the student passed that section.

• Makeup examinations will only be given under the most extreme circumstances for students with excused absences. Examples of excused absences include serious illness with a note from a physician, death in immediate family, religious holiday, etc. Makeup examinations will be given on a date and time determined by the Director of the Master’s Program.

• The Health Psychology Graduate Program Committee is informed of the grades of all students taking the Comprehensive Examination.

• Students are required to retake those sections on which a failing grade was earned at the next scheduled examination time.

• Within one month of taking it, the Director of the Master’s Program will inform students of their grades on the Comprehensive Examination and if and when they may need to retake the examination. Written notification will be provided.

• Retakes are given in the following semester. Questions will either be the one not answered on the first administration of the examination or another question written by the respective faculty members.

• Only 2 retakes are allowed.

• There are no further appeals.

This information is posted on the Psychology Department Website at:
http://www.psych.txstate.edu/graduate/policies.php

Portfolios

Students in the Master of Arts in Health Psychology Program are not required to maintain a portfolio of all papers and examinations for all courses taken. However, it might be a good idea to keep such papers and examinations to provide information to faculty and others who may write future letters of reference.
Academic and Professional Ethics

The purpose of Texas State’s graduate program in health psychology is to prepare students for professional roles in psychology, whether in counseling, research, teaching, consulting, administration, or other contexts. The professional practice of psychology is guided by the American Psychological Association’s (APA) “Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct” (APA, 2002). 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 to conform their behavior 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, and practicum placements). The complete “Ethical Principles” can be found at http://www.apa.org/ethics/. It is the student’s responsibility to consult with faculty members if he or she should have any questions about the “Ethical Principles” or about her/his behavior in relation to the “ethical principles.”

Students in Texas State’s psychology graduate program are consequently held to a higher standard of professional conduct than is required by the university’s regulations when the APA “Ethical Principles” establishes a higher standard of conduct.

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 on page 43 of the 2007-2009 Graduate Catalog at http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/07-09GCatalog.pdf. 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” (article 8.11, p. 1070; APA, 2002). 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 Psychology Department 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. 1062; APA, 2002). Consistent with Principle B and with articles 1.04 and 1.05 of the “Ethical Principles” regarding
the reporting of ethical violations (p. 1063; APA, 2002), graduate students who are aware of ethical violations on the part of other students are expected to report the violations to the Graduate Advisor or Program Director.

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, research, and practica than they did as undergraduates. To complete course and practicum and/or 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 on the Applied Research Track and those who are combining tracks should also develop an active program of research with faculty members that is reflected in publications and presentations at research conferences.

Graduate students in the Department of Psychology 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 Advisor 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. There are several specialized organizations, such as the Society for Industrial/Organizational Psychology, the Association for the Advancement of Behavior Therapy, and the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, that can be helpful to join as well. Talk to the Program Director or Graduate Advisor 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 in the department is to try to talk with the faculty member privately and non-defensively 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 Advisor and/or Program Director. Try to take care of the problem as soon as possible. Keep in mind that while the Graduate Advisor and Program Director 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).

Policy and Procedure on Failure to Meet Professional Standards

As part of an ongoing performance based assessment process, students are evaluated semiannually regarding their academic skills, practice competencies, and professional/ethical conduct. Student fitness and performance are evaluated throughout the Program by faculty members, advisors, and supervisors. The criteria used by the faculty to make professional judgments include:

- Course instructor evaluations of student’s performance in simulated practice situations,
- Supervisor evaluations of student’s performance in practicum and internship situations, and
- Student adherence to the discipline's codes of ethics.

For students pursuing licensure as a Professional Counselor, as is the practice in the Professional Counseling Program in the Department of Educational Administration and Psychological Services, the Professional Counseling Performance Evaluation Form is used to assess student performance and progress in all experiential courses (e.g., Individual Therapeutic Techniques, Practicum, etc.) but also may be used in any class in order to advise a student of deficiencies. If a student is not making satisfactory progress or is not meeting Program standards, the Department may remove the student from the Program.

Deficiencies in professional conduct include behavior that is inconsistent with the “Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct” as set forth in the current (2002) APA document and conduct which demonstrates a lack of professional integrity. Because students are often entrusted with individuals’ or organizations’ mental health and well-being and confidential or other sensitive
information, it is imperative that they demonstrate the integrity and emotional maturity and stability necessary to form professional relationships with clients, colleagues, or external agencies/organizations. Students who do not demonstrate the ability to form such relationships will be considered deficient in their professional conduct and ability, even if their academic record is satisfactory.

- If a faculty member believes that a student is not making satisfactory progress or meeting program, professional, or university standards, he or she should discuss the situation with the student.
- In the event that a faculty member or another graduate student should have concerns about a student's performance or continued matriculation in the program, the faculty member or student should notify the Graduate Program Director.
- The Graduate Program Director will notify the student of the specific concerns and of the facts that support these concerns.
- The student will be given a reasonable amount of time in which to respond to the notification and to meet with the Graduate Program Director.
- If warranted by the situation, the Graduate Program Director will attempt to work out remedial steps aimed at helping the student meet expected levels of professional conduct.
- In some instances, the Graduate Program Director may ask the Department Chair to convene an ad hoc Graduate Retention Committee and appoint three faculty members to serve on this committee, which is charged with reviewing students' performance and making recommendations to the Department Chair about students' continuation in the program.

  - In such a case, the student will be notified in writing about the purpose of the meeting and invited to attend and to provide information.
  - The committee may meet with faculty member(s), student(s), and/or other professionals directly involved with the student's situation in its deliberations.
  - The committee will notify the student of the reasons why he or she is not making satisfactory progress or meeting Program standards and will give the student the opportunity to meet with the committee to respond, to present information, and to provide witnesses to the committee.
  - After considering the matter, the committee will report to the Department Chairperson, recommending 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.
The Department Chairperson, after considering the committee's recommendations and after meeting with the student, will:

- Determine whether the student will be allowed to remain in the Program.
- In either case, the student will be notified of the Chairperson’s decision in writing within 10 working days of the chairperson’s receipt of the committee’s recommendation.

**Procedures for Withdrawing from the Health Psychology Program**

Students who are thinking about withdrawing from the Health Psychology Program are urged to discuss their concerns with faculty members they choose and with the Graduate Advisor. The faculty's and coordinator’s role is to help students make informed decisions. If a student should decide to withdraw from the program, he/she should follow the “Withdrawal Procedure” specified on page 42 of the 2007-2009 Texas State Graduate Catalog which can be seen online at [http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/07-09GCatalog.pdf](http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/07-09GCatalog.pdf)

**Procedures on Dismissal of a Student from the Health Psychology Program**

Students who are dismissed from the Health Psychology Program will receive written notification of their dismissal from the Program Director and/or the Graduate Advisor. Required paperwork will be filed with the Graduate College to bar them from registering in the future.

**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 a B average. They must also enroll in PSY 5105 Teaching Psychology for which they will receive 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 the Administrative Assistant III, Ms. Chantelle Elder.

These are employment positions and students receiving assistantships should conduct themselves in a professional manner with faculty, students, staff, and other student workers.
Appendices
Appendix A, Recommended Course Sequences
### Master’s Course Sequence by Track – Fall 2008

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Clinical</th>
<th>Clinical + Thesis</th>
<th>Clinical + LPC*</th>
<th>Clinical + LPC* + Thesis</th>
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* To sit for the LPC exam, students must take PSY 5317 and the following Counseling courses: COUN 5307, COUN 5316, COUN 5355, COUN 5366, COUN 5368, & COUN 5689

** Students will be assessed for academic readiness for PSY 5320 during the Fall of their first year. Students deemed to be underprepared will be required to enroll in PSY 5300 instead of PSY 5320 during Spring of their first year. PSY 5320 will be offered and is strongly recommended for these students during the Summer session, otherwise PSY 5320 must be taken in the Fall of the second year. PSY 5300 does not count toward the hours required for the degree.
Appendix B, Online Information about the Department, University, and Community
Appendix B

Online Information 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://catsweb.txstate.edu/catsweb/rg/soc.htm
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 Thesis Information  http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss_Info.html

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

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


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

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

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.
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/