



Charles E. Schmidt College of Science
Department of Psychology
777 Glades Road
Boca Raton FL 33431
Telephone: 954.236.1121 Fax: 954.236.1242
laursen@fau.edu

Date: 13 October 2012

Subject: Change in Course Requirements for Experimental Psychology Ph.D. degree

From: Brett Laursen, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology and Director of Graduate Training

Chair of Department of Psychology Graduate Committee

Chair of Department of Psychology

Dean of Charles E. Schmidt College of Science

Chair of University Graduate Programs Committee

Dean of Graduate College

Executive Summary of Experimental Psychology Ph.D. Degree Changes

The Experimental Psychology Ph.D. degree now requires a minimum of 80 credits with no fixed number of M.A. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation credits. Changes were made to the Ph.D. degree requirements to (a) reflect the reality that no students ever completed the program with only 80 credits, (b) specify the minimum number of thesis and dissertation credits required for graduation, and (c) increase the number of elective courses (from 2 to 3) required for graduation. The new requirements are designed so that students can complete the degree in 4 years by taking a full time (9 credits per semester) load for 4 academic (spring and fall semesters) years, plus a full time (6 credit) load for 3 summers. The typical student in the program now takes 5 years to complete the degree; most do not take a full time load during the summer because no graduate seminars are offered during the summer.

New Experimental Psychology Ph.D. catalog description

The Department of Psychology offers graduate study leading to a Doctor of Philosophy in Experimental Psychology. Students may select major and minor areas of study from five areas of psychology: behavioral neuroscience, cognition, developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology and social/personality.

Admission to Doctoral Study

In addition to meeting all of the University and College admission requirements for graduate study, applicants for the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree must meet each of the following criteria:

1. The student must have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university. It is not essential for this to be a degree in psychology.
2. The student must have a score of at least 153 on the verbal component and 152 on the quantitative component of the Graduate Record Examination.
3. The student must have a minimum 3.0 GPA in the last 60 credits of undergraduate work.
4. The student must attain approval for graduate admission from the Department of Psychology.

An admitted applicant will usually have a strong record of achievement that is higher than the minimum requirements. In considering applications for admission to the Ph.D. program, the decision of the graduate admissions committee will be based on an evaluation of a student's record and the likelihood of success in the program. The committee will consider a number of factors that include, but are not limited to:

1. The applicant's record of achievement based on GPA, GRE scores and letters of recommendation;
2. The applicant's promise for research productivity while in graduate school; and
3. The availability and willingness of a faculty member to serve as a mentor for the student.

Students admitted to the Ph.D. program will be assigned an advisor by the Department of Psychology Graduate Committee who will supervise their research and chair their M.A. thesis and Ph.D. dissertation committees. Considerable effort is devoted to matching students with advisors. As a consequence, few students change advisors. Changing advisors is not generally recommended because it slows progress toward graduation. The best time to change advisors is after completion of the M.A. degree but before admission to doctoral status. Students who change advisors must do so in consultation with the Chair of the Department of Psychology Graduate Committee. Students without an advisor cannot continue in the program.

Course Requirements

Ph.D. students will complete the M.A. degree requirements as described above.

A total of 90 credits is required to complete the Ph.D. program. Up to 36 hours of credits (30 credits of coursework + 6 thesis credits) that were used to satisfy the M.A. degree requirements

are typically counted toward the Ph.D. degree requirements. No more than 6 M.A. thesis credits may be transferred to satisfy the doctoral degree requirements.

A total of 4 quantitative courses (10 credits) is required. All doctoral students must take the 3 credit Experimental Design 1 course (PSY 6206) or the 3 credit Experimental Design 2 course (PSY 6207), but they need not take both. The 1 credit Experimental Design 1 Lab course (PSY 6206L) is required, but this requirement may be waived with the written approval of the advisor. All quantitative courses outside of the Experimental Design sequence must be approved by the Chair of the Department of Psychology Graduate Committee. For students who take both Experimental Design 1 and Experimental Design 2, the third 3 credit quantitative course must be a course offered by the Department of Psychology (or another unit in the College of Science).

Students must take 5 courses (15 credits) in their major area.

An additional 6 courses (18 credits) are required. Of this total, students must take at least one regularly offered Department of Psychology seminar in each the following areas of concentration (excluding the student's major area): (1) behavioral neuroscience; (2) cognition; (3) developmental; and (4) social/personality. Any single course will satisfy the requirement of only one area (e.g., Seminar in Personality and Social Development can fulfill the developmental or social/personality area requirement, but not both). Courses taken outside of the Department of Psychology must be approved by the student's advisor and the Chair of the Department of Psychology Graduate Committee.

A minimum of 9 Ph.D. dissertation credits (PSY 7980) are required. Students must register for dissertation credits starting the semester after they are admitted to candidacy and during each subsequent regular academic (fall and spring) semester.

An additional 32 credits are required, which may be filled with electives, dissertation credits, Advanced Research in Psychology (PSY7978), and Directed Independent Study (EXP 6908).

Taken together, doctoral students must complete a minimum of 10 graduate courses (30 credits) in the Department of Psychology (excluding thesis and dissertation credits, advanced research in psychology, and directed independent study).

Students are required to maintain a grade point average of "B" (3.0) or better. Courses with grades of "C+" or lower will not satisfy program requirements.

Transfer Students

Students admitted to the Ph.D. program may transfer up to 30 graduate credits taken at other institutions. Transfer courses must be relevant to the student's program of study and must be approved by the student's advisor and the Department of Psychology Director of Graduate Studies. Requests to transfer credits into the student's area of concentration are not typically approved.

Doctoral students who have completed an M.A. thesis at another university or in another department at FAU may substitute this thesis for the M.A. thesis as part of the requirement for admission to doctoral candidacy if it is approved by the student's advisor and the Chair of the Department of Psychology Graduate Committee.

Admission to Doctoral Status

Admission to doctoral status requires successful completion of Ph.D. coursework, successful completion and approval of a written M.A. thesis, the formation of a doctoral dissertation supervisory committee, and approval of a written dissertation proposal by the doctoral dissertation committee.

In addition, comprehensive exams must be completed before a doctoral student is admitted to candidacy. Comprehensive exams are designed to demonstrate a breadth of knowledge in the student's area. A student's comprehensive exam committee must include at least three members of the graduate faculty in the FAU Department of Psychology. The comprehensive exam committee is chaired by the student's advisor. The minimum comprehensive exam includes an eight-hour, closed-book essay exam, which may be spread across two separate days. The student must complete at least two written essays for each member of the committee. Additional evaluation material (e.g., more essays, short answer questions, oral questions) may be requested by the comprehensive exam committee. Exams are graded as follows: pass, fail or conditional pass (a pass grade contingent on successful demonstration of competence not evident in the initial exam). A unanimous pass vote from the committee is required to complete the comprehensive exam degree requirement.

Dissertation Advisor and Dissertation Committee

The doctoral dissertation supervisory committee must consist of at least five members. At least half of the committee must be graduate faculty in the Department of Psychology, including the committee chair. At least one member of the doctoral committee must be a faculty member from outside of the Department of Psychology. Committee composition must be approved by the Chair of the Department of Psychology Graduate Committee.

A central requirement for the Ph.D. degree is submission and defense of a dissertation based on original work in an area of specialization acceptable to the student's doctoral dissertation supervisory committee. The dissertation must be approved by the doctoral dissertation supervisory committee, the department chair and the Graduate College.

Doctoral dissertation supervisory committee approval of a written dissertation proposal must precede the experimental work required for the dissertation. Approval of the dissertation proposal must be obtained during a meeting of the full doctoral dissertation supervisory committee. Additional meetings of the doctoral dissertation supervisory committee should be held at least once a year to review the student's progress toward the degree.

Approval of a written dissertation during a full meeting of the doctoral dissertation supervisory committee is required. A publicly announced departmental lecture summarizing the Ph.D. dissertation research is expected upon successful defense of the dissertation.

Annual Review

All Ph.D. students will be evaluated by the entire graduate faculty during an annual meeting. Students who receive two consecutive unsatisfactory evaluations will be subject to dismissal.

Current Experimental Psychology Ph.D. catalog description

The Department of Psychology offers graduate study leading to a Doctor of Philosophy in Experimental Psychology. Students may select major and minor areas of study from five areas of psychology: behavioral neuroscience, cognition, developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology and social/personality.

Admission to Doctoral Study

Minimum requirements for admission to the Ph.D. program are the same as for the M.A. program. However, an admitted applicant will usually have a strong record of achievement that is higher than the minimum requirements. In considering applications for admission to the Ph.D. program, the decision of the graduate admissions committee will be based on an evaluation of a student's record and the likelihood of success in the program. The committee will consider a number of factors that include, but are not limited to:

1. The applicant's record of achievement based on GPA, GRE scores and letters of recommendation;
2. The applicant's promise for research productivity while in graduate school; and
3. The availability and willingness of a faculty member to serve as a mentor for the student.

Students admitted to the Ph.D. program will be assigned an advisor by the graduate affairs committee who will supervise their research and chair their M.A. thesis and Ph.D. dissertation committees. Considerable effort is devoted to matching students with advisors. As a consequence, few students change advisors. Changing advisors is not generally recommended because it slows progress toward graduation. The best time to change advisors is after completion of the M.A. degree but before admission to doctoral status. Students who change advisors must do so in consultation with the graduate coordinator. Students without an advisor cannot continue in the program.

Admission to Doctoral Status

Admission to doctoral status requires successful completion of Ph.D. coursework, successful completion of a comprehensive exam, successful completion and approval of an M.A. thesis, the formation of a doctoral dissertation committee and approval of a written dissertation proposal by the doctoral dissertation committee.

Comprehensive exams must be completed before a doctoral student is admitted to candidacy. Comprehensive exams are designed to demonstrate a breadth of knowledge in the student's area. A student's comprehensive exam committee must include at least three members of the graduate faculty in the FAU Department of Psychology. The comprehensive exam committee is chaired by the student's advisor. The minimum comprehensive exam includes an eight-hour, closed-book essay exam, which may be spread across two separate days. The student must complete at least two written essays for each member of the committee. Additional evaluation material (e.g., more essays, short answer questions, oral questions) may be requested by the comprehensive exam committee. Exams are graded as follows: pass, fail or conditional pass (a pass grade contingent on successful demonstration of competence not evident in the initial exam). A unanimous pass vote from the committee is required to complete the comprehensive exam degree requirement.

The doctoral dissertation committee must consist of at least five members. At least half of the committee must be faculty in the Department of Psychology, including the committee chair. At

least one member of the doctoral committee must be a faculty member from outside of the Department of Psychology. Committee composition must be approved by the graduate affairs committee.

Course Requirements

Ph.D. students must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 80 credits. Students must complete a minimum of 10, 3-credit graduate courses in psychology, maintaining a GPA of "B" (3.0) or better. Courses with grades of "C+" or lower will not satisfy program requirements. Students must complete three quantitative courses plus a statistics lab. The statistics lab may be waived with the written approval of the advisor. All doctoral students must take Experimental Design 1 or Experimental Design 2, but they need not take both. All quantitative courses outside of the Experimental Design sequence must be approved by the graduate affairs committee. Students who take both Experimental Design 1 and Experimental Design 2 must take their third 3-credit quantitative course from the Department of Psychology (or other units in the College of Science). Students must also complete five courses in their major area (i.e., behavioral neuroscience, cognition, developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology or social/personality) and one course in each of the other areas of concentration, excluding evolutionary psychology. The remaining credits may be obtained through dissertation credits, master's thesis credits, directed independent study in psychology and elective courses, which may include non-psychology courses approved by the student's advisor and the graduate affairs committee. Students must register for PSY 7980 (Dissertation) during the semester they are admitted to doctoral candidacy and during each subsequent regular academic semester (fall and spring) of attendance.

Students admitted to the Ph.D. program may transfer up to 30 graduate credits taken at other institutions. Transfer courses must be relevant to the student's program of study and must be approved by the student's advisor and the graduate coordinator. Requests to transfer credits in the student's area of concentration are not typically approved.

Doctoral students who have completed an M.A. thesis at another university or in another department at FAU may substitute this thesis for the M.A. thesis required for admission to candidacy if it is approved by the student's advisor and the graduate coordinator.

Dissertation Requirements

A central requirement for the Ph.D. degree is submission and defense of a dissertation based on original work in an area of specialization acceptable to the student's doctoral committee. The dissertation must be approved by the doctoral committee, the department chair and the Graduate College.

Supervisory committee approval of a written dissertation proposal must precede the experimental work required for the dissertation. Approval of the dissertation proposal must be obtained during a meeting of the full doctoral dissertation committee. Additional meetings of the doctoral dissertation committees should be held at least once a year to review the student's progress toward the degree.

A publicly announced departmental lecture summarizing the Ph.D. dissertation research is required.

All Ph.D. students will be evaluated by the entire graduate faculty during an annual meeting. Students who receive two consecutive unsatisfactory evaluations will be automatically discontinued from the program.