



**SCHOOL OF BEHAVIORAL AND BRAIN SCIENCES
Department of Psychology**

**Doctor of Philosophy in
Psychology Program**

Student Guide

updated January 2025

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INTRODUCTION

This student guide is a working document that provides information on policies and procedures on the Ph.D. Psychology program in the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences (BBS). It does not replace but supplements information you can find from official University sources, including the [Office of Graduate Education](#) and the [Graduate Catalog](#).

The BBS faculty and its representatives on the Graduate Studies Committee may make changes which could affect students during their time at UTD. Likewise, legislative actions, financial realities, or changes in University policy may affect academic requirements. Our curricula and requirements are continuously under faculty review. When changes occur, we will do our best to notify you in a timely manner, so be sure to check your UTD e-mail regularly. If you have questions not answered in this guide or if you are unsure about policies and procedures, please contact [Dr. Karen Rodrigue](#) (Program Director), [Dr. Shayla Holub](#) (Psychology Department Head), or [Dr. Robert Stillman](#) (BBS Associate Dean for Graduate Studies).

Like all universities here and abroad, financial pressures resulting from declining government support will impact faculty and students alike. Fortunately, UT Dallas is a healthy and growing institution and has not experienced the severe cutbacks other universities have faced. Nonetheless, we will be expected to make our programs more efficient and effective. Time to degree is an important measure of program efficiency and there will be pressure on students and their mentors to decrease the time between program milestones. There will also be regular and rigorous evaluation of student performance. We must be certain that the students in whom we invest our time and financial resources are the ones having the greatest likelihood of success in the program and their careers.

PHD PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Program Director: Dr. Karen Rodrigue is the program director for the Ph.D. Psychology (PSY) program. Consult with her on any issue relating to doctoral study, including information on program requirements, procedures and opportunities, assistantship assignments, and other student academic issues.

Department Faculty: The faculty in the Department of Psychology are responsible for the two Ph.D. programs (Psychology and Cognitive and Neuroscience) in the department. They develop Ph.D. program curriculum and requirements, serve in an advising and mentoring capacity, and evaluate student performance and progress.

Research Advisor: The research advisor is the primary faculty member with whom you will work; they will provide research mentoring, help you select courses, and carry out other responsibilities described in the “Advising” section.

Department Head: Dr. Shayla Holub is the Department Head for Psychology, overseeing budgets related to the graduate programs, general departmental operations, and coordination of the academic degree programs.

Associate Dean for Graduate Studies: Dr. Robert Stillman, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, coordinates all BBS graduate programs. The Associate Dean also serves on the UTD Graduate Council and is the School’s liaison with the UTD Office of Graduate Education.

Dean: Dr. Adam Woods, the Dean of the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences, oversees all of the School’s academic and research activities.

Center Directors: Each of the School’s six Centers has a director who oversees PhD student participation in its research and other activities.

- Dr. Angela Shoup - [Callier Center for Communication Disorders](#)
- Dr. Ted Price – [Center for Advanced Pain Studies](#)
- Dr. Sandra Chapman - [Center for BrainHealth](#)
- Dr. Mandy Maguire – [Center for Children and Families](#)
- Dr. Michael Rugg - [Center for Vital Longevity](#)

- Dr. Michael Kilgard - [Texas Biomedical Device Center](#)

Academic Support Coordinator: Each PhD program has an academic support coordinator (ASC) who assists PhD students with course registration, completing administrative forms, and other needs as described in this guide. The ASC for the Ph.D. Psychology program is Ashton Nance.

PHD PROGRAM FACILITIES

Some offices, classrooms and research facilities of the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences are located on the Richardson campus while others are located in one of the School's six centers. The [Callier Center for Communication Disorders](#) has two locations, in downtown Dallas and on the Richardson campus. The Callier Center has a primary focus on speech, language, and hearing and includes research laboratories, clinical services, and educational programs for children and adults with a wide variety of communication needs. The [Center for BrainHealth](#) and the [Center for Vital Longevity](#) are located near the campus of the UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas. The Center for BrainHealth emphasizes research activities in the areas of developmental disorders, clinical neuroscience, and aging. Research at the Center for Vital Longevity focuses on cognitive aging, age-related diseases affecting cognition, and factors which support successful aging. The [Center for Children and Families](#), the [Center for Advanced Pain Studies](#), and the [Texas Biomedical Device Center](#) are located on the main campus. The Center for Children and Families offers clinical and community outreach activities organized around three initiatives: parenting healthy families, strengthening interpersonal relationships, and enhancing thinking and learning. The Center for Advanced Pain Studies is pursuing lines of research aimed at alleviating suffering from pain and improving the lives of people with chronic pain and/or migraine. The Texas Biomedical Device Center aims to develop technologies to prevent injuries, detect impairments, and restore quality of life lost due to neurological injuries and disease. The Centers' collaborative arrangements with the UT Southwestern Medical School expand PhD student research opportunities including access to clinical populations and brain imaging and other research facilities.

STUDENT OFFICES AND STUDY AREAS

Full-time doctoral students are eligible for shared office space or a carrel in a study area; space is available in several locations on the Richardson campus and the off-campus Centers. Students whose primary location is in an off-campus Center should contact their Department Head or appropriate Center administrator to request an office/carrel assignment. Because of the shortage of space, we cannot ensure that all students will have office space. Students who do not need or use the space will be asked to relinquish it. Students whose office is in one of the Centers, but who have TA responsibilities on the Richardson campus, may sign up for shared space when holding office hours. The Academic Support Coordinator will send out an email before each semester to allow students to sign up for TA times in the shared office. There are currently 2 shared offices available in JO and GR for TAs to use when meeting with students. The School does not provide computers or other equipment for the student offices and shared spaces.

ELEARNING

To access [eLearning](#), students use their NetID and NetID password. Materials for courses in which students are enrolled, and any course for which a student may be the Teaching Assistant, may be found on eLearning.

COMPLIANCE TRAINING

Students who are appointed as Teaching Assistants or Research Assistants must complete Compliance Training. This training provides information regarding laws and policies applicable to The University of Texas at Dallas and how, as an employee, to ensure compliance with these laws and policies. Students appointed as a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant for the first time must complete this training within 30 days of the appointment. Continuing TAs and RAs are required to take the training each year as a refresher. The online training is found in eLearning.

PHD ADVISING

Research Advisor

You will primarily work with your research advisor, who will provide you with mentoring in research, guidance in the selection of courses, assistance in preparing and updating your degree plan and Milestones Agreement forms, and career guidance. The research advisor supervises and must sign off on the student's qualifying proposals and papers and other documents submitted to the Department. When students submit milestone documents for review, research advisors must be cc'd to denote approval. It is imperative that students work closely with their research advisors when completing their milestones. In most cases, the research advisor will become the chair of the student's dissertation committee. All tenured system faculty are eligible to serve as research advisors, including faculty in departments other than the one to which the student was admitted.

Occasionally, a student may wish to change research advisors. There are many reasons a student may seek a change. However, a change of research advisors should be carefully considered since starting in a new lab or new area can result in delays in meeting deadlines. You should seek the advice of your Program Director, Department Head or the Associate Dean before initiating a change. There are also situations in which a research advisor may no longer wish to serve as a student's advisor. It is a faculty prerogative to withdraw as a student's research advisor.

Whether by student choice or faculty decision, a student who at any time lacks a research advisor for more than one semester will be dismissed from the program.

REGISTERING FOR COURSES

Ashton Nance, the academic support coordinator (ASC) for the Ph.D. Psychology program, will register students each semester; students may not register themselves. Before registration, you must meet with your research advisor to complete a [registration form](#). Then, you'll submit the registration form, signed by the research advisor and you, to the ASC.

If you wish to add or drop a course, you must repeat the process starting with your research advisor. If there is a "Hold" on your student account (which could result from missing documents, unpaid fees, financial aid issues, or even an incorrect mailing address) you must resolve the problem before you can be registered. You should review your registration and payments regularly so that any errors can be caught and corrected quickly; you can do this by logging into your student account in [Galaxy](#).

DEGREE PLANNING AND ANNUAL REPORTING

Doctoral study in BBS includes a series of milestones. The key milestones include: 1) completion of core and advanced coursework, 2) development of proposals and completion of a research project and grant proposal or literature review, 3) preparation and defense of the dissertation proposal, and 4) completion and defense of the dissertation. Students will approach these tasks somewhat differently, but each step is critical toward completion of the degree. Timely achievement of each milestone is essential, and students who fall behind risk losing assistantship support or even being dismissed from the PhD program.

A degree plan for the [Psychology PhD program](#) shows when and how students expect to meet coursework and other requirements. It also helps the program director project the need for courses not offered annually. The degree plan is a working document initiated by the student and their research advisor is updated annually to reflect the student's developing research focus and career goals. The School offers many seminars on special topics, so it may not be possible to anticipate every aspect of a student's entire degree plan from the start. But a degree plan should be in place to specify how the student will meet coursework requirements and to indicate the timelines for meeting degree milestones. A final degree plan demonstrating completion of all program requirements must be filed along with the application for graduation.

In addition to the degree plan, the UT System requires that a Milestones Agreement Form be on file before the end of the student's first semester in the PhD program. Students can get a copy of the milestones agreement form by contacting the academic support coordinator. The milestones agreement form officially informs students and their advisors of their progress in completing specific degree requirements. The student and research advisor must review, update and sign this form annually and submit it to the Program Director and ASC.

Every spring, students will be notified by their Program Director that they must complete an annual report detailing their progress and accomplishments toward completion of the PhD, including coursework completed, teaching and research activities, professional papers and presentations, and achievement of program milestones. This information, along with independently gathered data on the student's academic, research, and assistantship performance, is incorporated into an annual evaluation that is used to advise the student and to make decisions about retention in the program and providing assistantship funding, as described below.

CRITERIA FOR RETENTION AND ASSISTANTSHIP FUNDING

(Policy currently under review and subject to change)

The Department Faculty for each PhD program meet annually to review the progress of PhD students. The quality of the student's performance, the rate of progress, and the likelihood of completing the degree are the primary criteria used by faculty in these evaluations and students are notified by letter concerning their progress. In some cases, students may be given specific feedback including deadlines for completing specific requirements that they must meet to remain in the program. Students are encouraged to meet with their research advisors periodically to discuss their progress and obtain informal feedback. Students whose progress is unsatisfactory risk suspension or loss of their assistantship and may be dropped from the program. Listed below are some of the standards considered in determining whether a student is making satisfactory progress.

Physical Presence Requirements

Students enrolled in face-to-face courses, including independent study, research, and dissertation hours, are expected to be on-campus and participating in classes for the full semester. Absence for academic reasons, such as attendance at professional meetings, are documented through the travel authorization form. Absences for non-academic reasons, such as personal travel, require the approval of your academic advisor. Teaching Assistants also need to obtain approval from the instructor of the course to which they are assigned. It is recommended that students retain email documentation of the approval to be absent. In the case of health-related absences or absences for family emergencies, please notify your supervisor(s) and Program Manager in a timely manner.

Summer and Intersession Travel

Funded students (supported by full tuition scholarship and stipend) are expected to be available on campus for the duration of the summer session as well as the long semesters. Please plan personal travel for time between semesters. If you have questions about these dates, please contact Michelle Blazewicz (Program Manager) or the Associate Dean for Graduate Education. Students assigned as Teaching Assistants for online courses or to the TA Pool must still be present on-campus for the duration of the semester. Except for brief periods and travel authorized by the Department, students residing outside the immediate Dallas area are not eligible for assistantship funding. If you have questions regarding the residency requirement, contact the Program Manager or the Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

Additional Restrictions for International Students

International students have additional restrictions imposed by the US Department of Homeland Security. Students should familiarize themselves with the regulations described on the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) [webpage](#). Those requirements are updated in concert with changes in immigration policy. According to current policy, all international students must reside continuously in the Dallas area and be available on-campus. Any extended travel or international travel must be cleared through the ISSO to avoid putting your visa at risk. Neither the School nor your Department can advise you on visa and other immigration issues. That responsibility rests solely with the ISSO to avoid putting your visa at risk or being denied re-entry into the United States.

Excellence in coursework

PhD students are expected to excel in their coursework and to exceed the University's minimum grade-point average. Grades that are consistently at the minimum level may indicate unsatisfactory performance. The University requires that graduate students maintain a minimum overall grade-point average of 3.0; an overall GPA below 3.0 automatically results in academic probation and suspension of assistantship support. In addition,

PhD students in BBS must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 in their core courses and receive grades of Pass (P) in all independent study courses. Students should be aware that if the syllabus for a graduate course indicates that plus/minus grading will be used, a grade of B- will result in fewer than 3.0 grade points for that class. Students should also be aware that a grade of incomplete (I) will automatically revert to an F if not resolved within eight weeks after the start of the next semester. Although an incomplete may occasionally be unavoidable, repeated incompletes suggest unsatisfactory performance and may result in the student being dropped from the program.

With their advisor's approval, graduate students can retake up to three courses, one time each. Students can use the [Repeated Course Grade Adjustment](#) form to request that only their last grade in a repeated course be used in calculating their GPA, although all repeated courses will remain on the transcript.

Timely completion of all program milestones

PhD students are expected to meet all deadlines and milestones including milestone 1, milestone 2, and the dissertation as outlined in the Pre-dissertation portfolio.

Growth in research and professional skills

Students are expected to demonstrate continuing progress in acquiring the specialized knowledge, research skills, and written and oral communication skills necessary to independently conduct high quality research and to communicate effectively to professional peers and students. All students are expected to be actively involved in faculty-supervised research and independent study throughout their program.

Fulfillment of all requirements of teaching and/or research assistantships

Assistantship funding represents a privilege and a responsibility; students who fail to fulfill requirements of their assistantships risk losing their funding.

TA/RA Residency Policies:

- Students who accept a TA appointment must be available on campus for the duration of their appointment semester regardless of class modality or pool assignment. RA's, with the approval of their supervisor and approved off-campus work plan, may work remotely if they remain in Texas. RA's may not work remotely out-of-state or out of the country. International students have additional restrictions determined by the DHS. International RA's and TA's considering traveling outside the DFW area during any semester should contact the International Student Success Office to be sure they do not violate the terms of their visa. TA's or RA's who leave their positions before the end of their semester appointment risk being required to reimburse the University for the cost of the semester's tuition. The only exception is an approved medical leave. Students who receive individual grant funding (NIH F31, NSF GRFP) may initiate those awards in mid-semester with the approval of the Program Head.
- TA's who have completed all requirements for graduation before the end of the semester are, nonetheless, obligated to complete their semester-long assignment. RA's may request to be released from work obligations, but risk having to repay their tuition, if they leave before the semester has ended.
- Students who enroll for "Priority Graduation" are not eligible for TA or RA appointments

Active participation in the intellectual life of the School:

Students are expected to attend area “brown-bag” seminars and public dissertation meetings, the School-wide Colloquium series, and lectures by visiting scholars including faculty candidates. All of these activities contribute to the BBS community and its culture of collaboration, enriching the intellectual experiences of students and faculty alike.

Students who find they are unable to meet deadlines or achieve expected standards because of personal or professional conflicts are encouraged to meet with their research advisor, Program Director, or Department Head as soon as they become aware of the problem. Options include requesting a leave of absence or declining assistantship support (with assurance that the support will be renewed in the future). A request for a leave of absence or deferral of an assistantship position requires the approval of the Graduate Studies Committee and cannot be assumed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students in good standing may request a leave of absence for personal or financial reasons. A brief memo to the Graduate Studies Committee indicating the reason for requesting leave and the expected date of return should be submitted to the Academic Support Coordinator. Leaves are normally granted to students in good standing for up to one year. Extensions beyond a year may also be granted but require an annual request and reapplication to the University at the point when the student returns. If the Graduate Studies Committee turns down the request for an extension, reinstatement requires a new application to the doctoral program that will undergo competitive review with new applicants. Granting of leave does not extend the 10-year limit for completing all requirements for the degree.

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

Scholastic dishonesty in any form is taken very seriously and the University has a formal judicial procedure for resolving allegations of scholastic dishonesty. Students are strongly advised to avoid any situation in which scholastic dishonesty might be suspected. Plagiarism is a form of scholastic dishonesty and each year several allegations of plagiarism occur. All students should carefully familiarize themselves with the University policy on plagiarism. This includes self-plagiarism, when a student submits coursework that was previously submitted for another course without edits and/or approval from the professor to do so. ***Please note that if you plan to submit coursework submitted for a core or elective course toward milestone completion (e.g., grant proposal for Milestone 2 from a Grant Writing course), you must receive approval from your advisor to do so.*** This is especially important for international students who may be less familiar with the plagiarism standards at universities in this country. If you have questions, ask your research advisor, Department Head, or Academic Support Coordinator. Many faculty will require that papers be submitted through Turnitin.com, an online program which identifies similarities in prose with previously published materials. All dissertations must be submitted through [Turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). Further information regarding scholastic dishonesty can be found here: <http://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/dishonesty/>.

Generative AI: Using generative AI to write your work clearly violates the basic definition of Plagiarism at UT Dallas. The start of the definition of plagiarism is as follows: “Plagiarism: To submit to your instructor a paper or comparable assignment that is not truly the product of your own mind and skill is to commit plagiarism.”

If you use AI to write your work, then the work is not a product of your own mind/brain and would be in violation.

PHD CURRICULUM

PhD degrees in BBS require a minimum of 75 graduate credit hours. The curriculum for each PhD program consists of a General Core, a Major Field/Area Core, Advanced courses, Independent Study/Research, and the Dissertation.

The **General Core**, required of all PhD students, has two components. One is the **Doctoral Proseminar** (HCS

6302), a 3-credit course that introduces students to the faculty and research domains in the School and addresses the many issues related to successful doctoral study and career development. The Doctoral Proseminar is supplemented by a School-wide colloquium series featuring internationally known scientists, as well as area-specific brown-bag seminars, which include presentations by students, faculty, and researchers visiting from other universities. Students are expected to attend their area “brown bags” and all BBS colloquia; all of these are announced on the BBS webpage and through e-mails to students.

The other component of the General Core comprises 6-9 credits of **Research Methods and Statistics courses** that provide a foundation in the research design and statistical analyses that are important for research in Behavioral and Brain Sciences. Most students will be required by their research advisor or dissertation committee to take additional advanced coursework in research design, statistics, or other research tools relevant to their research.

A brief list of the coursework required for the Psychology PhD program is shown below; see also the UT Dallas [Graduate Catalog](#). The University's course look-up page, [CourseBook](#), provides more detail on some of the specific courses listed below.

Psychology Ph.D. Coursework

<i>Doctoral Proseminar</i>	HCS 6302 Issues in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
<i>Research Methods & Statistics</i>	HCS 6312 Intermediate Research Methods in BBS – Part I HCS 6313 Intermediate Research Methods in BBS – Part II HCS 6317 Research Methods in Psychology

Major Field/Area Cores: Four courses representing at least two of the areas below and including two courses in the student's concentration area:

1. Developmental Psychology concentration area
 - HCS 6331 Cognitive Development
 - HCS 6350 Social Development
 - HCS 6368 Language Development
2. Cognitive Psychology concentration area
 - HCS 6330 Cognitive Science
 - HCS 6333 Memory
 - HCS 6395 Cognitive Psychology
3. Social/Personality Psychology concentration area
 - HCS 6327 Personality
 - HCS 6376 Social Psychology
4. Neuroscience concentration area
 - HCS 6346 Systems Neuroscience
 - HCS 6338 Functional Neuroanatomy

Advanced Electives 9 credits of doctoral courses approved by advisor; can include courses not selected for area core and must include an additional 3-credit advanced research methods course.

Waiver of Coursework Requirements

Students who enter the PhD program having successfully completed graduate coursework relevant to degree requirements may seek approval from the Graduate Studies Committee to waive specific courses. Students should submit such a request to their Program Director and ASC, attaching the syllabus from the equivalent course taken previously. Generally, only courses in which a grade of A was earned will be considered and the Program Director may require that another course be substituted for the waived course.

Transfer of Credit

Transfer of credit from another university is necessary only for PhD students who enter the program with extensive in-field, graduate coursework. Currently, students can request that up to 36 credits of graduate coursework completed elsewhere, with grades of B or better, be transferred toward PhD degree requirements. Those courses do not require a formal credit transfer request. To request a transfer of credit to substitute for a program requirement, the student must complete the [Transfer of Credit Request](#) and provide the Academic Support Coordinator with catalog course descriptions documenting the equivalence between courses taken elsewhere and UT Dallas courses. The Department, the BBS Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, and the Registrar must approve all requests and approval should not be assumed.

Transfer of credit from international universities can be problematic because of different systems of awarding credit and grades. Acceptance of transferred credit hours will not occur until after the student has completed 9

semester credit hours at UT Dallas with a grade point average of at least 3.0, and all petitions must be processed and approved no later than the semester prior to the one in which the student applies for graduation.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

Minimum enrollment for RAs and TAs is 9 semester hours for Fall and Spring. Summer enrollment requirements are determined each summer by the UT Dallas Provost and vary from year to year. In some summers, students will not enroll unless they are taking an organized course, graduating, or meeting a major milestone. In other summers, students will be required to enroll for up to 6 hours. Your ASC will inform you prior to registration of the number of summer hours in which you will enroll. The number of hours in which you are enrolled in summer do not change any of the requirements and responsibilities of your assistantship. If you accept an assistantship in summer, you must meet all of the obligations of the position regardless of the number of hours in which you are enrolled. Students who have been informed not to enroll during the summer continue their TA or RA appointments and remain eligible for University health insurance.

Enrollment Related to Graduation

All students must be enrolled in the semester(s) in which they defend and graduate. Students participating in Priority Graduation are exempt from enrolling in their graduating semester provided they meet Priority Graduation requirements. Self-funded students may enroll for 1-credit in their graduating semester. The 1-credit option can only be used once. Other than this exception, self-funded students must enroll for a minimum of 3 credits. Funded students enroll for 9 hours in their graduating semester or the number of hours specified by the Provost for summer graduation.

Students must complete a graduation application for the semester in which they intend to graduate. Online graduation applications are available only through your Department's Academic Support Coordinator. The graduation application triggers the appointment of the outside chair for your dissertation defense. Your defense cannot be scheduled until an outside chair has been appointed. Students planning to defend their dissertation in the summer should complete their graduation application by the start of the long summer session. Finding an outside chair for a summer defense can be difficult and students who apply late risk having their defense delayed.

Master's Degree en Route

Because of overlapping requirements, PhD students in Psychology may simultaneously seek a Master of Science (M.S.) degree in Applied Cognition and Neuroscience or Psychology. Students interested in the dual degree program must complete a master's degree plan approved by Dr. Golden, the Program Head in Applied Cognition and Neuroscience or Dr. Ackerman in Psychology, showing how they will meet the coursework and research requirements for the M.S. degree. Students must submit a [Graduate Change of Program Request](#) in order to matriculate into the master's program no later than the semester prior to the semester in which the degree will be conferred. Students cannot be considered for a master's degree en route until they have been matriculated into that degree program and have a degree plan for that program on file. Please contact Ashton Nance (ASC) for specific information and procedures.

QUALIFYING PAPERS AND PROJECTS (FALL 2020 AND EARLIER ENROLLMENT)

Students in all BBS PhD programs must complete a set of qualifying papers and projects before they can advance to PhD candidacy by successfully defending their dissertation proposal. These qualifying papers and projects take the place of a PhD qualifying examination. Through their qualifying papers and projects students demonstrate mastery of the literature in their field, competence in research processes and methods, and written and oral communication skills commensurate with professional standards in the discipline. *Because professional writing skills are considered in evaluating all qualifying papers, students who cannot effectively communicate their findings may fail to have their papers accepted, regardless of the strength of their finding. It is essential that students with poor written communication skills seek outside tutoring or instruction. Research advisors may offer suggestions to enhance the content and organization of papers but they cannot be expected to devote time to improving poorly constructed prose.*

Several qualifying plans are described below. Students admitted to Psychology prior to or during Fall 2020 usually follow Qualifying Plan 1. Students admitted to the Psychology program during or after Fall 2020 will follow the Pre-Dissertation Portfolio.

QUALIFYING PLAN FOR PSYCHOLOGY OR COGNITION AND NEUROSCIENCE – COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCE ADMITTED PRIOR TO OR DURING FALL 2020

Qualifying Plan 1: Qualifying Thesis

Plan 1 consists of a Qualifying Thesis, which is a research project supported by an extensive literature review, that takes the form of a published journal article. The Qualifying Thesis resembles but is less comprehensive than the dissertation; it is guided and evaluated by a faculty committee chaired by the student's research advisor that includes at least two other faculty members with expertise relevant to the project. The committee provides feedback in the design, conduct, and write-up of the study and is responsible for evaluating the final product, which must be completed during the fall semester of the student's third year in the PhD program. See [Overview of Qualifying Plan 1](#) for a summary of key events and deadlines for completing Plan 1. The [Psychological Sciences Guidelines for Completing Theses and Dissertations](#) describes an alternative timetable for completing program requirements in four rather than five years, but students generally use the five-year time table.

For Plan 1, the student works with the research advisor during the first semester in the program to identify a research question and to develop a pre-proposal (i.e., prospectus) for the Qualifying Thesis that provides an overview of the research area and specific research questions. When a suitable pre-proposal has been prepared the student and research advisor identify two other potential committee members with expertise appropriate to the project. The student provides them with a copy of the pre-proposal and invites them to serve on the Qualifying Thesis committee. Potential committee members should be given ample time (two weeks) to review the pre-proposal and to provide the student with feedback including any needed revisions. The student obtains faculty signatures on the [Qualifying Thesis Committee Membership Form](#) and submits this form and the final version of the pre-proposal to the Academic Support Coordinator by **February 1** of the first year of the program. The student's research advisor serves as Chair of the Qualifying Thesis committee and one of the other members is identified as a Vice-Chair who will assume the Chair's responsibilities should the Chair be unavailable to complete supervision of the thesis.

Under guidance of the thesis committee the student next writes a full Qualifying Thesis proposal in journal format, including completed Introduction and Method sections and an overview of the planned statistical analyses; the proposal also may include hypothesized results and their significance. **By August 1** of the first year of the program, the student must provide a copy of the completed proposal to the thesis committee; they will determine whether revisions are necessary before scheduling a Qualifying Thesis proposal defense meeting. At the end of the proposal defense meeting the committee may require revisions to the proposal, or alternatively they may approve the project and sign the [Qualifying Thesis Proposal Approval Form](#). The proposal must be defended and approved by **October 1** of the second year of the program. *Because the proposal approved by the Qualifying Committee is an agreement regarding the design of the study and the breadth of research literature to be surveyed in the thesis, the Qualifying Thesis Proposal Approval form must be submitted before data collection for the project can begin.*

During the second year of the PhD program the student conducts the approved Qualifying Thesis project. By **February 1** of the second year of the program the student must submit a progress report on the status of data collection and analysis, any changes to the project after it was underway, and the expected timeline for project completion to the Qualifying Thesis Committee and the Academic Support Coordinator.

The full draft of the Qualifying Thesis must be submitted to the Qualifying Thesis Committee for review by **August 1** of the second year of the program. The committee will determine if revisions are needed before the formal Qualifying Thesis defense meeting can be scheduled. The thesis defense meeting must be held by **October 1** of the third year in the program, at least two weeks after the final, complete draft of thesis is submitted to the committee for review. At the formal qualifying thesis defense meeting the student presents the

thesis and answers questions about the research and the research area. At the end of the defense the committee rates the Qualifying Thesis as "Acceptable," "Acceptable with Revisions," or "Not Acceptable." A rating of "Acceptable" means that the student has clearly met the criteria established for successful completion of the thesis, although in most cases minor editorial changes are necessary before the committee approves the final thesis manuscript. For a thesis rated "Acceptable with Revisions" the Qualifying Thesis Committee will specify more substantive changes, and the student must incorporate these in a revised manuscript that is submitted with a detailed cover letter that indicates where revisions have been made and fully explains why any recommended changes have not been made. The Qualifying Thesis Committee must approve all final revisions of theses rated "Acceptable" or "Acceptable with Revision" by signing the [Qualifying Thesis Final Approval](#) during the **fall semester** of the third year, unless a [Request for Extension](#) has been submitted and an alternative deadline has been approved by the Graduate Studies Committee.

A qualifying thesis rated "Not Acceptable" by thesis committee member(s) will be reviewed by one or more independent faculty members appointed by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in consultation with the Area Head. If the thesis is rated as "Not Acceptable" by the independent rater(s) the student is subject to dismissal from the program. However, if the independent rating(s) deem the qualifying thesis Acceptable or Acceptable with Revisions the student will have one semester in which to identify and be accepted by a new research advisor.

It should be noted that a competently conducted Qualifying Thesis will not be rated "Not Acceptable" due to unanticipated results; approval of the Qualifying Thesis proposal indicates the committee's satisfaction with the design of the study.

The final step in completing Plan 1 is for the student to present the Qualifying Thesis research at a public meeting such as a brown-bag session during the **fall semester** of the third year. With committee approval, the brown bag can be completed on the same day as the qualifying thesis defense. The brown bag requirement is intended to give students experience in public presentation prior to the dissertation proposal defense. It is also a way to disseminate information to faculty and students regarding doctoral student research within the school. Performance in the presentation will not affect acceptance of the project. However, students will receive feedback that will help to develop presentation skills. The student should contact the brown bag coordinator in his or her area to schedule the presentation; after the presentation the student submits a signed [Public Presentation of Research Project](#) form to the Academic Support Coordinator.

PRE-DISSERTATION PORTFOLIO FOR PSYCHOLOGY OR COGNITION AND NEUROSCIENCE – COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCE ADMITTED DURING OR AFTER FALL 2020

The Pre-dissertation has two milestones, one is fixed, and the other has two options from which students can select. Students and their mentors will work on the milestone 1 and 2 over the course of the first two years and will determine the order and timing for work on each milestone. The final deadline for completion of both milestones is May 1st of the 2nd year. This deadline will be enforced, and extensions will only be given in unusual circumstances. See [Overview of Pre-Dissertation Portfolio](#) for a summary of key events and deadlines. Students will check in with the Graduate Steering Committee* (GSC) at various touchpoints (a-c) outlined below.

*The GSC is a program-level committee in which members rotate off every 2-3 years. Program heads chair the GSC for their program. The committee checks in at several points in the year to make sure students are making progress, reviews the projects that have been proposed to make sure that they are all around the same level of scope, and meets with students who are struggling during summer semester, after milestone projects are due to help them develop a growth plan for moving forward.

Milestone 1 Research Project: This research project is an empirical study, designed and conducted by the student, that usually has its roots in work being conducted in the research advisor's lab. The study's scope should be sufficiently narrow to enable it to be completed within roughly 1 year, but sufficiently comprehensive to demonstrate the student's research skill in their field of study. The completed study is written up in journal format for evaluative review and ideally will be submitted and accepted for publication, although this is not required.

Milestone 1a: Research Project Proposal (2-5 page document outlining rationale and methodology for the project). Approved by research advisor and submitted to the (GSC) by February 15th of the 1st year. The GSC will ensure that the project can be completed as described in the time allotted and will seek additional reviewers if needed.

Milestone 1b: Research project submitted in manuscript form to the GSC by May 1st of the 2nd year. Students are asked to suggest two reviewers who can provide expertise in the subject area. Two anonymous reviewers, selected by the GSC, complete a rubric and provide feedback. Students respond to reviews in letter form (similar to responses to reviewers for journal submission) and revise the manuscript when appropriate. This will only be re-reviewed when requested by the GSC - the program head will review any revisions and determine whether the revisions can be accepted. If accepted, the milestone is complete.

Milestone 1c: Presentation. The student will present research at a public brown-bag (Psychology Lecture Series). The brown bag requirement is intended to give students experience in public presentation prior to the dissertation proposal defense. It is also a way to disseminate information to faculty and students regarding doctoral student research within the school. Performance in the presentation will not affect acceptance of the written project, but students should request feedback that will help to develop presentation skills. The student should contact the "brown bag" coordinator to schedule the presentation. After the presentation the student submits a signed Public Presentation of Research Project to the Academic Support Coordinator.

Milestone 2: Grant Proposal or Literature Review. The student, under guidance of the research advisor, will prepare either a grant application or a literature review. Grant applications should be targeted for NRSA, NSF, or similar grant agencies. Literature reviews should be the scope and length of reviews in Trends in Cognitive Science, Child Development Perspectives, or other area-specific journals (i.e., usually less than 5000 words). Due by May 1st of 2nd year. Students are asked to suggest two reviewers who can provide expertise in the subject area. Two anonymous reviewers, selected by the GSC, complete a rubric and provide feedback. Students respond to reviews in letter form (similar to response to reviewers for journal submission) and revise the manuscript when appropriate. This will only be reviewed when requested by the GSC - the program head will review any revisions and determine whether the revisions can be accepted. If accepted, the milestone is complete.

Pre-Dissertation Portfolio Review: During the annual student assessment meeting in May, the faculty will review the portfolios of all 2nd year students to ensure continuation in the program. This will include the two milestones outlined above, coursework, and work as a TA/RA. Concerns will be mitigated by the GSC, which might include some form of remediation or discontinuation from program with a master's degree.

Dissertation: The dissertation milestones are modified slightly with some updates to deadlines and additional oversight by the Graduate Steering Committee.

Evaluating Milestones: Research Projects, Integrative Literature Reviews, Grant Applications

Pre-dissertation components are all evaluated using a consistent process, which begins with an evaluation by the student's research advisor as the "first reader." After the first reader (i.e., advisor) approves the manuscript, the

Graduate Steering Committee designates two additional faculty members to serve as a “second and third reader” who will evaluate it independently using a rubric.

To maintain the integrity of the review process, second and third readers are anonymous. Students may not attempt to contact a reader unless the reader has agreed to be identified on the Graduate Steering Committee’s memo to the student, in which case the student is free to consult with the reader concerning the review and any suggested revisions.

The Graduate Steering Committee uses the readers’ evaluations to assign the paper one of the three ratings:

“Acceptable” means that the student has clearly met the criteria established for successful completion of the research project, although minor editorial changes may be required. After making these changes the student must submit the revised manuscript for final review and approval by the GSC.

For projects rated “Acceptable with Revisions” the GSC will provide the student with written recommendations for revising the paper; the student must submit a revised manuscript with a detailed cover letter that indicates where the revisions have been made and/or full explanation of why recommended changes were not made. The revised paper is then reviewed and rated again by the second reader (if more than minor edits are required) and the Graduate Studies Committee. The process repeats as needed until the Graduate Studies Committee rates the project as “Acceptable.”

For projects rated “Not Acceptable” the GSC will provide the student with written recommendations concerning a course of action for a different submission. If the student receives a rating of “Not Acceptable” on the second submission he or she will be subject to dismissal from the program, regardless of whether the re-submission is on the same or different topic or whether the research advisor is the same or a different member of the faculty.

Each pre-dissertation component must be rated “Acceptable” by the Graduate Steering Committee by the end of the semester in which it is due, and students must adhere to all deadlines unless a Request for Extension has been submitted and an alternative deadline has been approved by the GSC. Students should note that the Graduate Steering Committee makes every effort to rate papers within a month, but ratings may be delayed significantly if papers are submitted at times when faculty are unavailable, such as near holiday breaks or during the summer term. The submission deadlines are designed to avoid such delays.

Dissertation Milestones:

Milestone 3a: Dissertation Committee and Prospectus. The student should write a 2-3 page prospectus to invite faculty to join the committee. Students should hold meetings with their committee as needed and are encouraged to do so early on in project development. Due by Fall of the 3rd year.

Milestone 3b: Dissertation Proposal. The dissertation proposal is a comprehensive document outlining the proposed dissertation project. It includes a rationale, statement of the problem, specific hypotheses, discussion of relevant literature, methodology and procedures, a plan for statistical analysis, and when appropriate, pilot results. The student can propose a traditional dissertation project or, if they have a large corpus of independent research, can propose a “three first-authored paper” dissertation. The committee approves the proposal document before scheduling the proposal defense. Due by May 1st of the 3rd year.

Milestone 3c: Public Dissertation Proposal Defense. The student should defend the dissertation proposal by May 15th of the 3rd year.

Milestone 3d: Final Oral Examination (Dissertation Defense). After completion of the project and approval of the final manuscript by the research advisor, students should submit their final dissertation document to committee for feedback and approval. Students must give committee members a minimum of two weeks to review the dissertation and sign the defense form. The oral examination may be scheduled after the student receives the approval and signature of all dissertation committee members. The Office of Graduate Research

requires a two-week timeframe between the submission of the signed form and the actual dissertation defense. Students should successfully defend their dissertation in spring of their 5th year.

THE DISSERTATION

The [Office of Graduate Education](#) summarizes requirements and deadlines for completing the dissertation. The information below provides more detailed information on the dissertation for PhD students in BBS.

Dissertation Committee

The **dissertation committee** oversees and assists the student in developing a dissertation proposal and conducting the dissertation research; the committee also reviews and evaluates the written dissertation the Final Oral Exam (dissertation defense). To form a dissertation committee, the student works with the research advisor to identify at least four potential committee members from among the BBS faculty. One of these four, the Chair, must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in BBS. Occasionally a student may wish to appoint a co-chair from another university (e.g., if the student plans to conduct a substantial amount of the dissertation research in that off-campus lab) or a non-tenure track faculty member who has relevant expertise. However, the student should recognize that scheduling committee meetings and obtaining signatures can be difficult when committees include off-campus members. [UTDPP 1052 Procedures for Completing a Graduate Degree](#) provides details on appointing non-UTD and non-tenure system faculty to dissertation committees.

Students may form a dissertation committee whenever they choose, but they are not permitted to submit the dissertation proposal to the committee until the proposed members have been approved by the BBS Graduate Studies Committee and by the UT Dallas Dean of Graduate Education. To do this, the student must submit a signed [Committee Appointment Form](#) and a 2-3 page prospectus of the dissertation with reference citations to their Academic Support Coordinator for review by the BBS Graduate Steering Committee. The Graduate Steering Committee may choose to add an additional committee member if they feel additional expertise is necessary to effectively guide and evaluate the student's research. Final approval of the dissertation committee by the UT Dallas Dean of Graduate Education is required before the student submits the dissertation proposal to the dissertation committee for review.

Dissertation Proposal

The **dissertation proposal** is a comprehensive prospectus for the dissertation. It includes a rationale, statement of the problem, specific hypotheses, discussion of relevant literature, methodology and procedures, a plan for statistical analysis, and when appropriate, pilot results. It is generally assumed that the student will have completed relevant research with the supervising professor and that the dissertation proposal is an outgrowth of that research. Although preparation of the dissertation proposal is overseen by the dissertation Chair, it is important to keep other members of the committee informed of progress and, where appropriate, to invite their critique of the rationale, design, and proposed methods of data analysis. Once formed, the dissertation committee must meet at least once a year to review the student's progress toward completion of the proposal and final dissertation.

If previously collected data, either archival or collected by the student, is to be used in the dissertation, the source of the data must be divulged to members of the dissertation committee in the proposal and at the proposal defense. This does not include pilot data used to justify the project, but it does include any data collected before the proposal defense that the student intends to include in the dissertation. Students should be aware that the dissertation committee may question the validity of archival and prior collected data and have the authority to reject these data. For that reason, students should inform committee members early of the source of their data and not continue to collect data that committee members view as potentially flawed.

When the proposal is completed, the student presents the proposal to all members of the dissertation committee for review. When the committee members are satisfied with the proposal including, where applicable, the use of previously collected data, and believe the student is ready to be formally evaluated by the School's faculty, they will sign the [Dissertation Proposal Meeting](#) form requesting a public defense of the dissertation proposal. The student submits this form and the approved dissertation proposal to the Academic Support Coordinator.

Scheduling the Dissertation Proposal Defense

The Academic Support Coordinator schedules the dissertation proposal defense at the request of the dissertation committee Chair. All faculty and students are invited to attend the dissertation proposal defense, and the faculty must be notified of it at least two weeks in advance. The student must also submit a copy of the dissertation proposal to the Academic Support Coordinator at least two weeks in advance of the defense for faculty members who wish to review it. The dissertation proposal defense may be scheduled only on days when the Academic Calendar shows that classes are in session – not on University holidays, Reading Days, Final Exam Days, or between semesters.

In no case may the public defense of the dissertation proposal take place until the student has passed all qualifying paper and project requirements including brown bag presentations, and the Graduate Dean has approved the dissertation committee. For PhD students working in Cognition and Neuroscience - Cognitive Neuroscience track, Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences, and Psychology, the dissertation proposal defense should be held no later than February 1 of the student's 4th year. For PhD Students working in Systems Neuroscience the dissertation proposal defense should be held no later than May 15 of the 3rd year.

Format of the Dissertation Proposal Defense

To begin the dissertation proposal defense the student presents the background and goals of the proposed research and the methods to be employed. The student then answers questions from members of the dissertation committee and others in attendance. Following the conclusion of questions, all members of the faculty in attendance vote on whether the student demonstrated mastery of the theoretical issues and empirical findings in his or her field of specialization and was able to present and defend the proposed dissertation research in a manner commensurate with the PhD degree. Faculty in attendance may offer recommendations to strengthen the project; although the student and dissertation committee are not bound to accept them it is assumed that these recommendations will be given careful consideration. Passing the dissertation proposal defense is by vote of the majority of faculty in attendance; the conducting chair records the vote, and voters record their names and signatures, on the [Public Presentation of Dissertation Proposal](https://bbs.utdallas.edu/files/presentation-of-dissertation-proposal.pdf) form. The student submits this signed form to the Academic Support Coordinator; the form is then sent to the UT Dallas Dean of Graduate Education along with a letter from the School stating whether the student passed the dissertation proposal defense.

Students who fail the first dissertation proposal defense are permitted to use the same procedures to schedule a second dissertation proposal defense that must be held before the end of the following semester. Students who fail the dissertation proposal defense a second time or do not hold the second defense before the end of the following semester will be dismissed from the PhD program.

Scheduling the Final Oral Exam (Dissertation Defense)

After passing the dissertation proposal defense the student carries out the dissertation under the supervision of dissertation committee Chair with assistance from other committee members. The student writes the dissertation manuscript according to guidelines available at the [Office of Graduate Education website](#) and submits the manuscript to the dissertation committee for review. When the dissertation manuscript is approved by a majority of the dissertation committee, the student emails the Academic Support Coordinator to schedule a room for the Final Oral Exam. The student then completes the [Request for Final Oral Examination](#) form and obtains signatures of all of the committee members. The student will submit this form, the dissertation, and an unsigned formatted signature page to the [Thesis and Dissertation Submission website](#). A Graduate Reader will review the dissertation for formatting and email the student with necessary corrections. Students should review the [Doctoral Dissertation Checklist](#) on the Office of Graduate Education website for information and deadlines concerning review, approval and submission of the final dissertation document.

Format of the Final Oral Examination (Dissertation Defense)

The final oral examination is administered by a faculty member appointed by the Graduate Dean and is open to the public. Students should review the [Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#) available on the [Office of Graduate Education](#) website, as well as the [Policy on Procedures for Completing a Graduate Degree \(UTDPPI052\)](#). When the student passes the defense, he or she obtains the signatures of the dissertation committee members on the

original signature page. The student will then upload the signed signature page to the [Thesis and Dissertation Submission website](#) and follow the submission directions on the [Doctoral Dissertation Checklist](#) on the Office of Graduates Education website.

SUPPORT FOR DOCTORAL STUDY

(Policy currently under review and subject to change)

Graduate Assistantships

Financial support for full-time doctoral study is available in the form of teaching and research assistantships. Teaching assistants are appointed by the Graduate Studies Committee while research assistants are appointed by individual faculty PIs. The number of teaching assistantships available each year is determined by the annual budget while the number of research assistantships depends on the funding of faculty extramural grants.

Each Teaching and Research Assistantship carries an obligation to provide 20 hours/week of work outside of work done for course credit or independent study and research. Although an assistantship is considered a half-time position, full-time students are expected to give full-time effort to graduate study and research including fulfilling the obligations of their assistantship.

All students funded by teaching and research assistantships are awarded tuition scholarships covering the cost of tuition and fees (resident and non-resident). These scholarships cover a maximum of 9 credits in the fall and spring semesters. The scholarship covers a maximum of 6 hours for students who need to enroll in the summer. Students wishing to enroll in more than the standard number of credits in a semester will have to pay tuition and fees for the additional credits.

Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants (TAs) are appointed expressly to contribute to the instructional activities of the School. TAs participate in the TA "Pool" for 10 hours/week; they spend the remaining 10 hours/per week carrying out various assignments under the supervision of the research advisor. Students in the TA Pool are assigned to assist instructors in specific BBS courses, typically large undergraduate classes, classes with associated laboratories or discussion sections, or classes requiring extensive office hours and student tutoring. TA assignments vary depending upon program needs and the skills and experience of the student. Course instructors determine the specific responsibilities of their TAs, and students may be assigned limited direct teaching responsibilities under the supervision of the course instructor. Students who wish to have more extensive teaching experience including responsibility for full courses should contact the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies (Dr. Spence) or the undergraduate program head for the program in which they are interested in teaching. Because students assigned to teach full courses are expected to devote 20 hours/week to their teaching-related activities they are not also assigned 10 hours/week to their research advisor.

Students are notified by e-mail of their TA Pool assignment before the start of each semester. Attempts are made to assign students in areas related to their interests, but depending on School needs there may be occasions when students are assigned as TAs to courses outside their discipline. Students are provided sufficient guidance to perform well in these roles.

Each semester, one or more students are assigned to the "extra duty TA pool." Students in the extra duty pool are not assigned to specific courses but are on call for 10 hours/week to proctor exams and handle clerical and other work related to courses. The program manager supervises the extra duty TA pool and will directly contact students as needed.

When students receive their TA Pool assignment, they should contact the faculty member to whom they are assigned. Any time conflict regarding your TA responsibilities and the courses in which you are enrolled need to be resolved quickly. In such an event, contact Dr. Stillman.

Teaching assistantships are awarded on a 9-month basis. Opportunities for teaching assistantships in the summer depend upon need in particular coursework areas, student progress, and available funds.

Students who request summer funding will be notified in April. If you do not plan to be here during all or part of the summer or prefer to relinquish your duties in order to concentrate on completing your projects, inform Dr. Stillman. Students planning to spend time off campus that would interfere with summer term TA or RA duties should not request summer support, as the performance of TAs and RAs is evaluated and a failure to meet assistantship obligations could affect future assistantship support. Contact your Department Head if in doubt about your summer schedule. Students not assigned as TAs or RAs during a summer term remain eligible for re-appointment in subsequent semesters.

Research Assistants

Research Assistants (RAs) are selected by and assigned to specific faculty-initiated extramural grants, and RAs are not obligated to serve in the TA Pool. The specific assignments and responsibilities of RAs are decided by the grant's Principal Investigator but usually include participation in research as well as the clerical duties that support research.

TA and RA Salaries and Appointments

The salary of TAs is set by the School. The salaries of RAs are set by the Principal Investigator of the grant to which the student is assigned and equal to or exceed TA salaries.

Students supported on RA positions lost through expiration of a grant are typically offered TA positions if they are in good standing and making acceptable progress toward the degree. However, the salary of students transferred to TA positions will be at the TA rate rather than at the rate the student earned as a RA.

TAs are appointed from August 16 to December 31, from January 1 to May 15, and from May 16 to August 15.

Renewal of Assistantships

Annual renewal of assistantship support depends upon student progress and timeliness in meeting program requirements, as well as the availability of assistantship funds. Students should not anticipate TA funding for the duration of their time in the doctoral program and whenever possible should seek opportunities to obtain RA positions. More than four years of TA support requires a special request to the Graduate Studies Committee and normally is approved only when it is clear that the student has made good progress and is nearing completion of the degree.

Students or faculty may request transfer of assistantships at any time for any reason. Such requests must be initiated through and are considered by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Research Assistants are selected by a grant's Principal Investigator (PI), and a student may decline a PI's request for appointment.

Assistantship Responsibilities During Semester Breaks

TA duties normally extend from 4 working days before classes begin through the last day of final exams, but TAs for courses with final exams that occur late in the exam period are required to work until grading is completed or the due date for submitting final grades to the Registrar. These dates are published in the University's official Academic Calendar each semester. Variations to this schedule must be approved by the student's research advisor, the instructor of the course for which the student is a TA, and the Department Head.

RAs may be expected to follow the University's Human Resources Staff Calendar rather than Academic Calendar, which results in shorter intersession breaks. To avoid misunderstandings, RAs should check with their supervisors early each term to clarify expectations about working during intersessions.

TAs planning travel (other than approved travel to professional meetings) that might interfere with their duties must receive approval in advance from their Department Head. RAs planning such travel must receive approval in advance from the Principal Investigator of the grant. Students should not make travel arrangements or purchase tickets before the absence has been approved.

As noted above, students anticipating extended absences during the summer sessions should not seek TA support, even if the travel is in conjunction with data collection for dissertation research. All TAs are expected to be available for the duration of the summer sessions whether they are assigned to a course or to the extra-duty TA pool.

The University does not permit students supported as TAs or RAs to be employed elsewhere. Doctoral study can cause both financial and personal strains, but it is in everyone's best interest for students who feel unable to devote full time to their studies and assistantship obligations to resign their assistantships and shift to part-time status, or to seek a leave of absence. In general, students in good standing who temporarily resign their assistantship may be reappointed when they return to full-time status.

TAs and RAs must sign the [TA/RA Responsibilities](#) form before they begin their assistantship. Additional information on graduate assistantships is available at the [Office of Graduate Education website](#) site, including University policies related to graduate assistantships, [UTDPP1075](#).

Other Grants and Scholarships

Students are strongly encouraged to apply for pre-doctoral grants and fellowships as well as private scholarships for which they may be eligible. Students awarded Federal pre-doctoral fellowships receive supplemental travel funds and other financial benefits from the School in recognition of their achievement. In no case will such a student receive less salary support than a TA, regardless of the terms of a Federal pre-doctoral award. There are also scholarships funded by School endowments for which PhD students are eligible. There will be a call for applications each spring and students are encouraged to apply.

Travel Funds

(Policy currently under review and subject to change)

Funds are available to help defray the cost of travel to one major, national professional meeting per year (Sept 1 – Aug 31). Currently, the amount is \$1000. To be eligible for travel funds a student must be the first author on a poster or oral presentation accepted at a professional meeting. Students should submit the [Student Request for Travel Support](#) form to their Academic Support Coordinator as soon they are notified of their acceptance to present at the meeting, and they should not make any travel arrangements before speaking with Margo Sallet, the School's Fiscal Officer, who will direct them to the Administrative Assistant who will be handling their travel reimbursement once it is approved by the Graduate Studies Committee. Plane fare will only be reimbursed for a round trip to and from the single destination where the conference is being held and the airline ticket must be purchased through the University travel agency, Concur. There are very rigid rules regarding reimbursement for travel and students who don't follow the rules will not be reimbursed for their expenses. Some professional meetings offer competitive student travel scholarships and students are encouraged to apply for these to supplement travel funds awarded by the School. Students are not permitted to divide their travel award to cover attendance at more than one meeting.

Dissertation Support

To help offset costs associated with conducting their dissertation research, PhD students who have passed all of their qualifying requirements are eligible to apply for matching grants of \$500 from the University's Office of Graduate Education and BBS (total \$1,000). These funds can be used for travel, participant compensation, and materials needed to conduct the dissertation research. To request dissertation support the student should submit the [PhD Research Small Grants Program Application](#) form to their Academic Support Coordinator at least six weeks before funds are needed. The application request must be endorsed by the Department Chair and funding is contingent on approval from the School's financial representative.

The [Office of Graduate Education](#) provides information on additional sources of funding support for dissertation

research.