

Timeline for C&BS students (updated 10/14)

Cognitive Students: This cognitive area time line is your roadmap to remaining in good standing, which is necessary to assure eligibility for continued support (i.e., stipend and tuition scholarship) and continuation in the program. You should be in close communication with your mentor at all points in your graduate career concerning your progress. Typically, the C&BS area provides feedback to each student at the end of each academic year that will take into account your progress in the program, your development as a researcher, your contributions to the research program of your home laboratory, and your performance as a teaching assistant and/or instructor. Included below in the present document is a detailed time line, the C&BS newly approved course requirements, a course checklist, and some informal descriptions of potential formats for the preliminary exam.

COGNITIVE AREA TIME LINE: Every admitted student who remains in good standing is eligible for five years of funding (assistantship plus tuition scholarship, including health benefits as per specification by the Graduate School). In order to remain in good standing, each student must complete the program requirements according to the following schedule. Use this as a guide along with your mentor and faculty advisory committee(s). Throughout your graduate career, it is essential that you maintain a good working relationship with your mentor as you progress through the formal and informal aspects of your training.

First-year project. First-year students present their first year projects in CogLunch near the end of the spring of Year1.

Masters Thesis Committee. The Masters Committee will consist of three faculty members (including the student's mentor and at least one additional faculty member in the C&BS area).

Master's Thesis Proposal Presentation. The empirical research that will constitute the Masters Thesis must be finalized at the latest by the beginning of Year 2. The thesis proposal can be presented to the student's committee either at a meeting of the student with the student's thesis committee or at a CogLunch meeting at the end of the student's first year or very beginning of the student's second year. A hard copy of the Powerpoint (or equivalent) of the Thesis proposal presentation, signed by each member of the student's committee, must be filed with the graduate secretary as soon as it is approved.

Master's Thesis Defense. The final written version of the Master's Thesis, accepted by the student's committee, and accompanying paper work must be submitted to the Graduate School for the May degree deadline of the student's second year. (Note: the deadline dates imposed by the grad school change every year). A copy of the Thesis must be given to all members of the student's committee and Psychology's graduate secretary at least two weeks prior to the defense. Additionally, a public notice of the defense must be posted. This is done through Psychology's graduate secretary. Defense of the Masters thesis in the presence of the student's committee is public, and thus open to all faculty, students, and interested individuals. The Master's Thesis must be a written document in the form of a publishable paper (but the research that constitutes the Masters does not necessarily have to be sufficient for publication). Students must be registered for at least one credit of Thesis Research (PSYC 599) in the semester that they defend their Thesis.

Course Complete status. When students have completed all required courses other than PSYC 699 (Dissertation Research), they should see the graduate secretary with an unofficial copy of their transcript. The secretary will 'certify' that the student is Course Complete (CC), which will subsequently allow the student to maintain 'full-time' status while registering for only one credit hour/semester and, importantly, reduces semiannual student fees to be paid by the student by approximately 91%. Note that students who are CC or ABD are still expected to attend and participate in Cognitive Lunch, although they will no longer register for it.

Preliminary Examination. Preparing for the preliminary examination should be an ongoing process, and reflect ongoing reading of the literature throughout the student's graduate training. The preliminary examination is meant as a capstone learning experience as much or more than as an assessment tool. A prelim committee consists of three faculty members including the student's mentor and at least one other member of the C&BS faculty. The student and committee are to meet before 9/15 of Year 3 for final agreement of the topics, format, and completion date(s) for the exam. The C&BS program dictates no specific content or format for the exam. Rather, content and format are tailored individually for each student, although students and prelim committees are advised to make part of the prelim preparation relevant to the student's likely dissertation topic. After the initial meeting of the student and the student's prelim committee at which content and format of the prelim are established based on the individual student's needs, the student is to provide the committee with a document that summarizes the content, format, and timing of the preliminary examination. Formal approval of this document can be through a meeting or e-mail as the committee chooses. All parts of the preliminary exam, including any retaking of oral components or revision of written components, must be satisfactorily completed and approved by the committee by 9/15 of Year 4. In addition, students should be aware that faculty members may not be available to serve on the preliminary exam committee during the summer months. The occasional student who fails prelims on the first attempt will ordinarily be given a chance at remediation as specified by the student's committee which might include a second prelim or retaking parts of the first exam with a deadline to be specified by the student's committee, but in no case will the deadline be more than 90 days past the student's being informed that remediation is required and the nature of that remediation. If a student fails the second taking of prelims, the student will be dismissed from the program. There is a document devoted to the preliminary examination in C&BS that all students are urged to read when they begin planning their prelim exam.

Dissertation Committee. The Dissertation Committee will consist of four faculty members including the student's mentor and at least one additional faculty member in the C&BS area, as well as an External Examiner who should be knowledgeable in the area of the dissertation. The external Examiner must not be a member of the Binghamton Psychology faculty and must not have collaborated with the student or mentor in recent years. The external examiner serves as the fourth member of the student's Dissertation meeting and must be present (or have a two-way audiovisual link) at the actual defense. The student's committee, after consultation with the student, sends their nomination of an external examiner to the Director of Graduate Students in Psychology, who comments on it and then submits it to the Graduate School. Actual appointment of external examiners is done by the Graduate School. Nominations for external examiner must be submitted to the DoGS at least a month prior to the planned defense, but can be submitted as early as when the proposal is being evaluated. The latter allows the student to benefit from input from the external examiner throughout the dissertation research rather than simply have the external examiner receive the completed dissertation cold soon before the defense.

Dissertation Proposal Presentation. A formal presentation by the candidate to the Dissertation committee for approval of the proposed Dissertation project must take place by 3/31, Year 4. The Dissertation Proposal is a written document that must be given to the committee at least two weeks before the student's presentation. Upon approval of the proposal by the committee, the student must file a copy of the proposal with Psychology's graduate secretary.

Dissertation Defense. A copy of the Dissertation must be given to all members of the student's committee and Psychology's graduate secretary at least three weeks prior to the defense. Additionally, a public notice of the defense must be posted. This is done through Psychology's graduate secretary. The actual defense of the Dissertation is a public event. Students must be registered for at least one credit of Dissertation Research (PSYC 699) in the semester that they defend their Dissertation. The PhD is not complete until all dissertation committee members and the DoGS have signed the necessary paperwork and a version of the dissertation accepted by the committee has been successfully submitted to the Graduate School.

Notes: The various deadlines stated above are firm. However, given truly extenuating circumstances, a student, with endorsement by the student's advisory committee, may petition the area in writing for an extension of specific deadlines. Any such petition must be submitted prior to the relevant deadline and must include a proposed contract that specifies how the student will meet the other deadlines. The petition must be approved by the Cognitive Area Faculty. Approval of a petition should not be normally expected nor can it alter the five-year limit for state funding.