GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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Revised August 2019
PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

The graduate program in psychology is designed to prepare scholars for entering scientifically oriented research and/or teaching jobs. To this end, the program requirements for the Master's and Ph.D. degree have two major goals: 1) to provide a broad-based, high-level exposure to scientific psychology, and 2) to provide in-depth experimentally-oriented knowledge of an area of psychology.

The graduate program's course-work and milestone requirements have been constructed to consider the student's professional development and to foster a successful research career. Effective written communication is an essential research skill. As such, one of the main objectives of the graduate program focuses on effective written communication of scientific research. To achieve this objective, students receive extensive feedback on writing from personalized faculty committees.

1. Written communication — students will gain facility in written scientific communication.
2. Oral communication — students will gain facility in oral scientific communication.
3. Synthesizing psychological research literature — students will gain facility in understanding scientific research from theoretical and methodological perspectives.
4. Independent scientific research — students will move toward conducting independent and peer-collaborative scientific research.
5. Statistical competence — students will gain statistical competence in techniques common to psychological research.
6. Professional visibility — students will learn fundamentals of promoting and responding to the broader research community about their work.
7. Teaching competence — students will learn fundamentals involved with teaching courses in psychology

All students are expected to be full-time and actively involved in research throughout their graduate studies.

ADMISSIONS: PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Students are admitted to the Ph.D. program, which is comprised of Masters and Ph.D. components. Students admitted with Bachelor's degrees enter the Masters component. After completing the Master's degree, the student must request admission to the Ph.D. portion of the program via a letter to the Director of Graduate Studies. The decision to admit a student to the Ph.D. portion is made by a majority vote of the department faculty. Students may be admitted with a Master's degree from another institution and receive advanced standing pending departmental approval and after completion of the first-year requirements (statistics and first-year project). To determine advanced standing, students must have done an empirical Master's thesis project. They must meet with their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies, Ayanna Thomas, to determine which course and program requirements remain to be met. Students who did not complete an empirical Master's thesis will be admitted to the Master's portion of the program. Students with an outside M.S. degree must demonstrate statistical competence, as determined by the graduate statistics instructor.

TRANSFERRING GRADUATE CREDITS

Students entering with some graduate credits, but without a Master's degree, may transfer one graduate level course toward the M.S., unless that course has already counted for a degree. Graduate courses taken elsewhere may be used to waive a program requirement, but must be approved by the department graduate committee. Application for course transfer must be made to Student Services, after approval by the Director of Graduate Studies.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Milestone Requirements for Graduate Program

The graduate program is based around five annual milestones that provide a strong research-oriented background and a means of measuring student progress. The first two milestones fit into the master's degree requirements and the others correspond with the Ph.D. requirements.
Courses taken outside of the Psychology Department to fulfill the 200-level course requirement will require prior approval from the graduate committee. The request should be emailed to the DGS prior to taking the course. If possible, the request should include the course syllabus.

The Master’s thesis is to be completed by the end of the second year. A written proposal outlining this thesis should be submitted and orally defended at minimum of six months prior to the project’s defense date (see dates listed below). Timely completion of the Master’s thesis by the end of the second year thus requires that student propose their thesis by the preceding November for a May degree.

Admission to the Ph.D. portion of program
Admission to the Ph.D. portion of the program is based on satisfactory progress in meeting Master’s degree requirements (class performance, laboratory experience, TA and/or RA performance) and scholarly potential. Scholarly potential refers to the degree to which students have demonstrated their commitment to experimental psychology, and their ability to critically evaluate significant issues in psychology through research, writing, discussion, and teaching. Ways in which such potential may be demonstrated include showing initiative and active involvement in research; writing and publishing research articles, presenting research in departmental settings and at professional conferences, writing grant and/or fellowship proposals; attending colloquia and professional meetings; and organizing or promoting activities that aid intellectual exchange.

The student must write a letter, to be given to the Director of Graduate Studies, requesting admission to the Ph.D. portion of the program and describe their fulfillment of the MA degree requirements and their scholarly potential. This application letter will be presented to the full faculty. The applicant’s advisor will discuss the applicant’s progress at a department meeting, and the faculty may examine annual student evaluation letters when considering these requests. A positive vote by a majority of faculty is required for admission. The faculty will consider these admission requests only once during the fall semester and once during the spring semester. Application letters must

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- Year 1: First year project
- Year 2: Propose Master’s Thesis and at least 6 months later defend Master’s Thesis
- Apply to PhD portion of the program
- Year 3: Conceptual Review Paper
- Year 4: Conceptual Presentation
- Year 5: Propose Dissertation and at least 6 months later defend Dissertation
- General Requirement (Years 1 – 4):
  Grant/Publication submission

Requirements for the Master’s Degree
Students obtain the Master’s degree by the end of the second year. The requirements for the Master’s degree include 30 credits (6 course & 4 research credits, with the assumption that each course is worth three credits) distributed as follows over the first two years:

- Complete the graduate pro-seminar (Psy 201, 202) (1 credits)
- Complete the two-semester graduate statistics sequence (Psy 207, 208) (8 credits)
- One Core Course (Choose among Psy 231, 232, 233, 234, 235) (3 credits)
- One 100 or 200 level course (Psy or another department) (3 credits)
- One 200 level course (Psychology or another department) Graduate Research I (Psychology 289 Fall) (3 credit)
- Graduate Research II (Psychology 290 Spring) (3 credits)
- Master’s Thesis (Psychology 295 Fall) (3 credits)
- Master’s Thesis (Psychology 296 Spring) (3 credits)

Students must demonstrate expertise in statistical methods and experimental design. This can be done by either receiving a grade of A- or better in Psychology 208 (Advanced Statistics II) or taking a written Statistics qualifying exam. Statistical expertise must be verified before being admitted to the Ph.D. portion of the program.
be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies by December 1st or May 1st in order to be considered.

Course Requirements for the Ph.D. degree
Students in the Ph.D. component of the program must complete 39 credits to attain the Ph.D.

- One Core Course (Choose among Psychology 231, 232, 233, 234, 235) (3 credits)
- One 200-level Psychology course (Must be in Psychology) (3 credits)
- One 200-level course (Psychology or another department) (3 credits)
- One career preparation course (Choose among Psychology 260, 261, 262) (3 credits)
- One 100, 200, or research credit course (3 credits)
- Graduate Research Advanced I (Psychology 291) (3 credits)
- Graduate Research Advanced II (Psychology 292) (3 credits)
- Graduate Research Advanced III (Psychology 293)
- Graduate Research Advanced IV (Psychology 294)
- Dissertation Research I (Psychology 297) (4 credits)
- Dissertation Research II (Psychology 298) (4 credits)
- Dissertation Research III (Psychology 299) (4 credits)

Students who enter the program with a Master’s degree will also need to demonstrate competence in statistics. Students may be required to take the mandatory statistics sequence (207 & 208) even if they have taken graduate statistics in association with their previous Master’s program. Statistical competency will be determined by the instructor of the mandatory statistics sequence and the DGS. Examination may be required.

Students admitted to the Ph.D. component of the program at the end of their second year may complete the remaining requirements in as little as two years, although three years is more common. Tufts requires that a student spend a minimum of three years from the time of enrollment and a maximum of seven years to complete their Ph.D. This is calculated from the time of matriculation. Requests for extensions of time beyond seven years must be made to the Graduate School and must be accompanied by a supportive statement from the department. Please be advised the graduate funding is guaranteed for five years (four for students entering the program with a Master’s degree).

General Research and Teaching Requirements
All full-time candidates for a graduate degree should be actively involved in research every term. We consider research to be the primary component of a student’s educational experience. The time to conduct quality research is unquantifiable, and the research process should be considered the primary part of the student’s pedagogical experience. It is also expected that students will obtain teaching experience. Teaching and research must be in furtherance of the student's graduate education and must be supervised. If the experience is other than a departmental teaching assistantship or research assistantship, it must be approved by the department.

Students are required to inform the DGS if teaching experience is gained in another department or at another university.

Research. Students, with the assistance of their advisors, should develop strong research skills and interests. It is expected that graduate students will be consistently involved in research while in the program and will have several publications and conference presentations by graduation. It is the student's responsibility to establish a strong working relationship with a faculty member who may serve as the student's advisor and as an advocate when the student is evaluated. The student should make this person her/his/their official advisor with Student Services. The Director of Graduate Studies will be listed as a secondary advisor for all students.

Research experience may take the form of working as a half-time research assistant for a faculty (for which the student receives a stipend), conducting independent research in psychology or a related area for course credit, and/or working on research either independently or in collaboration with faculty and/or graduate student colleagues (without receiving course credit or a stipend). Graduate students must enroll for course credit every semester that is designed to credit research activities that semester. If a student is a paid research assistant, the
student must conduct research in addition for course credit. Paid research assistantships may not always correspond to the student’s developing program of research. Our program of study is designed to give course credit for laboratory training that includes learning methodological techniques, conducting literature review and analysis, learning statistical techniques, coding and programming, learning processes for pre-registration, grant writing, manuscript writing, and all activities designed to prepare students for careers upon program completion.

Teaching. Teaching experience is most often obtained by working as a teaching assistant (TA), for which the student receives a stipend. You should consider your TA assignment as a means to gain experience as a new instructor. Alternate ways of obtaining teaching experience include participation in the Graduate Institute for Teaching (GIFT), teaching a summer course in the department (limited opportunities), teaching a department course during the academic year (limited opportunities), and teaching in another unit of the university (e.g., Ex-College). Students with a Master’s degree may pursue teaching opportunities at another college or university.

**REQUIREMENTS/COMPETENCIES**

**Pro-Seminar**
Students in their first year are required to sign up for Psy 201 (F) and Psy 202 (S). This year long course requirement is designed to expose students to a broad range of topics using already established colloquia series in place in the Department of Psychology. Students will be required to attend seven talks given by outside speakers each semester. Two talks in each semester must be from outside of the student’s general area. Students will be able to use talks from the Social Area Meeting, the Cognitive Area Meeting, the Cognitive Brain Science Series, BioPsychology Lecture Series, and Departmental Brown Bag Series. Students may also use talks from other departments and other universities. Only talks given by speakers from outside of Tufts University will count towards this requirement. Students will be required to keep a record of the talks they attended, date, time, speaker, title, and will be required to write a short 500-word reaction paper in association with each attended presentation. The list of talks and short reactions will be due to the student’s advisor and the DGS at the end of the semester. The goal of this requirement is to expose new students to topics outside of the specific areas of interest. The organizers of each series and the schedule for talks of each series will be distributed at the beginning of each semester to all members of the department.

**Core Courses**
Core course provide students with a broad knowledge of psychology in their own as well as other sub-disciplines. Core courses are comprehensive, professional-level surveys of a particular area of psychology. They are structured to be broad, rather than focused in the instructor's research area, and to be suitable for students in any psychology specialty area. Core courses are taught at the graduate level; therefore, students who do not have prior experience in that particular domain may be required to do additional readings to support learning.

The syllabus for each core course will be more or less stable over time, and independent of the person teaching the course. Course work will involve both exams and papers. Core courses are offered in the following areas:

- Core Course
- Neuroscience
- Cognition
- Social
- Psychopathology & Emotion
- Developmental

**Career Preparation Courses**
Career preparation courses are designed to prepare students for their career. Students are required to take at least one of these courses, but you a may take them all, if you wish. These count as 200-level courses. These count as 200 level courses. The teaching course (PSY 260) focuses on how to teach and related pedagogical issues. Students can also complete the career preparation course requirement by taking part in the Graduate Institute for Teaching (GIFT), whereby students receive instruction on teaching during the summer and then co-teach a course with a faculty member during the subsequent academic year. For this option, students must make
arrangements with a faculty teaching mentor (someone teaching a suitable course) and both the student and faculty must apply to GIFT. The research writing course (PSY 261) focuses on research issues. Topics to be covered include, for instance, writing a research article, grant writing and preparation, research ethics, professional presentations and laboratory management. The research practices course (PSY 262) is an overview of best practices for producing and consuming high-quality science. Students will come away having developed a principled understanding of relevant concepts (e.g., sample size planning, preregistration, sharing data and materials), and concrete tools that they can apply to their own area of research.

100 and 200 level Seminar Content Courses
Seminar courses provide depth of knowledge on a narrower topic. Students may receive graduate credit for Tufts courses at the 100- or 200-level. Courses numbered in the 200 series are intended exclusively for graduate students. Individual 200-level courses are offered on an irregular basis. This necessitates some care in planning so that an essential course will not be missed, because it may be offered only once or twice during the entire time that a graduate student is in the program. Seminar courses can include 100- or 200-level courses offered in other departments (e.g., sociology, biology, child development, philosophy) or other schools in the university (e.g. Medical School, Sackler School, School of Nutritional Science and Policy) or at other Universities.

However, courses taken from outside of the department need approval from the graduate mentor and the graduate committee.

Statistics Qualifying Exam
All students must demonstrate competence in statistical methods and experimental design by either receiving a grade of A- or better in Psychology 208 or taking a written qualifying exam. The statistics qualifying exam is to be individually arranged between the student and the graduate statistics instructor. Requests to take the qualifying exam should be made in a timely fashion, so that qualifying exams may be given to groups of students when possible. Following the exam, student performance will be reported as pass/fail. To demonstrate statistics competence, transfer students can take Psychology 208 and receive a grade of A- or higher, or pass the statistics qualifying exam.

MILESTONES

First Year Project
All first-year students must conduct a first-year project (FYP), including planning, data collection, analysis, and oral and written presentation. All first-year students should enroll in PSY 289 in the Fall and Psy 290 in the Spring (section of Director of Graduate Studies).

The FYP is to be an empirical research project. Data should be collected during the student’s first year at Tufts. Exceptions to this (e.g., analyzing an extant data set in a different way; pre-registration; equipment development) must be approved by the Graduate Committee. Students will write up their project into a manuscript, using formatting requirements outlined by a journal to which the work could possibly be submitted. Additionally, students are encouraged to use their FYP to create an application to the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program or another appropriate funding source. First-year students will present their findings at a Spring semester conference attended by faculty other graduate students, and other departmental researchers. This conference takes place on the first or second day of reading period spring semester. Presentations will consist of an approximately 15 minute oral project summary with approximately 5 minutes for questions and discussion. Final written manuscripts of FYP are due approximately four weeks after the conference (with specific due date set by the DGS). FYP grading will consider work on the project as well as oral and written presentations. The student’s advisor and another faculty member, determined by the department, will provide feedback on the manuscript. The DGS will coordinate review by a second faculty member; however, the student’s advisor is expected to provide feedback to the student throughout the process and before the manuscript is submitted to the DGS. The DGS will attempt to assign a relevant faculty, in terms of research interests, to a project. Students have one month to
revise and resubmit their manuscript.

Grant/Publication Requirement
Students are required to submit a first-authored manuscript to a peer-reviewed scholarly journal or a grant proposal for funding by an external agency sometime between their first and fourth years of the program. Students must submit verification of submission to the Director of Graduate Studies (e.g., cover letter accompanying submission, confirmation of submission). Although it is hoped that the student’s manuscript is accepted for publication or the grant is funded, these outcomes are not necessary for fulfillment of the requirement. The career preparation courses focusing on research writing can be particularly helpful in meeting this requirement. Note that students must sign up for a credit (research credit with their advisor) associated with this requirement; this credit is separate from credit received for a career preparation course.

Third Year Conceptual Review Paper and Fourth Year Conceptual Presentation
Conceptualizing and motivating a research question at multiple levels is a critical career skill for a Ph.D., whether in academia or industry. The conceptual review paper milestone requirements will, thus, have graduate students conceptualize their research (past, present and future) for a broad psychological audience, i.e. an audience that extends beyond the student’s sub-area within Psychology. The requirement consists of both oral and written components as follows: 1) a review paper of research addressing the specific research question, and 2) an oral presentation at the Department 4th Year Conference, to take place during Fall Semester reading period. The details of these components are outlined below.

The conceptual review paper will be due on June 30 at the end of the student’s third year. The conceptual review paper should be a comprehensive analysis of literature that will serve as the foundation for dissertation research. The review will be evaluated by two members of the department, the student’s advisor, and a faculty member in a related field who will serve on the student’s dissertation committee. Please be advised that the Graduate Committee has oversight over assignment of this second reviewer. The faculty advisor is expected to provide feedback to the student throughout the process, and before the final manuscript is submitted to the DGS. Therefore, the DGS will not elicit a formal review from the student’s advisor. Complementary, but not overlapping fields are acceptable. The student will revise and resubmit their review paper by the beginning of the Fall semester of the 4th year. A specific deadline will be determined by the DGS. The conceptual review paper should be written for a general audience in the student’s specific area of study, as well as related areas of study. The review can take several different forms; however, the general approach with reviews is to a) distill key conclusions from published research addressing a specific research question, time-locked to what is known at the time the paper is written, and b) articulate important directions for future research.

Students are encouraged to select a peer-review outlet for this review. The selection of the outlet is required when the review paper is due. Submitting students should include a letter that indicates the selected outlet, and the publication guidelines for the outlet. Students should follow the author guidelines imposed by the review journal that most closely matches the student’s sub-field within Psychology. Examples of conceptual review papers include papers in journals such as Current Opinions in Neurobiology, Current Directions in Psychological Science, Trends in Cognitive Science, Trends in Neurosciences, Current Neuroscience Reports, Current Research in Psychology, to name some. Students should consult with their advisor to determine the appropriate model. Additionally, students are highly encouraged to submit their review paper for publication. Students who wish to take on a more detailed review, such as those published in Psychological Bulletin, Psychological Review, or published in book chapters may certainly do so. If the student chooses an alternative format, prior approval by the Graduate Committee is required.

The Department 4th Year Conference will take place during Fall semester’s reading period. The goal of the conference is to assess the student’s ability to present a concise summary of the key conclusions and future research directions related to a specific research question, and field questions from an audience. Toward this end, the presentation should be directed to a multidisciplinary audience that is
scientifically intelligent, yet unfamiliar with the research area. Students are encouraged to focus the presentation on the literature they reviewed in their third-year paper, and, thus, their dissertation question. Presentations will be limited to 15 minutes, with an additional 10 minutes for questions. The question period will be structured such that faculty will be assigned to ask questions for specific presentations. To facilitate, the student should have a draft of the presentation available one week prior to the conference for review by questioning faculty. The student is required to consult with her/his advisor and broader dissertation committee in determining the best approach to the presentation given the students’ specific research.

Timeline and Details for Conceptual Review Paper and Presentation Requirements

March of the 3rd Year - The graduate committee, with input from the student, will designate the reviewers for each student’s conceptual review requirement. To facilitate this process, students must submit

- an abstract (150 words) outlining their research topic and
- input, on reviewers and questioners to the graduate committee by March 30.

A selected reviewer should be considered a member of the student’s subsequent dissertation committee. By this time, graduate students should have a sense of their general dissertation research question should consult with their advisor on the best course of action. The reviewers will include, at a minimum, the student’s advisor and another faculty member at Tufts University, and who will serve on the student’s dissertation committee. Additional reviewers may be added either based on student or faculty input. Reviewers are responsible for evaluating both the student presentation and the review.

June of the 3rd Year -- Student will submit their review paper to the DGS by June 30. If the manuscript has been prepared for publication at a specific journal, the student should note this in a cover letter that accompanies the submission the DGS. The DGS will then disperse the reviews to the reviewers.

September of the 4th Year -- Reviewers will return reviews to the DGS for dispersal to graduate students. These reviews should be similar to those submitted to journals when reviewing manuscripts.

October of 4th Year -- Students will submit revisions to their review paper, addressing reviewers’ comments by the Oct 15 of the 4th year. Re-submissions should include a detailed cover letter indicating how reviewers’ points were addressed in the revision. This is an essential element for re-submission of manuscripts for publication; as such crafting response letters is an important skill to cultivate. Students will not have to resubmit this revision if they have already submitted this manuscript for publication and that manuscript has been accepted or undergone a revision for the journal. If the manuscript has been accepted, or is in the process of revision for a peer-reviewed journal, the student must provide this information to the Director of Graduate Studies by the first day of classes.

December of the 4th Year, Fall Semester Reading Period -- Students will prepare and deliver an approximately 15-minute presentation designed to motivate their research question to a broad audience.

January/February of the 4th Year — Students will receive feedback on their presentation from their reviewers. Presentation feedback should be considered for future presentations.

Theses and Dissertations

Master's Thesis and Ph.D. Dissertation. Thesis and dissertation work is supervised and evaluated by a faculty committee from the proposal stage to completion. Both the Master's thesis and the Ph.D. dissertation are written monographs based on original, empirical research conducted by the candidate; they differ only in the extent and complexity of the studies undertaken. Both may be written in journal form, although full supporting data and analyses should be included.

There is no publication requirement associated with either theses or dissertations (although, see above description of Grant/Publication Requirement). However, the quality of the dissertation is expected to warrant publication. Furthermore, all students are
strongly urged to publish their research. Copies of theses and dissertations are kept both in the department and in the library.

Stages of completing theses and dissertations include:
- Picking a research topic
- Selecting your committee
- Checking with the Graduate School Office for procedural details and deadlines
- Preparing the proposal
- Having a proposal meeting (at least six months before the defense)
- Conducting the research
- Writing the Thesis/Dissertation
- Distributing the document to your committee (one week prior to defense)
- Presentation of oral defense to committee
- Final copy is sent to the Graduate School

Selecting a Committee. For the Master's thesis and Ph.D. dissertation, the first step is to select a problem in consultation with your faculty mentor. The next step is to select the members of the committee and ascertain their willingness to serve. This should be done in consultation with your faculty mentor, who will serve as the committee chair. For the Master's committee, in addition to the committee chair, the committee must include one additional faculty member from the Psychology Department, and one member from outside the department (either from a different department at Tufts University or from any department in a different university) who holds at least a Ph.D. degree. For the Ph.D. committee, the committee includes the chair, two additional faculty members from the department, and an appropriate member from outside the university (normally, with a Ph.D.). One of the additional faculty members will have served as a reviewer on the conceptual review manuscript. Outside members may attend the defense via video-conference. The department does not pay for transportation or housing of such members.

Occasionally, a student will wish to conduct his or her research in a laboratory off the Tufts University campus. This may be done with departmental approval. Under these circumstances, someone with appropriate credentials must agree to provide day-to-day, on-site supervision of the student’s work and agree to serve on the student's committee. However, the committee chair must be a member of the department faculty.

Once all committee members have agreed to serve, the student will notify the Director of Graduate Studies in writing.

Preparing a Proposal. After consultation with the committee chair, the student will prepare a written paper describing his or her proposed research. This proposal will describe the rationale for the research, as well as hypotheses, proposed methods, and expected results of the research. This proposal should be disseminated to the committee approximately one week prior to the proposal meeting.

Proposal Meeting. When the proposal is sufficiently polished and distributed to the committee, the student arranges a meeting of the committee to hear an oral proposal presentation. The date of the meeting must be transmitted to the DGS prior to the meeting. Although the outside member of the committee is invited to be present at the proposal meeting, his/her/they attendance is not mandatory. If not attending, the outside committee member should send comments and concerns, in writing, to the student’s advisor. This proposal meeting should be held at least six months prior to the project completion.

Based on the proposal meeting, the committee may approve, disapprove, or request changes in the proposal, and may request another meeting. Once the proposal has been approved, the student must notify the graduate director that it has been approved.

Conducting the Research and Writing the Thesis/Dissertation. The student's committee may meet as often as needed (at the request of either the student or the committee) until the research is complete. Usually the student and her or his committee chair go through several drafts of the thesis or dissertation prior to distribution to the committee. Students should be aware that the Graduate School has stringent style requirements for thesis and dissertation manuscripts that must be followed (see graduate school website: https://students.tufts.edu/registrar/what-we-assist/apply-graduation/graduate-students).

Oral Defense. Once the student and the committee
chair feel that a draft of the thesis/dissertation is acceptable, an oral defense is scheduled. Before the oral defense is held, the student should procure the Certificate of Fitness and the Approval of Thesis/Dissertation for Submission forms from the Graduate School web-site and a grade change form from one of the department administrators. In advance of the defense, the student must reserve a conference room and the necessary AV equipment. All committee members, including the outside member, must be present for the oral defense. Attendance via video conference is acceptable.

Forms:
https://students.tufts.edu/sites/default/files/REGCertificateOfFitness.pdf
https://students.tufts.edu/sites/default/files/REGApprovalOfThesisDissertationForSubmission_0.pdf

The first part of the orals exam, whether for a Master's or a Ph.D., must be open to the public, and must be publicly announced to the entire department by email (psy-all@elist.tufts.edu) at least a week in advance of the defense. Students are also encouraged to give a separate departmental colloquium or brown bag presenting their research.

Grading of Thesis/Dissertation Work. Based upon the written thesis/dissertation and the student's performance in the oral defense, the committee will assess whether the research has been properly executed and well-defended, and whether it constitutes a "contribution to knowledge." If these conditions are met, the student will have successfully completed the defense. If the student passes the defense, the committee chair will ensure that all members of the committee sign the Fitness Form approving the defense. A copy of this form must be made for departmental records prior to returning to the Graduate School.

If the student passes the orals a grade (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory) must be entered for the thesis or dissertation work. The committee chair must complete the necessary form to remove incomplete grades from the student's record for Psychology 295-296 (Master's thesis) or Psychology 297-298 - 299 (Ph.D. dissertation), and, on the same forms, assign a S/U grade for the thesis or dissertation.

When all suggested revisions have been made and the thesis or dissertation is in an acceptable form, the student will bring the Approval of Thesis/Dissertation for Submission Form to her/his committee chair for signature. The signing of this approval form attests that all requirements have been met. Then the Approval of Thesis/Dissertation for Submission Form must be submitted to the Graduate School with the correct fee (required) for the M.S. or the Ph.D. The thesis or dissertation is submitted electronically. The fees and due dates for final submission, as well as information about electronic submission, can be found at http://gradstudy.tufts.edu.

Awarding of Degrees. Degrees are awarded by the Trustees three times a year: May, September, and February. A Degree Sheet must be submitted at least one semester prior to the graduation date. The Degree Sheet must be signed by the student's committee chair and by the Director of Graduate Studies. A copy of the form must be given to the departmental office before returning it to the Graduate School. When the original is returned to the Graduate School, the student's name is placed on a degree list. In addition, the Exit Survey must be filled out and returned to the Graduate School by a specified date. Dates for applying for graduation can be found here:
https://students.tufts.edu/registrar/what-we-assist/apply-graduation/graduate-students

and in the GSAS Graduate Student Handbook that can be found here:

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Graduate students, by the very nature of their work, are frequently evaluated. Reduced to their simplest form, the questions asked about each student are:

Have they demonstrated "scholarly potential"? Will they become a responsible and productive psychologist, who will bring credit to themselves, the department, the University, and the profession?

Course grades, satisfactory academic progress, the quality of independent work, thesis and dissertation research, and the quality of other scholarly activities
are the major factors that enter into the answers to these questions.

Graduate students should remain in close contact with their advisor(s) and the Director of Graduate Studies to ensure they are making satisfactory progress. At the end of the fall and spring semester of each academic year, the faculty will evaluate graduate student academic progress. Because all faculty with whom the student has interacted participate in the evaluation, it is recommended that graduate students working as teaching or research assistants meet with the relevant faculty members to solicit performance feedback and to deal with any problems that arise. Each student will receive a formal letter of evaluation at the end of the fall semester and at the end of the spring semester. A copy of this evaluation letter will be placed in the student's permanent file.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress**

In order for satisfactory academic progress to be made, the following should hold:

The Master's degree should be completed in **two years**, the Ph.D. in an additional three years. Overly ambitious Master's theses, involving longitudinal designs, rare or difficult-to-obtain subject populations, etc., are discouraged.

Core and other courses should be taken in an appropriate time frame. For graduate students, a grade below a B- is considered a failing grade for any course. If the student does get a grade below a B- for the M.S. degree, then the student can be still be considered to be making satisfactory progress as long as the course is retaken promptly with a passing grade or another course is substituted. For Ph.D. candidates, a second grade below B- is permitted as long as the course is retaken or substituted promptly.

Students should demonstrate consistent involvement in independent research.

**Unsatisfactory academic progress**

The following are signs of unsatisfactory academic progress and may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

- Academic or scientific dishonesty.
- More than one grade below a B- for the Master's candidates without prompt retaking or replacement with another course.
- More than two grades below a B-.
- Failure to satisfactorily complete one or more degree requirements (e.g., yearly milestones).
- Having two incomplete course grades on the student's record at any onetime

**Consequences of Unsatisfactory Academic Progress**

If a student is making unsatisfactory academic progress, the following steps will occur:

a. The student will be informed, either by the advisor or by the DGS, that unsatisfactory progress is being made toward the degree. The steps necessary to regain satisfactory status will be specified at this time.

b. If, after a reasonable interval, the student continues to perform in an unsatisfactory manner, the DGS in consultation with the advisor will set a time limit for the completion of relevant work. The likelihood of termination from the program, should the deadline not be met, will be communicated to the student.

c. If the student lets this deadline pass without regaining satisfactory status, the student will not be allowed to register. The department faculty will meet to formally vote on the student's dismissal from the program.

Dismissal from the program should not be confused with failure to be admitted to the Ph.D. part of the program. Since this is a relatively small program it is essential that there be a good "match" between the interests of student and faculty. While every effort is made to ensure that students admitted to the graduate program have a faculty mentor in their area of interest, research interests can change. Thus, it is possible that a student who performs satisfactorily at the Master's level may be denied admission to the Ph.D. portion of the program because his or her interests are not shared by at least one member of the faculty. Such a student will be counseled to seek admittance to another Ph.D. program. Dismissal and non-admittance to the Ph.D. part of the program shall be by vote of the faculty after a careful consideration of the individual case. Students may appeal a negative decision according to standard grievance procedures (see below).

A dismissal notice may be given to a graduate
student at any time of the year. Dismissals are most likely to occur between semesters. Should one occur during a semester the student, under normal circumstances, will be allowed to complete the semester. If a student would like to transfer to another school because they feel their academic performance is putting them in jeopardy, they should seek advice from their advisor or DGS so that there will be adequate time to apply to another school.

STIPENDS AND TUITION SUPPORT
Students can expect to receive tuition support for five courses per year for the duration of their program (i.e., 4-5 years). Financial support cannot be guaranteed beyond the 5th year (or beyond the 4th year for students entering with a Master’s degree). In addition to these tuition scholarships, students typically receive financial support through a combination of the following sources described below. Students entering the program without a Master’s degree can expect, assuming satisfactory progress in the program, to receive 5 years of financial support. Students entering the program with a Master’s degree who request advanced standing can expect, assuming satisfactory progress in the program, to receive 4 years of financial support.

Teaching Assistantships
Teaching Assistantships involve a 9-month commitment (Sept. 1 through May 30) and form the primary means of graduate financial support. The annual stipend is divided into 18 equal bi-weekly payments, and is subject to withholding taxes. TA’s are expected to devote up to 20 hours per week on their TA duties. Course instructor and TA will meet at the beginning of the semester and complete a TA expectations form. TA duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- attending class sessions
- preparing, proctoring, administering, and grading exams
- grading papers or laboratory reports
- preparing materials for lab experiments or lectures
- giving occasional lectures
- conducting discussion/review sessions
- maintaining regular office hours
- photocopying course materials

If a student requires special accommodations to meet TA expectations (attending classes, holding office hours, leading sections, etc.), the student is required to inform the DGS before TA assignments are made for the upcoming semester. Special accommodations may be necessary if students have specific health-related issues that may impact the successful completion of TA responsibilities and duties. If frequent absences are unavoidable, the TA must inform the DGS and the course instructor. Ideally, this should happen before the beginning of a semester. The TA may be asked to assist in developing a plan to reduce the negative impact of absences on the course. The DGS may be able to assist by assigning a floater TA that can substitute on short notice. Coordination before the beginning of each semester is necessary to facilitate this process.

Floater TA
A floater TA will be assigned on a case-by-case basis. This individual will “fill in” for a TA who may need periodic support. The floater TA will work no more than eight hours per week, and this position can be held in addition to another half-time TA or RA position. Floater TAs will be paid a competitive hourly rate.

Research Assistantships
Research assistantships involve assisting a particular faculty member with his or her research. The availability of research assistantships depends upon faculty grants and the needs of faculty investigators. Both the time commitment and the stipend for research assistantships are usually equal to those for teaching assistantships. However, in some cases, the funding period for an RA may differ from that of a TA. If grant funds are available, RAs may be employed in the summer as well as during the academic year. The term of a research assistantship may not always cover the entire academic year. In these cases, the department will make every effort to assist the student in locating alternative sources of support.

Fellowships
Students are encouraged to seek fellowship support for their graduate education. These awards add
prestige to one's vita when searching for jobs or post-doctoral opportunities, as well as increasing one's flexibility when balancing course work and research activities. This may become an increasingly important source of graduate student support as Tufts (like all other Universities) faces increasing budgetary restraints.

There are several places in which details about additional funding may be obtained:

- Searching the Internet
- The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences has compiled a list of funding sources appropriate for graduate students.
- Tisch Library has several directories of funding. Staff at the reference desk can assist you in locating these.
- The U.S. government has publications regarding funding opportunities, which are available through the above sources.

**Graduate Instructor**

Graduate Instructor positions may be offered to an advanced graduate student who has completed the Master’s Degree and the Publication requirement, and who has a good record of service as a Teaching Assistant. A Graduate Instructor may offer a small advanced seminar. The Graduate Instructor will receive a standard graduate student stipend for teaching the course. As with the graduate teaching assistantship, the graduate instructor will be required to work no more than 20 hours per week in this role.

**Other Jobs**

When other means of support are not available, or during the summer months, graduate students sometimes pursue job openings either within or outside of the University. Graduate students may sometimes be eligible for work-study grants to pursue campus employment. However, this is not an option for those who already hold a research or teaching assistantship. Information about work-study is available at the Financial Aid Office (Dowling Hall). International students should consult the office of International Students for specific employment regulations regarding foreign students.

**Loans**

Information on government-guaranteed loans is available at the Financial Aid Office (Dowling Hall).

**Summer financial support**

Students are not guaranteed financial support during the summer months. However, students may be supported as Research Assistants on faculty grants or submit proposals for internal competitive summer funding. Additional information regarding internal competitive summer funding will be distributed during the spring semester.

**DEPARTMENTAL SUPPORT OF GRADUATE STUDENTS**

**Phones.** All graduate students have access to telephones linked to extensions on the Medford, Boston, & Grafton campuses. These telephones can be used to make local calls. The Department Chair will take corrective measures if telephone privileges are abused.

**Photocopying.** The departmental copying machines are available for use necessary in fulfilling TA and RA responsibilities. Personal copying may be done at cost of $.05 a copy. Payment for this copying is arranged through Cynthia Goddard. Personal copying includes copying done for courses in which you are enrolled, theses, and individual research projects, etc.

**Supplies.** Graduate students may use reasonable quantities of standard office supplies necessary to complete their work.

**Travel Expenses.** A graduate student presenting a paper at a conference may ask the DGS for money from the department. The department generally provides $150 to help defray the cost of conference attendance. Students can generally get additional support for conference travel by applying to the graduate school. Students should request travel funds from the DGS and must provide an indication that they are presenting their research at the conference they will be attending.

**Thesis or Dissertation Expenses.** Approximately $150.00 may be requested for Master's research expenses, and $300.00 for Ph.D. research expenses. Expenditures for thesis or dissertation research for which the student would like to be reimbursed must be approved in advance by the department chair. Original receipts must accompany all requests for
reimbursement. Additional support may be available by direct application to the graduate school. These funds may be used for purposes such as: purchasing standardized tests, apparatus, or equipment, paying subjects, or hiring a consultant. They may not be used for expenses that relate to the binding, typing, or photocopying of the thesis/dissertation document. These costs must be covered by the candidate or by his/her faculty advisor.

**REGISTRATION**

**Academic Calendar**

The academic year at Tufts is divided into three semesters: Fall, Spring, and Summer (2 short sessions). The fall semester typically begins in early September, and ends in December. The spring term begins in mid-January and ends in mid-May. There is a week-long spring break in March. Commencement typically occurs in mid-May. Summer school has two 6-week sessions, one beginning right after Commencement (in late May) and the other beginning in early July.

Graduate students may take courses for credit during any of these official semesters. However, few graduate courses are offered in summer school (100-level courses are occasionally offered).

Graduate students who are paid for a Research Assistantship in the summer need to register for the correct continuation credit (PSY 502) to indicate they are a student. There are no tuition charges associated with this registration.

Students who have research or teaching assistantships are appointed for 9-month terms, running from September 1st through May 30th. They should therefore report to the department as early in September as possible, and no later than the first day of classes. In addition, it should be understood that undergraduate vacation periods do not necessarily apply to graduate students. Graduate students are expected to complete their work before leaving, and are encouraged to consult their faculty supervisors to discuss policies regarding graduate student vacations.

**Registering for Courses at Tufts**

- Consult departmental course listings (see Psychology web-site) to find out which courses will be offered in the upcoming semester. Consult your requirement checklist for details about requirements.
- Before registering, students should discuss their planned course work with their advisor. Before you can register, your advisor must clear you online.
- It is extremely important that graduate students go through this procedure each semester. **Failure to register will result in being administratively withdrawn from the university.** If a student is withdrawn, a reinstatement fee will be charged to re-enter the program. Once a student has matriculated at Tufts, pre-registration can simplify matters enormously.

**Registration for Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant**

Graduate students should register each semester as either a Teaching (Psychology 405) or Research Assistant (Psychology 406), unless on external fellowship. These do not carry course credit, but designate on the student’s transcript whether they served as a Teaching or Research Assistant.

**Registration with No or Reduced Coursework**

In order to maintain active status during terms in which the student is registered for fewer than 3 courses, the student should register for Psychology 501 or 502. No tuition is charged for this registration. Students must be registered for at least 501/502 during the semester in which they would like to receive their degree.

**Leave of Absence**

Students who wish to temporarily leave the program should request a leave of absence. Such requests should be discussed with one's advisor, the department chair, or DGS. Forms for requesting leaves are available through student services. There is a space on the Leave of Absence form for a statement of approval/disapproval that must be filled in by the department chair before the form is forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School.

**Registering at other Universities**

In addition to taking courses at Tufts, students may cross-register for graduate credit courses at Boston University, Boston College, and Brandeis. Cross-registration may be accomplished by using a form
available through Student Services.

**STUDENT STATUS**

**Definition of Full-time Student Status:** It is assumed that students in the program will normally be full-time students. A full-time student is one who:
- holds a research or teaching assistantship and takes at least 5 courses in a year, or
- holds a fellowship and is taking 5 courses within a year, or
- has completed course work and is actively working on a thesis or dissertation.

**GRADUATE STUDENT GRIEVANCES**

Student grievances may be resolved at any of several levels depending on the nature of the grievance.

The levels are:
1. The student's advisor
2. The department chair and/or DGS
3. A grievance panel of department faculty
4. The Dean of the Graduate School
5. A grievance panel of the university faculty

Normally one would begin by discussing the grievance with his/her advisor. Usually the matter can be handled at this level. If the problem involves others or is more complex in nature, it may be taken to the DGS or department chair.

When the problem is complex and/or sensitive, as judged by the DGS and/or advisor, a panel of department faculty may be established to hear the grievance and to act or make recommendations as is appropriate in the judgement of the panel. Graduate students may serve on the panel at the request of the aggrieved person, the student governing group, or the faculty, providing that department faculty judge the matter to be one that can be discussed with graduate students present. The panel size should be an odd number such as 3, 5, or 7, so as to avoid tie votes.

Should the issues comprising the grievance extend beyond the bounds of department control or resolution, it may be taken to a higher level. The Dean and Associate Dean of students handle many non-academic issues and matters of academic dishonesty. The Dean of the Graduate School handles matters relating to graduate policy and regulations, academic performance, financial support and other unforeseen or unique problems. The Dean may act on their own or with advice of a panel of university faculty, at the Dean's discretion.

If a student does not find satisfaction at a lower level in the grievance hierarchy, the student may address the request to the appropriate person at the higher level and notify those involved at the lower level that such a request has been made. If a student wishes to initiate grievance procedures with the Graduate Dean, the DGS and chair should be advised. Grounds for initiating grievances proceedings at a high level would be the belief that those lower in the hierarchy might be involved in the grievance, or that university regulations are part of the grievance. Student grievances against other students should start at the level of the DGS or department chair where an appropriate plan of action will be determined.