



# UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS®

**Experimental Program Handbook**

**(Revised August, 2024)**

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## Welcome and Purpose of Handbook

### Welcome to the Experimental Training Program!

The Ph.D. program in Experimental Psychology provides a core base of knowledge upon which students specialize in cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, or neuroscience. Our program is rigorous, collegial, and student-centered.

The goals of the program in experimental psychology are to teach students to be able to:

1. Understand research design and associated inferences that can be drawn (experimental method, correlational method, quasi-experimental, etc.)
2. Develop the broad and concrete skills necessary to pursue an area of research specialization (e.g., interacting with participants, collating, analyzing data, write clearly using APA style, etc.)
3. Convey psychology to others in an easily accessible way (knowledge translation)
4. Know and apply ethical and professional standards in research (e.g., open and transparent practices).
5. Demonstrate ability to build a research program, as well as disseminate science and/or seek research-related funding.

### Purpose of Handbook

This handbook describes key guidelines to help you progress successfully through the experimental program. No matter how comprehensive, a handbook cannot cover every situation you encounter. Feel free to talk to your faculty advisor or the Director of Experimental Training if you need help or have questions that are not answered in this handbook.

This handbook is a supplement and does not replace other handbooks – you are required to be aware of the content of this and other handbooks, including the [Department Handbook](#) and the [Graduate Student Handbook](#). The Department Handbook details general policies and procedures that pertain to students, staff, and faculty in the Department, and the Graduate Student Handbook provides important information pursuant to Graduate School policies and procedures that govern student progress from application to the conferral of the graduate degree. This handbook is designed to complement these other handbooks and to expand on the policies and procedures specific to the experimental program. You are responsible for knowing the contents of these handbooks, as they will facilitate your timely progress through the program. If you have any questions as you review this material, please ask your advisor, the Director of Experimental Training, or the Chair of the Department of Psychological Science.

**Changing the Handbook.** The policies and recommendations contained in these handbooks are considered to be in effect at the time you start the program and to remain in effect throughout your tenure in the program. As the program updates, adds, or modifies policies and procedures, you will be informed of these via memo/email. Sometimes changes in rules, policies, and

procedures are suggested by students. If you have an idea about how to improve an aspect of the program, please discuss it with your faculty advisor, the Director of Experimental Training, or your experimental student representative(s).

The handbook will be updated regularly (i.e., on a yearly basis). Proposed handbook changes will follow this procedure:

- (1) Any person affiliated with the program (faculty, staff, student) can suggest a handbook change by emailing the Director of Experimental Training.
- (2) The change and the rationale for the change will be presented to the Experimental Training Committee for comments, amendments, and a vote.
- (3) Approved changes will be integrated into the revised handbook, with the expectation that they will be implemented in the following academic year.

If changes to the handbook are made during your tenure in the program, you may choose to adopt the newer version of the handbook. Please inform the Director of Experimental Training and your advisor, in writing (e.g., email), if you choose to adopt a newer version of the Experimental Program Handbook during your training.

### **Experimental Training Committee (ETC)**

**Purpose and Scope.** The Experimental Training Committee shall have as its primary purpose the education and training of graduate students pursuing a degree in Experimental Psychology. In addition, the ETC shall have a firm commitment to provide quality education and training for all aspects of the program. The purview of the ETC shall include, but not be limited to, the specific functions listed below:

- (1) development and evaluation of the program leading to a degree in Experimental Psychology;
- (2) selection, admission, and orientation of new graduate students; and
- (3) evaluation of the progress of students enrolled in the program. This shall include keeping accurate and complete records on the progress of these students as they progress through the program.

**Membership of ETC.** The ETC shall consist of all faculty members within the Department of Psychological Science who are involved in training graduate students in Experimental Psychology. Faculty members and their research interests are delineated on the department webpage. In addition, a student representative to the ETC shall be elected to a one-year term by the graduate students to represent the students at ETC meetings. The student representative shall have one (1) vote on all matters except personnel matters and those matters dealing directly or indirectly with the evaluation of specific students.

**Meeting Schedule.** The ETC typically meets once each month from September to May, inclusive, for the purpose of conducting business. Meetings shall be held on Mondays at 4:00, usually on the first Monday of a given month. The location of meetings is determined by the Director. Additional meetings can be called by the Director or by a consensus of 50% of the ETC.

**Director of Experimental Training (DET).** The Director shall be elected by the Experimental Training Committee for a three-year term.

**Scribe.** Each year ETC may elect from the body of the ETC a scribe to take minutes at the meetings. Ideally, this duty should rotate so that each faculty member will serve in this capacity once before any member serves twice. The Director shall be exempted from this duty.

**Duties of the Director of Experimental Training.** As chief administrator of the ETC, the Director shall be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the functions of the ETC enumerated above are implemented and followed through. In addition, the duties of the Director shall include, but not be limited to, the specific functions listed below:

- (1) preparation of agendas, call and chair meetings of the ETC;
- (2) serving as academic advisor to all incoming experimental students until they have chosen a thesis advisor;
- (3) planning and organizing the orientation for the new students;
- (4) keeping accurate and complete records on the experimental graduate students as they progress through the program;
- (5) keeping accurate notes of the meetings and other deliberations of the ETC; and
- (6) delegation of the responsibilities and duties outlined above either to committees or to individuals.

Any duties not covered in the above list that are to be assigned to the Director must be approved by a majority of the ETC.

**Admission to the Experimental Training Program.** The Experimental Training Committee will be responsible for establishing procedures for soliciting applications from prospective students and for selection and recruiting of candidates. The Director of Experimental Training in consultation with the Department Chair shall be responsible for supervising and coordinating this process. Formal offers of admission shall come from the Director of Experimental Training.

### **Departmental Committees: Student Opportunities for Engagement**

In addition to the Clinical and Experimental training committees, the Department has numerous standing committees. Most of these include student representatives. See the Department Handbook for more details; a list is included below. Graduate students interested in serving on these committees can self-nominate during the graduate student elections, typically held on or

near the first week of classes each Fall semester. Student representatives are elected for one-year terms. Students are encouraged to serve on committees to contribute to the development and quality of their own training and to learn about academic governance. Indeed, for committees not listed below, student representation is the norm. That is, students will be invited by the chair of the committee (in consultation with the committee members and the ETC student representative) to be a part of all ETC committees unless the ETC stipulates otherwise.

**Graduate Student Co-Presidents.** Graduate students elect two co-presidents (typically one from each graduate training program). Co-presidents attend full faculty meetings, which are typically held on the third Monday of every month from 4-5 PM. Co-presidents represent graduate students at these meetings, including providing their perspective on policies, procedures, and motions under consideration. Matters of personnel or concerning specific students are not discussed with co-presidents present. They may also be tasked with canvassing their stakeholders about specific topics or issues. Co-presidents may bring concerns of the graduate students to the Department Chair for discussion among full faculty.

**Experimental Training Committee (ETC) Representative.** Graduate students elect one ETC representative; this individual attends ETC meetings, which are typically held the first Monday of every month from 4-5 PM. ETC representatives represent experimental students at these meetings, including providing their perspective on policies, procedures, and motions under consideration. Matters of personnel or concerning specific students are not discussed with ETC representatives present. ETC representatives are often tasked with canvassing experimental students about specific topics or issues. ETC representatives may bring concerns of the experimental students to the DET or to the ETC directly for discussion. ETC representatives also assist with graduate student recruitment and our graduate interview day, coordinating with applicants, current students, and faculty.

**Diversity Committee.** The department has an active Diversity Committee that is tasked with regularly assessing the climate of the department and developing and implementing policies and activities that promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. One graduate student from each training committee is elected for a one-year term to serve on the diversity committee.

**Howells Committee.** The department has a committee to oversee an endowment, known as the Marie Wilson Howells fund. This committee makes decisions about how to spend monies from this endowment, including reviewing and approving funding requests from faculty and students. One graduate student is elected to this committee per year (program affiliation is open).

**Other Roles for Graduate Students.** In addition to committee representatives, graduate students may be elected or appointed to other key positions in the department. In these diverse roles, graduate students serve the important function of representing the program and

providing important input, especially from their perspective as a student in the program and department.

*Experimental Liaison.* The DET regularly gets requests from potential applicants about the Experimental Training Program. The Experimental Liaison is asked to meet with prospective applicants and others who have questions about the program. The Experimental Liaison is elected by graduate students and represents the program at the request of the DET. For instance, the Experimental Liaison may meet with high school students from underrepresented groups attending recruitment events at the University.

*Search Committee Student Representative.* When the department is hiring new faculty (e.g., tenure-track lines), a hiring committee typically comprised of three faculty and one student representative is appointed by the Department Chair. Graduate students may be offered opportunities to serve on hiring committees. In this role, they review applications, attend job talks and dinners with the candidates, coordinate the graduate student lunch meetings, assist with scheduling and transportation, and collect and provide feedback from graduate students and others about each candidate, presenting their findings to the full faculty.

*Ad-hoc Committee Representative.* Occasionally the Department Chair or DET may appoint an ad-hoc committee of faculty and graduate students to explore specific issues or for a specific purpose. For instance, ad hoc committees have been developed to examine research credit utilization and to develop new program policies. Graduate students are often asked to serve on these ad hoc committees. Specific duties are dependent on the committee's primary task or objective.

## **Curriculum**

The first two years of the program are focused on research and coursework, culminating in a written thesis and oral defense of an empirical project in the second year. Completion of 30 semester-hours of courses (including 6 semester-hours of PSYC 600V ["Master's Thesis"] and 6 semester-hours in student's chosen concentration) and completion of the thesis and defense satisfy the requirements for a non-terminal master's degree. The students then develop a Concentration Area Project (CAP) to further specialize their learning. At this time, some students also teach their own classes as an instructor of record. The remaining time is devoted to continuing their program of research, including the doctoral dissertation.

Students in the Experimental Training Program do not have a prescribed list of courses. Instead, the training program is designed to give them in-depth experience in statistics and methods; expertise in a subfield of psychology (i.e., a concentration) of their choosing, to promote specialization; and some flexibility in the form of elective classes, to either broaden exposure or create greater specialization. More specifically, the students are required to complete the following:



- Three *statistics/methods* courses (9 credit-hours), including PSYC 5133 ("Inferential Statistics") and PSYC 5143 ("Advanced Descriptive Statistics"), the latter two to be taken in the first year of the program.
- Three courses (9 credit-hours) in a *concentration*, with 6 credit-hours to be completed prior to the M.A. degree being granted; concentrations include social, developmental, neuroscience, cognitive, and other topics to be considered and approved by the ETC on an as-needed basis.
- Two courses (6 credit-hours) of *electives*.

At least three courses (9 credit-hours) that count toward the 24 credit-hours specified above must be graduate-level psychology seminars selected from among PSYC 6323 (Seminar in Developmental Psychology), 6343 (Seminar in Quantitative Methods), 6353 (Seminar in Learning/Memory/Cognition), 6373 (Seminar in Personality and Social Psychology), and 6413 (Seminar in Physiological Psychology). Additional options available for fulfilling the concentration and elective requirements include but are not limited to the following

- PSYC 4123: Perception
- PSYC 5013: Advanced Developmental Psychology
- PSYC 5063: Advanced Social Psychology
- PSYC 5113: Theories of Learning
- PSYC 5123: Cognitive Psychology
- PSYC 6133: Advanced Behavioral Neuroscience
- PSYC 5033: Psychopathology
- PSYC 5163: Personality: Theory & Disorder

All of the courses listed above are considered ETC courses. Other courses (e.g., in the clinical program or in another graduate department) may be taken to fulfill requirements with prior approval of the ETC. No more than one course taken to fulfill the requirements may be a non-ETC course without prior approval of the ETC.

For the purpose of fulfilling concentration requirements, all courses will have concentration tags associated with them, with tags designated by the ETC. A concentration should be declared in writing (e.g., by sending an email to the Director of Experimental Training) prior to the end of a student's first semester in the program.

*Other coursework:* Students are required to meet the Graduate School degree requirements for the doctorate, including a minimum of 72 graduate semester-hours, 42 taken after completion of the M.A. degree. They should tailor their coursework to their training goals. Some of the courses listed below will go toward the semester-hour total, and students can take additional courses as needed (including PSYC 611V, *Individual Research*) to fulfill degree and enrollment requirements.

- **Research Practicum:** During their first year of studies, students are required to take a 1-credit Research Practicum (PSYC 523V) in the fall and spring. The function of the research practicum is to foster early competence and involvement in research. Indicators of this involvement and competence include: (a) knowledge of ethical and professional standards in research; (b) a broad knowledge about how to build a research program, publish scientific papers, and seek research-related funding, (c) an understanding of academic and non-academic career trajectories, and (d) how to thrive in the graduate school setting (e.g., time management, adaptive coping). This research experience will culminate in a presentation about of the student's research (approximately 20 minutes) presented to the faculty and graduate students in the department. It is the responsibility of the Director of Experimental Training to coordinate the research practicum.
- **Teaching Seminar:** At some point in their training, most students take a 3-credit Teaching Seminar (PSYC 602V). This course is typically taken after students defend their master's thesis, and is a requirement for independent instruction.

**Master's and Dissertation Credits:** Students must also take 6 hours of PSYC 600V prior to defending their master's thesis, and 18 hours of dissertation credits (PSYC 700V) prior to defending their dissertation. Students must be enrolled in at least 1 credit during the term in which they defend their dissertation. Check the Graduate School webpage for the most up-to-date policies.

Finally, students will be expected to participate in regular meetings with faculty supervisors throughout their training to discuss research literature in the student's area of emphasis and to participate in regular meetings with other students and faculty about current research projects.

Students also are expected to exhibit good departmental citizenship and engagement. Expectations for engagement include attending regular departmental colloquia (including bi-monthly Focus Area Research meetings); job talks and other scholarly events; participating in interview day with PhD program applicants; and participating in interviews with applicants for faculty positions.

**Course Evaluations.** Each semester students are given the opportunity to evaluate their graduate courses and training experiences by participating in the course and instructor evaluation procedures as described by the Provost's Office (<https://provost.uark.edu/course-evaluations.php>)

**Course Transfers & Waivers.** Prior graduate coursework will not be transferred automatically for credit at UARK.

*Course Waivers.* Some courses (e.g., statistics; social psychology; developmental psychology; behavioral neuroscience; etc.) may be considered for waivers. To waive out of a required graduate course, students must submit their syllabus (or syllabi) to the head of that course

committee along with a formal request to waive out of that specific course. This can be done via email at any point after the student is admitted to the graduate program. Heads of course committees for graduate courses can be found in the Department Handbook. The course committee will review the syllabi and request, then render a decision and communicate that to the student (usually within a week). The decision could be (a) full waiver of the course; (b) denial of waiver; or (c) a decision to waive but require the student to attend portions of the course or the lab (i.e., to remediate any units or content that was not present in the original course the student took).

*Appealing Course Waiver Decisions.* Students in the Experimental Training Program have the right to appeal a course committee waiver decision. To do so, students should provide a written rationale for their appeal, as well as any supporting resources (e.g., course work), to the course committee chair (listed in the Department Handbook). The course committee chair will then convene the course committee to evaluate the student's appeal. One of the three outcomes listed above will then be applied to the student's request.

*Procedures for testing out of courses.* Students may believe that previous coursework taken prior to entry to the graduate program in Psychology may have provided sufficient exposure to the content for a course. Therefore, students may seek to test out of one of more courses.

Each non-seminar course has a committee of three or more faculty, all of which are listed in the Department Handbook. To initiate the process for testing out of a course, a graduate student petitions the appropriate course committee chairperson in writing with justification for testing out of the course. This petition must be received by the course committee chairperson at least three (3) weeks before the close of the semester preceding the course offering. The exception is entering students in the graduate program who can petition up to the first day of class of the semester offering the course.

Students must enroll in the class and attend until their test performance has been determined. Each course committee is responsible for determining the nature of a comprehensive written test which must be taken at least one (1) week prior to the start of the semester in which a course is offered. Entering students may take the test the first week of classes. A unanimous pass is required for testing out of a course. The committee may request an oral exam on the basis of written performance. The final results of testing, including evaluation of the student's performance, are written by the committee chairperson and distributed to the student, her/his advisor, and the Department Chair, no later than one week after testing. No appeal procedure is available; the decision of the course committee is final. The student is permitted only one try at testing out of a particular course. A student on academic probation is not permitted to test out of a course.

**Master's Thesis.** Students must have completed 30 semester-hours of courses, including 6

semester-hours in their chosen concentration, along with a master's thesis to receive the M.A. degree.

A master's thesis (or M.A. thesis equivalent) project is required of all doctoral students and ideally should be completed by the end of the second year of study. A thesis equivalent project, required of students entering the doctoral program with a Master's degree in Psychology that did not involve completion of an empirically-based thesis, is defined as a piece of research that is comparable in process, scope, and magnitude to a M.A. thesis (including an oral defense before a three-person committee). However, a project completed as a thesis equivalent will not be submitted to the Graduate School and Library as a degree requirement.

Students are not permitted to register for thesis hours unless they have a thesis advisor and have submitted the appropriate paperwork to the Graduate School. Appendix A includes the list of required paperwork for this and other milestones in the program. The thesis advisor must be at least a Level II Graduate Faculty status as defined by the Graduate School. Students must register for a minimum of 6 hours of master's thesis credit (PSYC 600V) prior to their thesis defense. A minimum of three (3) persons must serve on the master's thesis (or thesis equivalent) committee.

*Post-M.A. Review.* At the first regularly scheduled meeting following a student's successful defense of the master's thesis (or master's equivalent research for those students admitted with an M.A. or M.S. degree in psychology from another program that did not require an empirically-based thesis), the ETC will evaluate the student's overall performance in the program. Inadequate performance could lead to a recommendation for probation and/or dismissal.

*Thesis Waiver.* Students admitted to the program who have completed a master's thesis can petition the ETC to accept their thesis and waive the master's thesis requirement in the program. Only empirical master's theses will be considered for a thesis waiver; theses that were literature reviews/non-empirical will not be considered. To request a thesis waiver, send your master's thesis to your advisor and the DET. If appropriate, the DET will add the request to the next ETC meeting agenda. The ETC then discusses and votes on the request. If the ETC approves the thesis waiver, the student may begin working on their concentration area project (CAP) right away. If the thesis waiver is not approved, the student will be expected to complete an empirical master's thesis in the program.

*Concentration Area Project.* After successful completion of the master's thesis defense and the Post-M.A. review (see above), each student should form an advisory committee that is responsible for helping develop a doctoral specialization project. This project serves as the student's comprehensive examination, and at minimum, consists of an in-depth, independent and integrative project.

Students should work with their mentors and advisory committee to ensure the scope of the project is satisfactory to meet the requirements of doctoral candidacy. Examples include (but are not limited to): a conceptual analysis that often serves as the springboard for student's dissertation work, mastery of a methods-related competency central to the student's area of expertise, or a meta-analytic or systematic review of an area of research. Students may include other pieces to their third-year project, including training opportunities and other matters of professional development consistent with their long-term goals. This project usually takes the good part of a year, and culminates with submission of a document (e.g., theoretical paper, research grant, empirical research paper) to their committee and an oral examination. Successful completion and defense of the third-year project is a prerequisite to doctoral candidacy.

Please see Appendix A for relevant paperwork required for the CAP. The Chair of the Advisory Committee must be in the student's declared program (experimental) and hold Level I Graduate Faculty status as defined by the Graduate School; in addition, at least one member of the committee must be from the Clinical Training Committee. A minimum of three (3) persons must serve on the Advisory Committee (unless Level I faculty status has been approved by the Department, adjunct faculty may be appointed to an Advisory Committee only as a fourth member of the Committee.). The Chair of the Department must recommend the membership of the committee to the Graduate School, and the Dean of the Graduate School formally appoints the student's Doctoral Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee is responsible for the remainder of the student's academic program and will determine the nature of the candidacy examination when the student has completed the components of the CAP. The duration of time the CAP should last a minimum of two full semesters or one full semester plus the 12-week summer session. In practice, some students may not complete the M.A. thesis or be able to schedule their doctoral specialization project committee meeting at times consistent with the recommended academic schedule. In such cases, the CAP committee should expect the student to devote an equivalent amount of calendar time to the work as would be the case if the student had completed the two full semesters of work (approximately 36 weeks). The Chair of the Doctoral Program Advisory Committee is responsible for placing in the student's permanent file a written record of all decisions reached by the Committee and forwarding a copy to the director of the student's training committee.

**Dissertation.** Each doctoral candidate must complete a minimum of 18 semester hours (PSYC 700V) for the doctoral dissertation (a University requirement). After the student has passed the candidacy examination, a student must register for at least one (1) hour of dissertation per semester for each semester and summer session until the work is completed. A candidate working on the dissertation during the summer, either in residence or away from campus, must register for a minimum of one (1) hour. For each semester in which the student fails to register without approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, a registration and payment for three (3)

hours will be required before the degree is granted. Students should review current registration [policies](#) and [form/procedures](#) pertinent to the dissertation. Students are not permitted to register for dissertation hours unless they have a dissertation committee chairperson. If a student expects to propose their dissertation after the start of a semester, the student should, with approval of his or her advisor, initially enroll in PSYC 611V and then complete an administrative drop/add form to change the credit to PSYC 700V after the dissertation proposal has been accepted. The dissertation chair may be chosen from the entire faculty and must hold Level I Graduate Faculty status. A minimum of three (3) persons must serve on the dissertation committee; unless Level I faculty status has been approved by the Department, adjunct faculty may be appointed to a Dissertation Committee only as a fourth member of the Committee. In addition, at least one member of the committee must be from the Clinical Training Committee.

### **Student Evaluations**

Evaluations of general student progress are the responsibility of the Experimental Training Committee, whereas evaluation of coursework is delegated to instructors and evaluation of progress toward milestones (e.g., the Master's thesis) is delegated to the appropriate committees. The ETC retains the overall responsibility for the integration of evaluation information and assuring the communication of that information to the students. To ensure that this principle is carried out, the following evaluation procedures are prescribed.

**Course Grades.** At the end of each semester, in addition to submitting grades via UAConnect, instructors will submit the grades of all graduate students with pluses and minuses appended to the Director of Experimental Training. The following grade related policies are in effect:

- (1) Grades below B require remedial work:
  - (a) A grade of B- requires either supplemental work or retaking the course as an unofficial audit, at the discretion of the instructor.
  - (b) A grade of C+ or below requires that the course be retaken (either officially or as an unofficial audit). For Departmental records the average of the two grades in the course will be used in computing the student's grade point average. If a grade of B- or below is obtained when retaking a course, the retake does not count, and the course must be retaken again.
- (2) Three grades of C+ or below in required courses will trigger an aperiodic review in which the ETC considers whether to place the student on probation. [See the Dismissal Policy below for details.]
- (3) Any student with a GPA of 2.85 or less will be warned of the possibility of academic dismissal.

- (4) Students with an 8.0 (B) average or less in all required courses at the time of the post-M.A. review will be warned of the possibility of academic dismissal. [See the Dismissal Policy below for details.]
- (5) Incompletes (**N.B.** For Departmental purposes, an "I" in a graduate course does not automatically turn to "F" after twelve weeks.) will not be considered in (2) and (3) above. A course for which an Incomplete was originally assigned will be included in the student's grade point average at the time when the instructor assigns a final grade.
- (6) Students should maintain a grade point average of better than B at all times. Poor grades or other forms of poor performance in required courses (e.g., multiple incompletes, slow progress through the curriculum, etc.) could result in the student being placed on probation by the Experimental Training Committee. [See the Dismissal Policy below for details.]
- (7) Syllabi for graduate courses should specify the criteria for assigning all letter grades, including any + or – grades.

**Review of Student Progress.** Student progress will be reviewed by the Experimental Training Committee (ETC), at minimum, at least once a year. The Director of the ETC will notify students at least one (1) week in advance of a periodic review by the ETC in order to encourage students to attend the review. Students and faculty should make every effort to be available for these meetings.

**Annual Review.** The supervisor of each student's research activity will submit a written report of progress to the Director of Experimental Training (DET) at the end of the spring semester. This report is to contain a statement specifying what the student has accomplished during the academic year and what strengths and weaknesses the student has exhibited in the research enterprise. Prior to submission to the DET, the research supervisor will review the report of research progress with the student who will sign the progress report, indicating their knowledge of its content.

The ETC will review the progress of its students on all training criteria to identify exceptional performances. These evaluations should be conducted at the end of the Spring semester. An exceptional performance may occur on any criterion (e.g., exceptionally high or low grades, superior or inadequate progress on thesis research, superior or poor performance in practicum, etc.) and requires written comment by the Experimental Training Committee (e.g., in the student's summary progress evaluation). Typically during the week immediately following commencement, the Experimental Training Committee will review all aspects of each student's cumulative progress. This information will be fully discussed and integrated and a written summary progress evaluation will be provided to the student.

*Aperiodic Reviews.* In addition to the regularly scheduled reviews of student progress described above, the ETC will be responsible for conducting formal reviews at irregular intervals for any reason covered by existing dismissal procedures.

*Post-M.A. Review.* At the first regularly scheduled meeting following a student's successful defense of the master's thesis (or master's equivalent research for those students admitted with a M.A. or M.S. degree in psychology from another program that did not require an empirically-based thesis), the ETC will evaluate the student's overall performance in the program. Inadequate performance could lead to a recommendation for probation and/or dismissal [See the Dismissal Policy for details.]

### **Dismissal Policy**

The policy on dismissal is detailed below. This policy must be followed whenever a student is being considered for dismissal from the graduate program. In addition, students should note that the Graduate School allows a maximum of seven years to complete the Ph.D. following matriculation into the program (see [TIME EXTENSION](#)). If a student has not completed all requirements for the degree within the seven-year time period, the student may not be automatically dropped from the program. There is no formal provision within the procedures of the Graduate School for graduate students to take a "leave of absence" from their graduate training or to "stop" the seven-year "clock."

**Procedures for Consideration for Dismissal.** Dismissal policies are detailed on the Graduate School website:

<https://catalog.uark.edu/graduatecatalog/objectivesandregulations/#academicdismissalacademicprobationandannualreviewtext>

The Experimental Training Committee (ETC) has the right to dismiss students for due to failure to make adequate academic progress or engagement in illegal, fraudulent, unethical, or unprofessional behavior as defined in any of the university codes or policies pertaining to academic and research integrity. Except in rare cases where the infraction is of sufficient severity to warrant immediate action, students will be provided with written warning letter prior to dismissal, including a clear statement about what must be done within a specified time period to alleviate the problem. At this point, the student is considered to be on probation and will remain on probation until the required remedial activities stipulated in the warning letter are completed. A copy of this warning letter must be filed with the Graduate School. These expectations must be reasonable and consistent with expectations held for all students in the program. If the student does not meet the requirements within the time frame specified, a hearing to consider the recommendation for dismissal, utilizing the procedures contained below, will be conducted. Any faculty member may request that the Director of Experimental Training (DET) schedule an aperiodic review in which the details of the problem, warning letter,



and statement of student requirements to alleviate the problem (e.g., remediation plan) are discussed by the ETC.

Dismissal proceedings may be initiated by any member of the faculty or body of the faculty, such as the students' thesis committee, advisory committee, or dissertation committee, by notification of the Director of Experimental Training (DET) along with the reason for which the recommendation is being made (e.g., low grades, failure to make adequate academic progress, research misconduct, unethical behavior). A hearing by the Experimental Training Committee (ETC) will be scheduled for the purpose of reviewing the recommendation within two (2) weeks (ten working days) of the initial recommendation. The Director shall then notify the student in writing, at least one (1) week (five working days) in advance, that a hearing that may involve dismissal from the training program is to take place and provide the basis upon which such consideration may be made. The student will be invited to present information on his/her own behalf bearing upon the issue(s) to be considered.

A quorum for the purpose of a dismissal hearing shall consist of not less than 2/3 of the ETC Faculty. A full and open discussion of the basis for the recommendation along with the full record of the student's performance throughout graduate training shall be considered during the dismissal hearing. Following the discussion, a vote of the ETC shall be taken in which the majority of faculty voting yea or nay will determine the action of the committee. Such actions may include: (a) a specific reparative or remedial procedure, (b) placement on probation for a specific period of time at the end of which a hearing for dismissal will be conducted, (c) the recommendation for dismissal being denied, or (d) dismissal from the program.

In the event that the ETC votes to dismiss a student from the Training Program, the full faculty of the Department of Psychological Science will automatically review the action of the committee at the next meeting of the Department Faculty. The purpose of this review shall be to ensure that Program and Departmental procedures were followed in reaching the decision. The DET shall notify the Department Chair of the action of the ETC in writing and provide a copy to the student in question. The Chair shall then notify the student of the meeting date and time at which the review shall be held and invite the student's participation in the review. A quorum of two-thirds of the faculty will be required to conduct the review. A discussion by the Departmental Faculty of the procedures employed by the ETC in reaching its decision will ensue, being recorded fully and maintained separately from the faculty minutes. Following the discussion, a vote will be taken to either affirm or disaffirm the ETC's compliance with Program and Departmental procedures. A majority of those voting yea or nay will be required to make this determination. Should the voting affirm that the appropriate procedures were followed in reaching the decision, the student will be dismissed from the ETC.

Should the voting disaffirm that Program and Departmental procedures were followed in reaching the decision, the Departmental Faculty shall recommend to the ETC those steps it deems necessary for procedural compliance.

If the student then wishes to appeal either the ETC's decision or the decision of the Departmental faculty, the Academic Grievance Procedure for Graduate Students established by the Graduate School of the University of Arkansas shall apply.

### **Background Checks**

Students may be requested to undergo additional background checks based on requirements of external training agencies or when deemed necessary by the DET or Department Chair. Documented offenses revealed by these checks will be evaluated by the ETC in consultation with the student and relevant members of the department faculty and university administration. If documented offenses are deemed substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of training, students might be prohibited from participating in certain training experiences (e.g., independent teaching).. Minor traffic violations will not disqualify students from these training experiences. Offenses occurring as an enrolled student may be a violation of the University's policies for student standards and conduct (<https://accountability.uark.edu/>) and might result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Experimental Training Program and expulsion from the university. If students believe the results of a background check are erroneous in any way, they may request a second background check at their own expense. Students who wish to appeal a denial of participation in training activities may do so in writing to the Chair of the Department of Psychological Science within 30 days of receiving notification.

## Appendix A: ETC Paperwork guide

All italicized forms (or templates for them) may be found on the [Graduate School's website](#). Students are responsible for checking the website to ensure you're using the most up-to-date forms. Students are also responsible for the boldfaced forms below; advisors are responsible for nonboldfaced forms (but you should make sure that they're taken care of!). The Graduate Program Administrative Assistant in the PSYC department can help send forms to the Grad School office. Grad School contact & location: 479.575.4401, gradinfo@uark.edu, Gearhart Hall 213. It is good practice to keep copies of all signed forms in case one or more were to be lost in processing. Finally, if you identify an update to this sheet, please let the Director of Experimental Training know as soon as possible.

### Forms to submit every year

Form	Details & rationale	Due	Who gets it?
<b>CV, Student Summary Sheet</b>	we need a copy of your CV to help in annual reviews summary sheet tracks progress through program	typically Dead Day in the spring semester	Director of Experimental Training (DET; uploaded to student folder on Box)

### First-year forms

Form	Details & rationale	Due	Who gets it?
<b>first-year abstract</b>	title & abstract (100-200 words) for your 1 <sup>st</sup> -year talk	one week before 1 <sup>st</sup> -year talks	DET (by email)

### Master's degree-related forms

Form	Details & rationale	Due	Who gets it?
<a href="#"><i>Master's Committee</i></a>	lets the Grad School know who's on your committee, so they can ensure they have graduate status; be sure to check the Master's <i>Thesis</i> Committee box	ideally before proposing; no later than <u>three months</u> before your thesis defense (but don't wait that long)	Graduate School (one original + one copy to the DET, uploaded to Box), signed by your committee members & the chair
<a href="#"><i>Master's Thesis Title</i></a>	provides a title for your thesis (indicating that you've got a topic your advisor has approved) and provides evidence that the IRB has approved your research	before proposing, as soon as you have a topic/title; no later than three months before your thesis defense (don't wait that long)	Graduate School (one original + one copy to the DET, uploaded to Box), signed by your advisor and the chair
<a href="#"><i>Graduate school precheck process</i></a> *Not a form, a process	allows the graduate school to complete checks required prior to final upload to ProQuest	submit a copy of your thesis to the Graduate School to allow for a check of formatting as early as possible and at	send your Microsoft Word or PDF document to gradtad@uark.edu expect 0-2 business day turn around for pre-

		least <i>two weeks</i> before defense. Continue the pre-check process until formatting is stamped approved; multiple checks are usually necessary	checks during low volume time ; 3-5 business day turn around for pre-checks during high volume time (the 2-3 weeks prior to submission deadlines) for larger files, use the University's drop box at <a href="http://its.uark.edu/">http://its.uark.edu/</a>
memo/email indicating outcome of proposal meeting	your advisor should let the DET know when your proposal was, who your committee members are, and how the meeting went	after your proposal, sooner rather than later	DET (one copy, digital or paper)
<b>Graduation Application for MA</b>	lets the Grad School know you intend to complete your masters that semester	varies by semester; usually around the middle of the semester	completed in UAConnect under "degree audit" (if MA not listed in UAConnect, contact Graduate School)
Master's Record of Progress *Not a form, a process	lets the Grad School know your committee approved your thesis and you passed your defense	after your oral defense	Email program director with thesis defense date so they can 1) complete degree certification and 2) click "dept/advisor approved" in UA Connect Degree Audit system
signature page on thesis	verifies in the thesis itself that the committee approved the thesis	with your thesis (see below)	with your thesis (see below)
<a href="#"><u>Intellectual Property Disclosure</u></a>	discloses invention of commercial interest or lack thereof	with your thesis	with your thesis
<a href="#"><u>Thesis/Dissertation Submission Form</u></a> & <b>Master's Thesis</b>	the thesis is submitted electronically to the Grad School; see <a href="#"><u>Guide for Preparing Theses and Dissertations</u></a> for details	after your oral defense; deadlines vary from semester to semester (sooner is better than later)	electronic submission

### Concentration-Area-Project (CAP)-related forms

Form	Details & rationale	Due	Who gets it?
<a href="#"><u>Doctoral Committee</u></a>	names your CAP committee, which must have at least 3 members, 1 from the clinical program; lets the Grad School know who's advising you for your candidacy exam, which in PSYC is the defense of your CAP; be sure to	when you form your CAP committee (after your post-master's review, which the ETC will do at its first meeting after your thesis defense)	Graduate School, 213 Gearhart (one original + one copy to the DET, uploaded to Box), signed by your committee members & the chair

	check the Doctoral <i>Advisory Committee</i> box		
memo/email indicating outcome of proposal meeting	your advisor should let the DET know when your proposal was, who your committee members are, and how the meeting went	after your proposal, sooner rather than later	DET (one copy, digital or paper)
<a href="#">Candidacy Exam Notification Form</a>	you should let the Graduate School know that you have completed your candidacy exam and all other work to be admitted to candidacy; this will need your advisor's and the chair's signature	ASAP after your defense of your third-year project, at least <u>one year</u> before defending your dissertation	Graduate School, 213 Gearhart (one original + one copy to the DET, uploaded to Box), signed by your advisor and the chair

### Dissertation-related forms

Form	Details & rationale	Due	Who gets it?
<a href="#">Doctoral Committee</a>	lets the Grad School know who's on your committee, so they can ensure they have graduate status; be sure to check the Doctoral <i>Dissertation</i> Committee box	before proposing, after being admitted to candidacy (i.e., defending your third-year project)	Graduate School (one original + one copy to the DET, uploaded to Box), signed by your advisor and the chair
<a href="#">Doctoral Dissertation Title</a>	provides a title for your dissertation and evidence that you've got an approved topic and IRB approval	before proposing, after admission to candidacy as soon as you have a topic/title; <b>no later than three months before your defense</b>	Graduate School (one original + one copy to the DET, uploaded to Box), signed by your advisor and the chair
<a href="#">Graduate school precheck process</a> *Not a form, a process	allows the graduate school to complete checks required prior to final upload to ProQuest	-initiate formatting pre-check process by emailing paper to the Graduate School at <a href="mailto:gradtad@uark.edu">gradtad@uark.edu</a> <i>prior to defense</i> -schedule defense date (ideally at least 2 weeks prior to the final submission deadline) -doctoral students must <u>announce</u> defense at least two weeks before defense date	<a href="mailto:gradtad@uark.edu">gradtad@uark.edu</a>
memo/email indicating outcome of proposal meeting	your advisor should let the DET know when your proposal was, who your committee	after your proposal, sooner rather than later	DET (one copy, digital or paper)

	members are, and how the meeting went		
<b>Graduation Application for PhD</b>	lets the Grad School know you intend to complete your PhD that semester	varies by semester; usually around the middle of the semester	completed in UAConnect under "degree audit"
<a href="#"><u>Dissertation Defense Announcement</u></a>	this is an online form; you must let the Grad School know the date, time, and location of your defense, and provide a title	at least two weeks (10 business days) prior to your defense	online form
Doctoral Record of Progress *Not a form, a process	lets the Grad School know your committee approved your dissertation and you passed your defense	after your oral defense; Confirm that the DET is completing your Degree Audit and Record of Progress	Email program director with thesis defense date so they can 1) complete degree certification and 2) click "dept/advisor approved" in UA Connect Degree Audit system
signature page on dissertation	verifies in the thesis itself that the committee approved the thesis	with your dissertation (see below)	with your dissertation (see below)
<a href="#"><u>Intellectual Property Disclosure</u></a>	discloses invention of commercial interest or lack thereof	with your dissertation	with your dissertation
<a href="#"><u>Thesis/Dissertation Submission Form</u></a> & <b>Dissertation</b>	the dissertation is submitted electronically to the Grad School; see <a href="#"><u>Guide for Preparing Theses and Dissertations</u></a> for details	after your oral defense; deadlines vary from semester to semester (sooner is better than later)	electronic submission
<a href="#"><u>Survey of earned doctorates</u></a>	NSF survey, no other rationale provided	after your oral defense; deadlines vary from semester to semester (sooner is better than later)	electronic submission