

I. Master's Degree Requirements:

- A. Completion of appropriate course work as defined by the student's area (Behavioral Neuroscience, Clinical, or Cognitive). Students are to fill out the area course check-list (with grades & semester taken), attach a transcript from the Registrar's office, and give these to the graduate secretary at the time you are filing for a Master's degree. The forms can be obtained from the Graduate Secretary.
- B. An approved Master's Thesis proposal on file (signed by the committee). The format differs among the areas.
- C. A Declaration of Candidacy for Graduate Degree form must be filed the semester the degree is to be awarded (<https://www.binghamton.edu/grad-school/resources/graduation/graduate-application-for-degree.html>)
- D. An approved Masters Thesis Defense Form (obtained from the Graduate Secretary's office) must be filed. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that this form is given to the graduate secretary and that the master's thesis document is available to the public at least 10 days prior to the defense date (the committee requires a minimum of 2 weeks). When the defense is completed the student is to have the back of the form filled out by the committee chairperson (or advisor) and obtain the appropriate signatures before giving it to the graduate secretary.
- E. An e-copy of the approved Masters Thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School and sent to the student's committee members. A hard copy with committee signatures must be submitted to the Graduate School for binding. The bound copy required by the department will be delivered directly to the department.
- F. A recommendation for award of the Master's Degree form must be signed by the Director of Graduate Studies in Psychology. In order for the Graduate Director to sign the recommendation for award of the Master's Degree, you must give the Graduate Director the following items:
 - 1. An approved (signed) Master's Defense Form (see D above)
 - 2. A transcript & checklist (see A above)
 - 3. The Recommendation for Award of Degree form must be filled out and signed by the committee Chair before the Director of Graduate Studies signs the form.
- G. Continuous registration is required, including the semester (fall, spring, summer) in which final degree requirements are completed.

II. B. Ph.D. Degree Requirements:

- A. Completion of appropriate course work for the student's area (Behavioral Neuroscience, Clinical, Cognitive, or Behavioral Science). Students are to fill out the area's course check-list (with grades & semester taken), attach a transcript from the Registrar's office, and give these to the graduate secretary at the time you are filing for a Ph.D. degree.

Notes:

1. Required course work is determined by each area (see check-lists on web (<http://psychology.binghamton.edu>)).
 2. Obtaining a Minor is now optional. If a student chooses to have a minor, the student's Ph.D. committee must approve the courses with a memo outlining the courses to be taken.
- B. Successful completion of the Preliminary Examination, with the signed Preliminary Examination form being given to the graduate secretary for filing.
- C. After steps A and B are completed, a Recommendation for Admission to Candidacy for Doctoral Degree form should be filled out, signed by the Director of Graduate Studies in Psychology, and given to the graduate secretary.
- Note:* This (steps A, B and C) advances the student to all-but-dissertation (ABD) status which reduces student fees.
- D. An approved Ph.D. Dissertation proposal must be signed by the student's committee and given to the graduate secretary for filing.
- E. A Declaration of Candidacy for Graduate Degree form is to be filed at the beginning of the semester in which the degree is to be awarded (for deadlines and this form, see: <http://gradschool.binghamton.edu/cs/enrollstud.html>).
- F. An approved Ph.D. Dissertation Defense form must be filed. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that this form is given to the graduate secretary and that the Ph.D. dissertation document is available to the public at least 10 days prior to the defense date (the committee must receive it a minimum of 3 weeks prior to defense date; 1 month is recommended). When the defense is completed, the student is to have the back of the form filled out by the committee chairperson (or advisor) and obtain the proper signatures before giving it to the graduate secretary.

- G. An e-copy of the approved Ph.D. Dissertation document must be submitted to the Graduate Office and sent to the student's committee members. A hard copy with committee signatures needs to be submitted to the Graduate School for binding. The required bound copy will be delivered directly to the department.
- H. A Recommendation for Award of Doctoral Degree form signed by the Director of Graduate Studies in Psychology must be given to the graduate secretary. In order for the Graduate Director to sign off on the Recommendation for Award of Doctoral Degree form, you must give the Graduate Director the following items:
1. An approved (signed) Ph.D. Dissertation form (see F above)
 2. A transcript & checklist (see A above)
 3. The Recommendation of Award of Degree Form must be filled out and signed by the committee before the Director of Graduate Studies signs the form.
- I. Continuous registration is required, including the semester (fall, spring, summer) in which final degree requirements are completed.

III. Exemption Policies:

- A. Course Exemption. The student must provide a written petition to the Director of Graduate Studies. Criteria include:
1. A student has taken an equivalent graduate course. Provide a syllabus and transcript displaying the grade earned with the written request.
 2. If a student feels he/she has mastered the material in another manner (e.g., a sequence of courses), provide both the syllabi and course grades.
 3. The student may request to take an equivalency exam which will be administered by the teaching faculty on a case-by-case basis (but not more frequently than twice annually).
- A written response (exemption or denial) will be provided to the student with copies sent to the student's file (via graduate secretary) and the student's advisor.
- B. Course Requirement Substitution. Substitution of a course requirement must be fully justified and approved by the advisor, Area Head, and the graduate committee. A primary reason for substitution is **research relevance** – a seminar course, or other content course may be more related to the student's research interest than a prescribed course. The following procedures are to be followed if a student wants to make a substitution in the distribution requirements.

A letter from the student that states the following:

1. The reason for the request, which outlines the relevance of the course substitution to the student's career.
2. A statement of support from the student's advisor.
3. The substitution must match or exceed the required course in number of credits.

The graduate committee will meet to review the criteria and inform the student in writing of the decision of the committee.

Note: Some distribution courses are offered on an every other year basis. This requires students to plan ahead and not assume substitutions will be approved.

- C. Masters Thesis Exemption. The student should submit a written petition to waive the requirement to the area faculty (at least 3 faculty must approve).

Student must provide a Master's document (or foreign equivalent) from another institution to a selected committee of three faculty appointed by the Area Head.

The faculty will read, review, and discuss whether the document is of sufficient quality and appropriate focus to be considered equivalent to a Binghamton University Psychology Master's Thesis.

A written response (exemption or denial) will be provided to the student by the committee, signed by the advisor, and filed in the student's folder (give to graduate secretary).

IV. Thesis and Dissertation Issues:

(See also: <http://gradschool.binghamton.edu/handbook.htm>)

- A. Proposal & Approval. Both the Masters thesis and Ph.D. dissertation require an initial proposal document and meeting. For the thesis, this takes slightly different forms for each area (see area Master's proposal rules). Prior to collecting the majority of the data (obtaining pilot data is acceptable) for either research project, the student must write and orally defend the thesis or dissertation proposal. For the dissertation, this document must include an introduction and detailed methods section written in APA format (see below). Pilot data may also be presented and discussed. The written proposal must be approved by the student's committee (see below) and an approved document put in the student's folder.
- B. Format. The ultimate goal of the Masters thesis and Ph.D. dissertation is to have it submitted for publication in peer-reviewed journals.

However, unless other arrangements are made with the student's committee, the dissertation should contain broad introduction and discussion sections that are more general than those found in published articles. The format accepted by the Binghamton University Psychology Department is stated in the APA Publication Manual. Students are expected to use the manual to guide their writing style. Exceptions to the APA format (i.e., Medical Science format) must be approved by the student's thesis or dissertation committee.

C. Members. For a Master's committee the student must choose (in consultation with the advisor) three members of the Binghamton University faculty (including the faculty mentor) of whom at least two come from within the Psychology Department. The dissertation committee requires more diversity: a dissertation committee must contain at least three Binghamton University Psychology faculty members (at least two from the student's area) plus at least one member who holds an appointment outside the department (see dissertation committee statement on the next page). The outside member must hold a Ph.D. If the person does not have a primary faculty appointment in another Binghamton Ph.D. program, a request for approval of the member must be obtained from the Vice-Provost of the Graduate School. Outside committee members often come from other universities.

D. Dissertation Committee.

1. Chair: A faculty member with a regular academic appointment at the rank of assistant professor or higher from the department awarding the degree.

Purpose: To guide all stages of the project including formulation of the proposal, data collection and analysis, as well as writing the dissertation.

2. Department representatives: At least two additional faculty members with academic appointments from the department awarding the degree. Individuals with adjunct, research, or teaching professorships granted by the Psychology Department as their sole academic appointment are acceptable departmental representatives.

Purpose: To provide (a) expertise and a comprehensive appraisal of the proposal and final document, (b) a broader representation from the faculty of the candidate's major, (c) critical review of the thesis document.

3. Outside representative: One faculty holding a PhD or equivalent degree that holds an academic appointment at the rank of assistant professor higher from a department or university other than the department awarding the degree. The name of this individual must be sent to the Graduate School for approval several months prior to the dissertation defense. Nonacademic professionals must be approved by the Area Head, Director of Graduate Studies, and the Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

Notes:

a. Individuals under the direction of Binghamton faculty in the Psychology Department (research staff w/PhD) cannot serve as outside members.

b. Outside members do not need to be part of the proposal committee.

Purpose: To ensure the dissertation meets high academic standards and uniformity in the standards across departments and universities, and to provide an outside point of view – a different prospective.

E. Time lines.

1. Masters Thesis: Students are expected to develop a Master's thesis proposal by the beginning of the fall semester of their second year of enrollment. An earlier time frame is encouraged. Students are expected to defend the Master's thesis by the end of their second year of enrollment. Students who have not completed their Master's thesis by the end of their second year will be placed on probation for funding. Students are expected to give committee members a copy of the final document—*that has been approved by the mentor*—a minimum of two weeks prior to the defense date.
2. Qualifying Examination: Students are expected to form a qualifying examination committee at the beginning of their third year in the program. Such committees must include at least three members of the department's Ph.D. faculty. Specific rules for qualifying examinations differ among areas. Qualifying examinations should be completed by the end of the student's third year and surely no later than the end of the student's fourth year.

Students failing to successfully complete their qualifying examination by the end of their fourth year will be placed on probation and may not be eligible for further funding.

3. Ph.D. Dissertation: Students are expected to develop a Ph.D. dissertation proposal by or before the fall semester of their 4th year of enrollment. The goal of the department is to have students defend during the spring semester of the fourth or at the latest by the end of the fifth year of enrollment. Students who have not completed their dissertation by the end of their fifth year will be ineligible for further funding from the University. Students are expected to give committee members a copy of the final document—*that has been approved by the mentor*— a minimum of three weeks prior to the defense date.

V. Academic probation and dismissal from program:

- A. Course failure. A course grade of C or F in any graduate required course is failure.

Action: The student is placed on probation. A letter outlining the probation will be written by the Director of Graduate Studies and sent to the student as well as placed in the student's file.

1. Probation is removed when the student has passed the course.
2. A course must be retaken the next time it is offered. The student must pass the course during this second attempt. If the student is unable to complete the course or fails the course, the student will be terminated from the program.
3. The student may not fail (C or F) in any other course during probation. If the student fails another course, the student will be terminated from the program.

Notes:

- a. *When a student fails a course, it is the instructor's decision whether the student only needs to pass a competency exam or whether it is in the best interest of the student to repeat the course.*
- b. *Faculty must send a list of graduate students who failed a course to the Graduate Director via e-mail at the time grades are turned in.*

- B. Unable to maintain a GPA of 3.0. A student performs marginally if the student's overall GPA is below 3.0.

Action: The student will be placed on probation for one year. A letter outlining the probation will be written by the Director of Graduate Studies and sent to the student as well as placed in the student's file.

1. Probation is removed if the student is able to achieve satisfactory grades (B or above) for one year and GPA is raised to 3.0 or higher.
2. If the student is unable to improve his/her GPA the student will be terminated from the program.

C. Failure of Qualifying Examination. The department's goal is to have students pass their qualifying examination ideally after three years of matriculation and surely prior to completion of the student's fourth year of graduate studies.

A student will be put on probation if:

1. the qualifying examination requirement is not satisfied by the end of the fourth year of study. The student will be required to take the qualifying examination within a specified time. If the qualifying examination is not passed at this time, the student will be terminated from the program.
2. the qualifying examination is failed. The qualifying examination committee will determine the course of action and if remediation is an option. The specific requirements and time for completion for remediation will be given to the student in writing. If the remediation attempt is unsuccessful, the student will be terminated from the program.

Note: Faculty must notify the Area Head of students that are not progressing towards successful completion of their qualifying examination or have failed the examination. The Area Heads are to notify the Graduate Director via e-mail with a course of action determined by the qualifying examination committee. A letter will be sent from the Director of Graduate Studies to the student regarding the committee recommendations.

D. Unsatisfactory scientific progress. If a student fails to show progress in research endeavors or potential he/she will be put on probation for one semester.

If the student fails to meet the research goals determined by the mentor and area faculty, the student will be dismissed from the program and department.

Note: The faculty advisor is to discuss student's research failures with the area faculty, determine a plan of action and notify the Director of Graduate Studies. A letter will be sent to the student from the Director of Graduate Studies outlining a course of action.

- E. Unethical behavior. Scientific fraud and other unprofessional actions (such as sexual harassment, discrimination, violence, teaching failures), including those related to clinical issues (see clinical handbook) can result in immediate dismissal from the program.

VI. Approved leaves of absence from the Department of Psychology:

A. Leave of Absence. Under exceptional situations, students may apply for a *Leave of Absence*. Students on leave are excused from the registration requirement during the period of the leave. Leaves are normally granted for six months with an extension of up to one year. A *Leave of Absence* is granted only in exceptional circumstances, such as illness or other unusual personal hardship, and requires detailed justification. *Leaves of Absence* are not granted to students who wish to absent themselves to undertake thesis or dissertation research elsewhere. Requests for *Leaves of Absence* should be submitted one month prior to the semester for which the leave is requested.

Requirements:

1. Discuss with advisor the reasons and strategy for a leave of absence and return.
2. Meet with Area Head to formalize in writing the goals and time frame for returning to full-time status in a document. The student and the Area Head should sign this document.
3. Forward the signed document and the formal "Leave of Absence Form" (obtained from graduate school) to the Director of Graduate Studies.
4. The Director of Graduate Studies will review and discuss the document with the Area Head and student. The document will be put into the student's file. The "Leave of Absence Form" will be forwarded to the Graduate School.

VII. Permanent withdrawal from the Department of Psychology:

Students who withdraw from all courses for which they are registered at the University must follow a formal withdrawal procedure if they wish their record to indicate good standing. Absence from class does not constitute due notice of withdrawal. Withdrawals are initiated through the University Registrar's Office and can be accomplished by submitting a letter to the Graduate School as well as notification of the Director of Graduate Studies. No grades are recorded for students who formally withdraw within the first two weeks of the semester. Students who withdraw to enter military service are granted a full tuition refund for the semester if no academic credit is received.