

Psychological & Brain Sciences, PhD

Doctoral Candidacy

To earn a PhD at Washington University, a student must complete all courses required by their department; maintain satisfactory academic progress; pass certain examinations; fulfill residence and Mentored Experience Requirements; write, defend, and submit a dissertation; and file an Intent to Graduate. For a general layout of doctoral degree general requirements in Arts & Sciences, including an explanation of Satisfactory Academic Progress, students should review the Doctoral Degree Academic Information page of the Arts & Sciences *Bulletin*.

Program Requirements

- **Total Units Required: 36 (Note:** Remission applies for a maximum of 72 graduate-level units.)
- **Degree Length: 5 years**
 - The PhD in Psychological & Brain Sciences is a 5 year program. Students in the Clinical Science area will complete an additional year of clinical internship for a total of 6 years to complete the degree.
 - **Note:** Students must be enrolled in 9 graduate credits each semester to retain full-time status. As students complete their course work, if enrolled in fewer than 9 graduate credits, they must enroll in a specific Arts & Sciences graduate course that will show 0 units but does count as full-time status. Students should connect with their department to ensure proper enrollment prior to Add/Drop.
 - Graduate Students receive financial support, including tuition remission, for up to five years if they are in good standing.

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 Graduate Student Handbook (PDF). Students in the clinical science training program have somewhat different requirements; please refer to the Clinical Program Handbook (PDF) as well.

All students must do the following:

- Complete required graduate-level courses (courses must be completed for a student to be considered "all but dissertation"). A typical semester course load for the first two years is 8-11 units. Full-time status is at least 9 units of coursework OR 1-8 units + the LGS 9000 enrollment.
- 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 Graduate Student Handbook.

- Attend a 1-credit (one hour per week) seminar on research ethics. This seminar typically happens during the fall semester of a student's first or second year in the program.
- Attend at least five professional development workshops over the course of the program.
- Complete a qualifying research project during the first two years of graduate study. This project 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 Graduate Student Handbook.

Required Courses

Students are required to take a minimum of 36 units to earn the degree. Required courses make up 12 units, Distribution Requirements make up 9 units, and the remaining 15 units will consist of units earned by enrolling in the department seminar series (Psych 5245) and colloquium series (Psych 5999), taking additional distribution courses, or taking other elective courses that support the student's research and career goals. Students must achieve a grade of B- or higher in all courses offered for a letter grade and must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Code	Title	Units
Psych 5066	Quantitative Methods I	3
Psych 5067	Quantitative Methods II	3
Psych 5011	Research Designs and Methods	3
Psych 5405	Seminar in Research Ethics	1
Psych 565	Practicum in Teaching of Psychology	2

Distribution Requirements

Students must take one course from three of the following seven distribution areas.*

- * **Note to Clinical Science Students:** Please see the Clinical Science Program Handbook for more specific guidelines regarding which courses should be used to fulfill distribution areas for the clinical science program.

Social and Personality Psychology

Code	Title	Units
Psych 503	Seminar: Experimental Social Psychology	3
Psych 5225	The Psychology of Social Stigma	3
Psych 5227	The Science of Close Relationships	3
Psych 5352	Theories of Personality Psychology	3
Psych 5358	Personality Psychology and Behavioral Dynamics	3
Psych 5593	Psychology of the Good Life	3

Psych 592A	Seminar: Theories of Social Psychology	3
Psych 5953	Memory and Attitudes in the Wild: Political Spin, Collective Attitudes and Advertising	3
Psych 5427	Social Gerontology	3

Abnormal Psychology and Affective Neuroscience

Code	Title	Units
Psych 5345	Current Directions in Research on Genetic and Environmental Contributions to Psychological Phenomena	3
Psych 537	Advanced Psychopathology	3
Psych 5373	Neural Systems of Behavior and Psychopathology	3
Psych 540A	Advanced Seminar in Clinical Psychology: Personality and Psychopathology	3
Psych 545	Clinical Science: Introduction to Intervention	3
Psych 5453	Introduction to Affective Science	3
Psych 546	Seminar in Psychotherapy: Behavior Therapy	3
Psych 5523	Neuropsychological Syndromes	3
Psych 588	Clinical Psychology of Aging II	3
Psych 5958	Emotion Regulation	3

Biological-Neurological Bases of Behavior

Code	Title	Units
Psych 5373	Neural Systems of Behavior and Psychopathology	3
Psych 5523	Neuropsychological Syndromes	3
Psych 5831	Biological Foundations of Behavior	3
Biol 5651	Neural Systems	4

Cognitive, Learning, and Perception

Code	Title	Units
Psych 5081	Consciousness, Cognitive Control and Subjective Experience	3
Psych 5085	Human Memory	3
Psych 5086	Retrieval Processes in Human Memory	3
Psych 5087	Advanced Cognitive Psychology	3
Psych 5088	Key Readings in Cognitive Psychology	3
Psych 5089	Cognitive Neuroscience of Memory	3
Psych 5095	Concepts in the Science of Memory	3
Psych 532	Seminar in Developmental Psychology: Language and Cognitive Development	3
Psych 5182	Perception, Thought, and Action	3
Psych 5505	Seeing	3
Psych 5665	The Science of Behavior	3

Aging and Development

Code	Title	Units
Psych 5255	Lifespan Health Psychology	3
Psych 532	Seminar in Developmental Psychology: Language and Cognitive Development	3
Psych 5321	Advanced Developmental Psychology	3
Psych 588	Clinical Psychology of Aging II	3
Psych 5881	Psychology of Aging	3
Psych 5887	Intervention with Older Adults	3

History of Psychology

Code	Title	Units
Psych 4651	History and Modern Systems of Psychology	3

Quantitative Knowledge

Code	Title	Units
Psych 5012	Selected Topics in Design and Statistics	3
Psych 5068	Hierarchical Linear Models	3
Psych 516	Applied Multivariate Analysis	3
Psych 5165	Applied Longitudinal Data Analysis	3
Psych 5167	Applied Bayesian Statistics for Psychologists	3

Qualifying Examinations

Progress toward the PhD is contingent upon the student passing examinations that are variously called *preliminary*, *qualifying*, *general*, *comprehensive*, or *major field exams*. The qualifying process varies according to the program. In some programs, it consists of a series of incremental, sequential, and cumulative exams over a considerable time. In others, the exams are held during a relatively short period of time. Exams may be replaced by one or more papers. The program, which determines the structure and schedule of the required examinations, is responsible for notifying the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, of the student's outcome, whether successful or unsuccessful.

Mentored Experience Requirements

Doctoral students at Washington University must complete a department-defined Mentored Experience. The Mentored Experience Requirement is a doctoral degree milestone that is notated on the student's transcript when complete. Each department has an established Mentored Experience Implementation Plan in which the number of units that a student must earn through Mentored Teaching Experience(s) and/or Mentored Professional Experience(s) is defined. The Mentored Experience Implementation Plans outline how doctoral students within the discipline will be mentored to achieve competencies in teaching at basic and advanced levels. Some departments may elect to include Mentored Professional Experiences as an avenue for completing some units of the Mentored Experience

Requirement. Doctoral students will enroll in LGS 6XXX Mentored Teaching Experience or LGS 7020 Mentored Professional Experience to signify their progression toward completing the overall Mentored Experience Requirement for the degree.

The Doctoral Dissertation

A Research Advisory Committee (RAC) must be created no later than the end of the student's third year; departments may set shorter timelines (e.g., by the end of the student's second year) for this requirement. As evidence of the mastery of a specific field of knowledge and of the capacity for original scholarly work, each candidate must complete a dissertation that is approved by their RAC.

A Title, Scope & Procedure Form for the dissertation must be signed by the committee members and by the program chair. It must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, at least 6 months before the degree is expected to be conferred or before beginning the fifth year of full-time enrollment, whichever is earlier.

A Doctoral Dissertation Guide & Template that give instructions regarding the format of the dissertation are available on the website of the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. Both should be read carefully at every stage of dissertation preparation.

The Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, requires each student to make the full text of the dissertation available to the committee members for their review at least 1 week before the defense. Most degree programs require 2 or more weeks for the review period; students should check with their faculty.

The Dissertation Defense

Approval of the written dissertation by the RAC is necessary before the student can orally defend their dissertation. The Dissertation Defense Committee that observes and examines the student's defense consists of at least five members, who normally meet these criteria:

- Three of the five must be full-time Washington University faculty members or, for programs offered by Washington University-affiliated partners, full-time members of a Washington University-affiliated partner institution who are authorized to supervise PhD students and who have appropriate expertise in the proposed field of study; one of these three must be the PhD student's primary thesis advisor, and one may be a member of the emeritus faculty. A fourth member may come from inside or outside the student's program. The fifth member must be from outside the student's program; this fifth member may be a Washington University research professor or lecturer, a professor from another university, or a scholar from the private sector or government who holds a doctorate and maintains an active research program.
- Three of the five normally come from the student's degree program; at least one of the five must not.

All committees must be approved by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, regardless of whether they meet the normal criteria.

The committee is appointed by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, upon the request of the degree program. The student is responsible for making the full text of the dissertation accessible to their committee members for their review in advance of the defense. Faculty and graduate students who are interested in the subject of the dissertation are normally welcome to attend all or part of the defense but may ask questions only at the discretion of the committee members. Although there is some variation among degree programs, the defense ordinarily focuses on the dissertation itself and its relation to the student's field of expertise.

Submission of the Dissertation

After the defense, the student must submit an electronic copy of the dissertation online to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. The submission website requires students to choose among publishing and copyrighting services offered by ProQuest's ETD Administrator. The degree program is responsible for delivering the final approval form, signed by the committee members at the defense and then by the program chair or director, to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. Students who defend their dissertations successfully have not yet completed their PhD requirements; they finish earning their degree only when their dissertation submission has been accepted by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.

Master's Degree Along the Way/ In Lieu of a PhD

From the beginning of the graduate program in Psychological & Brain Sciences at Washington University students participate in research reflecting their area of specialization. That education will be guided by their research mentor and will take place within one or more of the research laboratories in the department or university. In the early stages of their study, students will work on a qualifying research project (master's thesis). Once the qualifying research project is completed (by the end of your second year) and the student has completed at least 36 units, including the required course work (e.g., Statistics, Research Methods, Research Ethics, and the distribution classes), the student can receive a master's degree along the way to the PhD.

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