

# **Cognitive and Developmental Studies**

## **Graduate Student Handbook**

**(Revised: December 1, 2003)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this document is to state explicitly what the Cognitive and Developmental (CDS) Area expectations are for graduate students. Some of this information is covered in other sources, such as the Departmental Handbook and the Graduate School Bulletin (available online at <http://www.rgs.uky.edu/gsbulletin/bullinfo.html>). This handout is meant to clarify and supplement those sources, not to replace them. Most important, the rules and requirements as stated in the Departmental Handbook remain the final authority, and any discrepancies between that source and what is written here should be resolved in favor of the Handbook. Students should realize that it is ultimately their responsibility to keep apprised of important Department and Graduate School requirements, deadlines, and regulations.

### **THE CDS AREA**

The CDS Area provides integrated course work and individualized training designed to prepare students for a career in research and teaching. Emphasis is placed on theoretical analyses and empirical studies involving adult cognition, cognitive development, the application of cognitive theories to everyday cognition, typical and atypical development in human infancy and childhood, and animal cognition. Scholarship in basic theory is the primary focus of training, but students interested in applying their training to nonacademic settings may do so. Current research interests of faculty members include comprehension of and memory for complex information such as discourse, television, and graphical displays; attention to visual displays; individual differences in attentional abilities (e.g., attention deficit hyperactivity disorder--ADHD); intentional forgetting; eyewitness testimony; development of attention, perception, memory, television viewing, reading comprehension, drug abuse prevention in children and adolescents, as well as comparative cognition, including concept learning, memory, timing, and social learning by animals. Other faculty with related interests study ADHD, antisocial disorders, and the social aspects of teasing in children.

### **CORE FACULTY**

Bhatt, Ramesh, Associate Professor, University of Iowa, 1988. Perceptual, attentional, and cognitive development in infants; memory processing.

Carswell, Melody, Associate Professor, University of Illinois, 1988. Human factors and engineering psychology, human-technology interaction, visual and haptic displays, consumer product design and evaluation.

Golding, Jonathan, Professor, University of Denver, 1986. Psychology and law, eyewitness testimony, intentional forgetting, memory and cognitive processes.

Gottlob, Lawrence, Assistant Professor, Arizona State University, 1995. Visual attention, cognitive aging.

Lorch, Elizabeth, Professor, University of Massachusetts, 1981. Cognitive development, attention, reading, television viewing, drug abuse prevention, development of attention and comprehension in children with ADHD.

Lorch, Robert, Professor, University of Massachusetts, 1980. Text processing, memory and cognitive processes.

Zentall, Thomas R, Professor, University of California, Berkeley, 1969. Animal cognition and intelligence, concept learning, imitation, memory

## REQUIREMENTS

### 1) Course Requirements

#### a) Departmental

Statistics sequence:

PSY 610 - Experimental Design

PSY 611 - Correlational Design

#### b) CDS Course Requirements

Within all CDS course requirements, choices of specific courses must be approved by the advisor and/or the advisory committee.

(1) PSY 780 – Problems in Psychology

Taken each semester prior to taking the qualification exam

(2) Any three Proseminars in the following areas: Learning, Cognition, Development, and Sensation and Perception

(3) Additional course work or experience as recommended by supervisory committees. This includes a minimum of 3 graduate courses, typically advanced topical seminars.

It is important to note that with regard to course requirements (and all departmental requirements, for that matter), some flexibility is possible. Depending on particular student needs, a given requirement may or may not be reasonable and may in fact be waived. For example, a student in his or her last year may wish to devote more time to research and applying for jobs rather than taking a course that is being offered that semester. Students are always permitted to petition their committees for exemptions to any requirement, although of course there are no guarantees that such petitions will be granted.

A final thought about course work: Beginning graduate students are often unduly anxious about their performance in classes. It can be difficult to make the transition from an undergraduate perspective, where classes and GPA were all-important, to a graduate perspective, where course work is a necessary but decidedly *less* important component (compared to research) of your graduate work. It will be tempting for you to focus your time and energies largely on your course work, as the work load for these classes may seem at times overwhelming. We urge you not to yield to that temptation. Research should remain your top priority.

## 2) Research

It is expected that all students in the CDS area will be involved in research throughout their course of study towards the Ph.D. The area has two formalized requirements that are designed to train the student in conducting research:

(a) Master's thesis

(b) Ph.D. Dissertation

Early in the semester, either before classes start or during the first week, you should meet with your advisor. During this meeting you will discuss the research you have in progress and what goals you wish to set for the upcoming semester. These goals should be fairly specific. When you and your advisor reach agreement, these goals will be recorded in writing, and at the end of the semester your progress will be compared to those goals. An implication of this system is that the grades for your research hours will be as meaningful as grades for your other courses. In other words, the research hours will not be "automatic As" regardless of the amount of research actually done. You will not have to meet all of your goals to get an A (we want you to set lofty goals), but you will need to make reasonable progress toward them.

This system of establishing written goals for research each semester helps to emphasize the importance of meeting with your advisor on a regular basis. It has been our experience that regular, frequent meetings only help to keep students on track with research; they never impede research progress. Thus we urge you to set up a regular meeting time with your advisor. More frequent meetings (e.g., weekly or biweekly) are especially important for beginning students, but advanced students need regular contact with their advisors as well.

## 3) Allied Area

Each student is expected to develop an allied area to gain expertise in some area outside of the student's main research specialty. This requirement can be satisfied by various combinations of course work and research or professional experience. The selection of an appropriate allied area project will be made by the student in consultation with the advisory committee. This requirement should be completed prior to scheduling the qualifying examination.

## 4) Qualifying Examination

Each student must pass the qualifying examination to be promoted to doctoral candidacy.

The exam is intended to be a demonstration that the candidate has developed a broad, defensible perspective on his or her area of study. The specific content of the examination will be determined in discussions between the student and the advisory committee. Discussions will also determine the format of the examination. However, the examination for all students will contain a written component. Finally, discussions will determine how long the student will have to complete preparations to take the oral component of the examination.

At the appropriate time the student will schedule the oral defense with the Graduate School. The oral defense will lead to a “Pass” or “Fail” evaluation. If a student fails the initial oral defense, the Ph.D. Qualification Examination Advisory Committee determines the conditions to be met before another examination may be given. The minimum time between examinations is four months. A second examination must be taken within one year after the first examination. A third examination is not permitted.

#### 5) Teaching

All students are expected to gain teaching experience, generally consisting of service as a teaching assistant or instructor. Students are also encouraged to take courses and attend workshops pertinent to teaching, especially if teaching is a part of one’s primary career goal. In consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies for the Department of Psychology a formal "teaching specialty" may be pursued, which can serve as an allied area for interested students. It will consist of course work pertinent to college teaching, a systematic assignment of teaching assistantships, and in some cases a teaching internship at the University of Kentucky or one of several liberal arts colleges in the area.

## **CREDIT FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS**

Students admitted to the graduate training programs in Clinical or Experimental Psychology who have completed an empirical thesis on an appropriate topic at another institution may have the requirement for completion of a master’s thesis in the department waived through the following process:

1. The student should notify, in writing, his or her assigned academic advisor as well as the head of the appropriate area that he or she desires to have the requirement for completion of a thesis in the graduate program in psychology waived.
2. In order to be eligible for this consideration, the thesis must have been formally accepted as completed at the outside institution, and written documentation to this effect must be provided. Students matriculating in the department who have not yet defended the thesis at the outside institution have one year from the start of classes in the graduate program at U.K. to exercise this option.
3. The thesis will be reviewed by the student’s assigned academic advisor as well as one other faculty member chosen in consultation with the area head. These two reviewers will render an opinion, in writing, to the head of the area regarding the acceptability of the outside thesis as a substitute for completion of a thesis at U.K. In the event of a disagreement between the two readers, the area head will appoint a third reader as a “tie-breaker”.

4. If the readers of the thesis judge the thesis acceptable as a substitute for one completed in the graduate program at U.K., the area head will write a letter to this effect to the Director of Graduate Studies as well as the Chair of the Graduate Student Advisory Committee with a copy placed in the student's file.
5. If the readers determine that the thesis is not acceptable as a substitute for a thesis completed at U.K., the area head must also notify the DGS and Chair of GSAC to this effect. In the case of this outcome, the student may be held to the usual deadlines for completion of a thesis at the discretion of GSAC. GSAC will notify the student of its decision in this regard in a timely fashion.
6. Students who submit a thesis as a substitute but have it rejected by the readers may appeal the decision to GSAC, which will have final discretion in the matter.

## **STUDENT SUPERVISION**

Student supervision occurs on three levels: primary faculty advisor, faculty advisory committee, and the entire CDS faculty. Each student will choose (or be assigned) a primary advisor, or mentor, upon entering the program. The student in consultation with the mentor will form the various committees listed below. These committees are primarily composed of faculty within the area, but faculty from other units, and in some case from other institutions, can also serve. There is usually considerable overlap in the composition of these committees, but students do have the prerogative of selecting different faculty for subsequent committees. It is expected that these committees will meet at least once each academic year. There are four points during a student's career that constitute logical points at which the composition of the advisory committee are considered: (1) during the first semester of matriculation, the student must form an initial advisory committee; (2) at the point where a Master's thesis project is defined, the committee might undergo a change; (3) upon completion of the thesis the Ph.D. qualification examination advisory committee must be formed; (4) upon completion of the qualifying exam, a student might elect to make changes in the dissertation advisory committee for supervision of the dissertation. At the end of the spring semester, each student receives a letter summarizing the results of the yearly CDS faculty review of student progress.

### **Initial Advisory Committee**

The initial advisory committee should be formed by the end of the first semester of enrollment. This committee will consist of the student's mentor and (at least) two other faculty members. The purpose of this committee is to guide the student's early progress in the program. The student will consult with this committee to select courses, define a research speciality, and begin development of the Master's thesis project. This committee will supervise all aspects of the student's academic experience until the Master's advisory committee is formed.

### **Master's Advisory Committee**

The primary responsibility of this committee is to guide completion of the Master's thesis. This committee will consist of the student's mentor and (at least) two other faculty members; the student's initial advisory committee may well serve as the thesis committee. The

student will consult with this committee to develop a research idea that is then formalized into a Master's thesis proposal. This committee will determine the adequacy of the proposal, guide completion of the project, supervise other aspects of the student's academic progress during this time, and conduct the oral defense of the Master's thesis.

#### Ph.D. Qualification Examination Advisory Committee

During the semester following successful defense of the Master's thesis, the student must form a committee that will supervise the qualifying examination and dissertation. This committee will consist of the student's mentor and three other faculty members, at least one of whom must be outside of the Department of Psychology. One purpose of the committee is to advise and approve the allied area plan. Another purpose of the committee is to guide the preparation and completion of the student's qualifying examination, including both written and oral components.

#### Dissertation Advisory Committee

This committee may be the same as the Ph.D. Qualification Examination Advisory Committee. It is responsible for supervising academic progress during the remainder of the student's tenure, including the development, completion, and evaluation of the student's Ph.D. dissertation. Each student will develop a formal dissertation proposal, which will be evaluated by the committee. In accord with guidelines of the Graduate School, this committee will also conduct the oral defense of the dissertation, which is the final formal requirement for the Ph.D.

## **RECOMMENDED TIMETABLE OF PROGRESS**

Fall of first year:	Initial Advisory Committee formed and meets
Spring of first year:	Master's Advisory Committee formed
Fall of second year:	Master's thesis proposed and research begun
Spring of second year:	Master's thesis defended
Fall of third year:	Ph.D. Qualification Examination Advisory Committee formed
Spring of third year:	Allied Area work completed
Fall of fourth year:	Qualifying Examination passed
Spring of fourth year:	Dissertation Advisory Committee formed
Fall of fifth year:	Dissertation proposed and research begun
Spring of fifth year:	Dissertation defended

## **EVALUATION OF PROGRESS**

Students will receive explicit, timely feedback concerning their progress in the program. Students will be evaluated by the faculty of the program at several points during their academic careers.

#### Annual Evaluations

As stated earlier, all students will be evaluated by CDS faculty at the end of each academic year. Students will submit a statement of their accomplishments during the year and those accomplishments will be evaluated against students' statements of goals at the beginning of the academic year. In addition, any other information relevant to an evaluation of the student's professional progress will be considered (e.g., performance in teaching assignments, class participation, etc.). The content of the discussion will be communicated to the student in a letter from the CDS Coordinator, which will be approved by all faculty before it is conveyed to the student. Students are encouraged to meet with the CDS Coordinator and his/her advisor following receipt of this letter.

#### Master's Thesis

The end of the fourth semester in the program is the goal for the completion of the Master's thesis. According to GSAC regulations, if the thesis is not completed by the start of classes in the sixth semester in the program, the student may have to meet with GSAC and could be subject to dismissal from the program.

#### Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination is the point in a doctoral program where a determination is made of whether the student will be promoted to candidacy for the Ph.D. The examination consists of a written and oral component, as described previously. It is expected that the oral defense is completed by the end of the fourth year of matriculation. If the qualifying exam has not been completed by the start of classes in the ninth semester (i.e., Fall of fifth year), the student may be placed on probation.

#### Academic Probation

Students will receive explicit feedback about their progress in the program. In cases where the advisory committee rates either quality of performance or rate of progress to be inadequate, the CDS faculty may place the student on academic probation. When placed on probation, the CDS faculty will recommend a course of action that will allow the student to set goals for improvement. The student will receive a letter from the coordinator of the CDS area that outlines the nature of the problem leading to probation and the goals the student must achieve to end the probation period. A timetable for reaching these goals will be included in the letter. The student on probation will also meet with his/her mentor and the CDS Coordinator to discuss the nature of the problem and the work needed for improvement. Probation periods will not normally extend beyond one year.

## **COURSE LOAD**

The usual course load for students receiving non-service fellowships (financial awards that do not require specific teaching or research participation) is 12 credit hours. The usual

course load for students on teaching (T.A.) or research assistantships (R.A.) is 9 credit hours each semester, and assistantship duties are limited to a maximum of 20 work-hours/week. A student must be officially enrolled with the graduate school for at least 9 credit hours in order to be considered a full-time graduate student. Once required course work has been completed, full-time status is maintained through enrollment in variable-credit research hours (PSY 781). At the appropriate time, students must also register for Master's Degree Research Credit (PSY 768) and Doctoral Degree Research Credit (PSY 769). Premaster's Research Credit is PSY 790.

## **COURSES OFFERED**

**PSY 623 PROSEMINAR IN SENSATION AND PERCEPTION.** (3 credit hours)

An intensive examination of the facts, methods and concepts involved in the study of sensory and perceptual processes. Prereq: Consent of instructor.

**PSY 625 PROSEMINAR IN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY.** (3 credit hours)

An intensive treatment of theoretical and experimental literature, both classical and contemporary, in developmental psychology. Prereq: Admission to the graduate program in psychology or consent of instructor.

**PSY 628 PROSEMINAR IN COGNITIVE PROCESSES.** (3 credit hours)

An intensive examination of theoretical and empirical evidence concerning mental processes in the adult human, including attention, memory, language, and problem-solving. Prereq: Graduate standing in psychology, or consent of instructor.

**PSY 748 MASTER'S THESIS RESEARCH.** (0 credit hours)

Half-time to full-time work on thesis. May be repeated to a maximum of six semesters. Prereq: All course work toward the degree must be completed.

**PSY 749 DISSERTATION RESEARCH.** (0 credit hours)

Half-time to full-time work on dissertation. May be repeated to a maximum of six semesters. Prereq: Registration for two full-time semesters of 769 residence credit following the successful completion of the qualifying exams.

**PSY 768 RESIDENCE CREDIT FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE.** (1-6 credit hours)

May be repeated to a maximum of 12 hours.

**PSY 769 RESIDENCE CREDIT FOR THE DOCTOR'S DEGREE.** (0-12 credit hours)

May be repeated indefinitely.

**PSY 772 TOPICAL SEMINAR IN LEARNING.** (3 credit hours)

The study of selected topics in the learning area with emphasis on the recent experimental and theoretical literature. May be repeated to a maximum of six credits. Prereq: Consent of instructor.

**PSY 778 TOPICAL SEMINAR IN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY.** (3 credit hours)



An advanced seminar in selected topics in human development, including cognition, learning, language, personality, socialization, life span issues, and developmental aspects of psychopathology. Prereq: PSY 625 and enrollment in graduate psychology program, or consent of instructor. May be repeated a maximum of six credits.

**PSY 780 PROBLEMS IN PSYCHOLOGY.** (1-3 credit hours)

This number is used for topical seminars taught on an experimental basis or covering special material that may not be presented again. May be repeated to a maximum of six credits.

**PSY 781 RESEARCH PARTICIPATION.** (1 credit hours)

Emphasis on the team approach to research. Designed primarily for first year graduate students. May be repeated to a maximum of four credits. Laboratory, two to four hours. Prereq: Enrollment in the graduate program in psychology.

**PSY 790 RESEARCH IN PSYCHOLOGY.** (1-12 credit hours)

A minimum of three hours per credit a week is required on research conducted in consultation with the instructor. May be repeated as necessary with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.