

Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

Psychology Doctoral Degree Program

We offer a single doctoral degree which may be earned in one of the following concentrations: brain, behavior, and quantitative science, clinical psychology, or social psychology. Students admitted to the Psychology Graduate Program are expected to continue graduate study through the Ph.D. as the department does not admit terminal master's students.

Our program boasts distinguished and award-winning faculty, notable research publications, and a deep foundation in the historical progress of psychological advances.

Please visit our department website (<https://psychology.ku.edu/psychology-graduate-program/>) for more information.

For applicants interested in Clinical Child Psychology: The Clinical Child Psychology doctoral training program is housed within the Department of Clinical Child Psychology (<https://ccpp.ku.edu/>). Contact email ccpp@ku.edu, with any questions regarding applying to this program.

Admission to Graduate Studies

Admission Requirements

- All applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>) policy.
- Bachelor's degree: A copy of official transcripts showing proof of a bachelor's degree (and any post-bachelor's coursework or degrees) from a regionally accredited institution, or a foreign university with equivalent bachelor's degree requirements is required.
- English proficiency: Proof of English proficiency (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) for non-native or non-native-like English speakers is required. There are two bands of English proficiency, including Admission and Full proficiency. For applicants to online programs, Full proficiency is required.

Graduate Admission

The department does not admit students seeking the terminal master's degree. All students admitted to the Psychology Graduate program are expected to continue graduate study through the Ph.D.

In addition to the general admissions requirements (http://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/?num1_1=) from the Office of Graduate Studies, applicants are required to provide the following materials in their application.

- A current C.V. (curriculum vitae) or resume
- A Statement of Purpose
- Name and Email addresses of 3 references
- List of psychology courses taken and grades received (at least 15 credit hours in psychology or a closely related field is required, including a first course in statistics and a course in experimental psychology or psychological research methods.)*

*Applicants to the Brain, Behavior, and Quantitative Science concentration are not required to submit this requirement. However, they must identify a faculty member in the department who is open to their background as well as provide a convincing argument in their statement of purpose that they are prepared to complete a doctoral degree in psychology.

Applications should be submitted online through the Graduate Admissions website (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>). Application are due by December 1st or the following business day. Applications are only accepted for Fall Admission.

Visit the Psychology Graduate Program website (<https://psychology.ku.edu/psychology-graduate-program/>) for more information on admission requirements or contact the department's graduate program coordinator.

Ph.D. Degree Requirements

The Department of Psychology offers one Ph.D. degree in Psychology, through three unique concentrations. Students develop unique plans of study with their faculty committee. These plans indicate how the student proposes to fulfill the requirements for the Ph.D. degree (including M.A. requirements), considering all general requirements and conditions.

Note: Contact the department for more information about research skills and responsible scholarship, and the current requirements for doctoral students. Review the Office of Graduate Studies policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/research-skills-responsible-scholarship/>) for general requirements for all doctoral students.

Our department graduate student handbook provides additional procedural information related to these requirements. Please visit the Psychology Graduate Program webpage (<https://psychology.ku.edu/psychology-graduate-program/>) to view a current edition of our department handbook.

Code	Title	Hours
Course Requirements for Ph.D. in Psychology		
Research		12
Choose one of the following:		
PSYC 980	Special Problems in Psychology	
PSYC 999	Dissertation	
Elective Courses		6
Students develop unique plans of study in consultation with their faculty contract committee. The contract committee will work individually with the student to identify courses that will cater to the student's unique interests.		
Concentration course work		9-14
Total Hours		27-32

Brain, Behavior, and Quantitative Science Concentration

The Brain, Behavior, and Quantitative Science concentration provides instruction and research training for students pursuing careers in the academic, public, and private sectors that draw on the research and scholarly interests of the core faculty. These interests include behavioral economics, cognitive neuroscience, cognitive science, developmental science, learning, and quantitative and computational methods. Across all

areas, a strong emphasis is placed on students developing a fundamental understanding of psychological theory, acquiring advanced statistical and computational skills and expertise, and learning how to apply this science to improve the development and/or well-being of individuals in society. Toward this end, the program requires both coursework and sustained involvement in the research endeavor, whether in the laboratory or in the field, and (where appropriate) active engagement in opportunities to translate basic science into practice or application.

Training Contracts

Students are guided by individually tailored plans, or contracts. These contracts are a mutual agreement between the student and a faculty committee that describe a set of learning experiences designed to allow the student to establish a career in the behavioral sciences whether that is within or outside of academia. In general, each contract specifies a set of courses tailored to each student that provides the student training in core substantive areas of psychology, quantitative and computational psychology, and training in translational science that are relevant to the goals of the degree on which the faculty and student agree. In addition, the contract specifies a student's long-term goals, planned research activities, other professional development necessary for the student to achieve his/her goals, a plan for the evaluation of progress in the program, and a timeline with proposed completion dates. As a part of this contract system students are evaluated annually on their progress within the program.

The contract is a general framework that permits students to adapt their graduate work to their interests, strengths, and weaknesses. It also provides a standard against which progress can be assessed. Students contracts must specify how the research skills and responsible scholarship requirement will be met; the research skills requirement typically is met by completion of a set of graduate courses in statistics and research design and work in a research laboratory, while the responsible scholarship requirement is met via (a) coursework as specified in the contract, (b) completion of online tutorials associated with obtaining IRB certification, and (c) attendance at ethics professional seminars. All contracts must comply with other departmental and university policies including residence and time limits.

Code	Title	Hours
Ph.D. Requirements for the Brain, Behavior, and Quantitative Science Concentration		
Professional Seminar		6
PSYC 881	Proseminar in Quantitative Behavioral and Social Sciences	
Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship		8
PSYC 780	Research Lab	
PSYC 899	Thesis	
PSYC 980	Special Problems in Psychology	
Total Hours		14

Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship

The University requires that every doctoral student receive training in responsible scholarship pertinent to the field of research and obtain research skills pertinent to the doctoral level of research in their field(s). These requirements must be completed by the end of the semester that the student takes the oral comprehensive exam. For students in the Brain, Behavior, & Quantitative Science concentration, this requirement is satisfied by completion of:

- 1 Statistical Methods course
- 1 Research Methods course
- Total of 8 credits of PSYC 780, PSYC 899, or PSYC 980
- Online CITI Training

The Oral Comprehensive Exam

The oral comprehensive exam is meant to mark the transition point of successfully completing doctoral coursework and moving into full-time research on the dissertation milestone. Thus, all coursework laid out in the student's contract should be completed before scheduling the oral comprehensive exam. After completing the oral comprehensive exam, students are considered "doctoral candidates." The oral comprehensive exam can take on several different formats in this program (see below), but generally involves preparing a written document that showcases the student's expertise in their program of study as well as an oral defense of that document.

1. Defense of a major area paper
2. Defense of two research proposals
3. Defense of five propositions
4. Defense of written exam

The Office of (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-oral-exams/>) Graduate Studies policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-oral-exams/>) outlines general requirements for completing the Oral Comprehensive Exam. Students should meet with their faculty advisor and the concentration director to decide which format is best for them and provide further details on preparing for their oral defense.

All students must complete an Oral Comprehensive Exam before beginning work towards their Doctoral Dissertation. The defense of the Oral Comprehensive Exam includes an oral presentation of the student's selected format and questions from a faculty committee. Doctoral committees must meet the Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/oral-exam-committee-composition/>).

Following the successful completion of the Oral Comprehensive Exam, students in the Brain, Behavior and Quantitative Science concentration will begin progress towards completing their dissertation and final oral exam. The Office of Graduate Studies policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/final-oral-exams/>) outline general requirements for the final oral exam.

The Doctoral Dissertation

The doctoral dissertation is meant to be the culmination of a student's research training and demonstrate both independent scholarship and doctoral-level research competency. It takes the form of a written document describing one or more novel research projects led by the student (i.e., it should contain a substantial amount of work completed by the student after the proposal, although it is acceptable to build upon a foundation of previous work by the student and the work of collaborators).

Dissertation Proposal

Students complete a dissertation proposal with their dissertation committee before they are approved to begin work towards their Doctoral Dissertation. The dissertation proposal meeting includes an oral presentation from the student, and a collaborative discussion of the proposal with the student's committee including the student.

Dissertation Defense

All students must complete and defend a dissertation. The defense of the Doctoral Dissertation includes an oral presentation of the student's selected format and questions from a faculty committee. Doctoral committees must meet the Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/oral-exam-committee-composition/>).

Clinical Science Concentration

The clinical psychology concentration educates students to master knowledge in the field of scientific psychology so that they can generate new scientific knowledge and theory related to the field of clinical psychology, and can make independent contributions to the evolving base of skills and scientific knowledge required for clinical practice. All students take basic course work and practica in academic/research and clinical application. Students may take electives or practica to augment either aspect of training. About half the graduates pursue academic/research-oriented careers, and the rest undertake careers emphasizing applied activities (e.g., psychotherapy in community mental health centers or hospitals).

Major Area of Study in Health and Rehabilitation Psychology

Work centers on the psychosocial and biomedical aspects of physical health, illness, and disability. Students apply the knowledge and techniques to problems of prevention, assessment, treatment, and rehabilitation. Students interested in this area will earn a Ph.D. in Psychology, Clinical Science. The department does not offer this major area of study as a concentration or track.

Requirements

Individual plans of study are designed to meet the standards established by state licensing boards and professional organizations. The plan of study constitutes an agreement between the student and the entire clinical faculty.

Code	Title	Hours
Ph.D. Requirements for the Clinical Science Concentration		
Internship		3
Repeated for 1 credit for 3 consecutive semesters		
PSYC 974	Clinical Psychology Internship	
Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship		
PSYC 968	Research Methods in Clinical Psychology	3
PSYC 810	History and Ethics in Psychology	3
Total Hours		9

Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship

The research skills requirement is met by completion of 2 graduate courses in statistics and 1 research design course. The responsible scholarship requirement is met by completing:

- PSYC 968 Research Methods in Clinical Psychology
- PSYC 810 History and Ethics in Psychology
- Online IRB tutorial and Online HIPAA data tutorial

The Task & Oral Comprehensive Exam

Students must propose and demonstrate competence in one task or project. This task is typically completed in the third year. It may be in applied/clinical, research/methodology, or program evaluation. A complete description of the task is available in the KU Psychological Clinic office. The task is provided to the Director of Clinical Training for approval.

Upon completion of all degree requirements except the dissertation and internship, the student must pass the oral comprehensive examination. The defense of the oral comprehensive exam includes an oral presentation and questions from a faculty committee. Doctoral committees must meet the Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/oral-exam-committee-composition/>) and include a majority of core clinical psychology faculty.

The Doctoral Dissertation

Students must complete and defend an empirical doctoral dissertation. The defense of the Doctoral Dissertation includes an oral presentation of the student's selected format and questions from a faculty committee. Doctoral committees must meet the Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/oral-exam-committee-composition/>) and include a majority of core clinical psychology faculty. It is strongly recommended that students complete their dissertation before leaving for internship.

Internship

Students must complete a 12-month predoctoral internship at a setting approved by the clinical psychology faculty. Clinical students may complete their internships at any setting approved by the American Psychology Association. Applications for graduation are not approved until the department receives confirmation from the internship site that a student has successfully completed their internship and the student has passed their dissertation defense.

Social Psychology Concentration

The Social Psychology concentration is an intensive research training experience seeking students who are committed to empirical, scholarly work. The major research interests of faculty members are stereotyping, prejudice, intergroup relations, person perception, close relationships, emotion and motivation, self and identity, culture.

In addition to coursework, the central requirement of the program is continuous involvement in research. Research opportunities range from laboratory experimentation to field research. Depending on backgrounds and goals, students may move from one research setting to another or concentrate on a particular type of research throughout their training.

Training Contracts

Students are guided by individually tailored plans called contracts. These describe sequences of learning experiences developed by the student and a 3-member faculty committee. The contract specifies students' long-range goals, specialties, other fields of psychology or related disciplines in which they will become proficient, proposed sequence of course work, research and teaching experiences they hope to obtain, plans for the M.A. proposal, comprehensive requirements and dissertation landmarks, and an approximate timetable. Contract details can be changed by agreement of the student and faculty committee.

The contract is a general framework that permits students' graduate work to be adapted to their interests and abilities and provides a standard against which progress can be assessed. Students' contracts must specify how the research skills and responsible scholarship requirement is to be met. The research skills requirement typically is met by completion of 6 graduate courses in statistics and research design. The responsible scholarship requirement is met via coursework as specified in the contract, completion of online tutorials, and attendance at ethics professional seminars. All contracts must comply with other departmental and university policies including residence and time limits.

Code	Title	Hours
Ph.D. Requirements for the Social Psychology Concentration		
Professional Seminar		6
PSYC 903	Proseminar in Social Psychology	
Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship		
Elective course(s) chosen in consultation with the students contract committee		3-6
Total Hours		9-12

Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship

The University requires that every doctoral student receive training in responsible scholarship pertinent to the field of research and obtain research skills pertinent to the doctoral level of research in their field(s). These requirements must be completed by the end of the semester that the student takes the oral comprehensive exam. For students in the Social Psychology concentration, this requirement is satisfied by completion of:

- Elective course(s) chosen in consultation with the students contract committee
- HSC-L ethics tutorial
- Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) tutorial
- Attendance of ethics discussions included in the Professional Seminar series

The Oral Comprehensive Exam

Students are required to complete an oral comprehensive exam once all coursework outlined in the contract is complete. Social Psychology students choose 1 of the following choices to complete their oral comprehensive exam.

1. Defense of a major area paper
2. Defense of two research proposals
3. Defense of five propositions
4. Defense of written exam

The Office of Graduate Studies policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-oral-exams/>) outlines general requirements for completing the oral comprehensive exam. Students should meet with their faculty advisor and the concentration director to decide which format is best for them and provide further details on preparing for their oral defense.

All students must complete an oral comprehensive exam before beginning work towards their doctoral dissertation. The defense of the oral comprehensive exam includes an oral presentation of the student's selected format and questions from a faculty committee. Doctoral committees must meet the Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee

Composition policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/oral-exam-committee-composition/>).

Following the successful completion of the oral comprehensive exam, students in the Social Psychology concentration will progress towards completing their dissertation and final oral exam. The Office of Graduate Studies policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/final-oral-exams/>) outline general requirements for the final oral exam.

The Doctoral Dissertation

The doctoral dissertation is meant to be the culmination of a student's research training and demonstrate both independent scholarship and doctoral-level research competency. It takes the form of a written document describing one or more novel research projects led by the student (i.e., it should contain a substantial amount of work completed by the student after the proposal, although it is acceptable to build upon a foundation of previous work by the student and the work of collaborators).

Dissertation Proposal

Students complete a dissertation proposal with their dissertation committee before they are approved to begin work towards their Doctoral Dissertation. The dissertation proposal meeting includes an oral presentation from the student, and a collaborative discussion of the proposal with the student's committee including the student

Dissertation Defense

All students must complete and defend a dissertation. The defense of the Doctoral Dissertation includes an oral presentation of the student's selected format and questions from a faculty committee. Doctoral committees must meet the Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/oral-exam-committee-composition/>).

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Conduct original, publishable research in the field.
- Demonstrate a broad knowledge of theory and research across several sub-areas in the field.
- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of one area of expertise.
- Conceptualize research questions, and apply appropriate quantitative, qualitative, and/or computational modeling methods for data analysis and interpretation.
- Follow ethical guidelines for research and practice in the field.
- Write and speak effectively to professional and lay audiences.
- Recognize the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion for research, coursework, teaching, service, and collaborations with colleagues; apply DEI principles in local work settings and the broader discipline.