Psychological & Brain Sciences

The Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences trains graduate students who are interested in becoming the next generation of academic researchers and educators in psychological and brain sciences. Graduate study may be undertaken in the following general areas: Behavior, Brain, & Cognition; Clinical Psychology; Aging & Development; and Social & Personality Psychology. The traditions of Washington University and the department encourage interdisciplinary graduate study, both between the sub-fields of psychological and brain sciences and with other disciplines. Therefore, whereas students must affiliate with at least one of the areas within psychological and brain sciences, they are frequently affiliated with multiple areas within psychological and brain sciences. Further, many graduate students in Psychological & Brain Sciences also engage in interdisciplinary training and research. For example, opportunities for cross-disciplinary training and research are available in the Division of Biology and Biomedical Sciences (e.g., neuroscience and genetics); in the programs of Linguistics and of Cognitive, Computational, and Systems Neuroscience; in African-American Studies; and in Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology, as well as in several departments in the Schools of Medicine and Engineering.

The Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences admits students for full-time study toward the PhD and does not offer a terminal master's degree. However, students are required to complete a master's degree with a thesis as part of the requirements for a PhD. In addition, the PhD requires course work (including statistics, methods, ethics, and several core content areas), a subject matter exam, at least one semester of a teaching experience that fulfills the doctoral teaching requirement, and consistently high-quality research productivity that results in publishable findings.

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Degree Requirements

PhD in Psychological & Brain Sciences

The following is a brief listing of the requirements for the PhD in Psychological & Brain Sciences. A more detailed description
of these requirements may be found in our Guide to Graduate Training (available on our website [http://psychweb.wustl.edu/graduate](http://psychweb.wustl.edu/graduate)). All students must:

- Complete 72 credit hours of graduate-level coursework (this coursework must be completed for a student to be considered ABD). A typical semester course load for the first two years is 12-13 credit hours, unless teaching or research responsibilities suggest a 9-10 credit hour load.

- Obtain teaching experience commensurate with preparation for an academic career. There is a teaching requirement that all students must meet, the details of which are outlined in our Guide to Graduate Training.

- Attend a 1-credit (one hour per week) seminar on research ethics. This typically happens during the fall semester of a student’s first or second year in the program.

- Attend at least five (5) workshops on professional development over the entire course of the program.

- Complete a qualifying research project during the first two years of graduate study. This is often referred to as the master’s thesis.

- Pass a subject matter examination. This examination must be passed before work on the dissertation can begin.

- Complete a dissertation project and defend it in an oral examination. The research requirements for the PhD are described in more detail in our Guide to Graduate Training.