

Ph.D. Program in Neuroscience and Behavior
Department of Psychology
University of Georgia

General Philosophy of the Neuroscience and Behavior Program

The objective of the Doctoral Program in Neuroscience and Behavior is the education and training of graduate students for research and teaching in various areas in the field of Neuroscience and Behavior, such as animal behavior and behavioral neuroscience. Students may elect to concentrate on one area or may choose a program which encompasses more than one specialty or interdisciplinary interest.

Although the Neuroscience and Behavior Program sets certain minimum requirements for its students, the primary responsibility for an individual student's Program of Study rests with the student's *Advisory Committee* (see Graduate School *Bulletin* for explanation of Program of Study and Advisory Committee). Each student's course of study is expected to provide the best possible education and training consistent with his/her abilities, interests, and needs.

The Neuroscience and Behavior faculty believes that an effective way to gain competent knowledge of several research areas and methods in Neuroscience and Behavior is through first-hand exposure to active research projects. To this end, the student is required to take at least three, 3-credit-hour laboratory apprenticeships (PSYC 8330) with at least three different faculty members. These apprenticeships, which are begun as soon as possible after the student enters the Program, enable the student to work closely with faculty members in their areas of concentration.

Graduates of the Neuroscience and Behavior Program are expected to demonstrate a high level of competence in their area of specialization. They are expected to have sufficient knowledge and understanding of problems and approaches, both in other areas within psychology and in the other biological sciences, so that they can communicate and work with scientists in related disciplines. To accomplish this, students may use the core courses of the Department of Psychology's master's degree program, and other advanced courses and seminars in psychology and in other fields, as their committee deems necessary. In addition, due to interinstitutional agreements, approved students may take courses in any institution in the University System of Georgia or Emory University and directly apply them to the Program of Study. Students are encouraged to obtain at least one semester of college teaching experience.

Neuroscience and Behavior students present their dissertation proposals and defenses in a public forum. Other Neuroscience and Behavior students are expected to attend. These are research presentations that constitute an important part of the education of every student. Similarly, students are expected to take an active part in other seminars sponsored by the Neuroscience and Behavior Program.

Specific Rules and Regulations

Preamble. This document supplements the Graduate School *Bulletin* and the Department of Psychology's *Graduate Studies Policy Manual* by providing information and requirements specific to students in the Neuroscience and Behavior Program. *It is the responsibility of each student to maintain her/his good standing regarding the requirements in all three documents.* All three are evolving documents, and faculty members, no matter how well intended, may not be fully aware or up-to-date regarding requirements. The versions of the three documents that were in effect when a student first enrolled serve as a *contract* that obligates the student only to requirements that were in effect when he/she was admitted; if a student quits graduate studies and later is re-admitted, he/she may be required to meet the more recent requirements.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements for admission to the Graduate School of the University of Georgia and to the graduate program in the Department of Psychology. Acceptance of applicants for admission to the Neuroscience and Behavior Program requires both the majority approval of the Program's faculty and that one faculty member agrees to be the student's advisor. See also the section near the end of this document titled *Faculty Role in Selection and Evaluation* of graduate students in Neuroscience and Behavior.

Registration

In accordance with Graduate School rules, a student who has not been enrolled for 12 months (the *Bulletin* states this as *more than three semesters, including the summer semester*) will be required to apply for readmission before resuming her/his work in the program.

Neuroscience and Behavior students must request and receive reinstatement in the Neuroscience and Behavior Program before they may return to complete a degree. If there are extenuating circumstances that cause a student to need to seek readmission according to the above, it may be appropriate to petition the Doctoral Advisory Committee for a leave-of-absence; this will not alleviate the necessity to apply for readmission (a Graduate School requirement) but will establish a formal understanding in your favor that accounts for the interruption of your studies. Also see registration requirements in the later section, *Admission to Candidacy.*

Assistantships

The Neuroscience and Behavior Program faculty nominates students for two general categories

of assistantships: departmental teaching assistantships and Graduate School research assistantships. Typically, a minimum of 7 and as many as 10-12 teaching assistantships may be awarded to Neuroscience and Behavior students. Graduate School research assistantships are awarded in University-wide competition where GRE scores, grade-point-averages (GPA), and research record are influential data, and the number received by Neuroscience and Behavior students is usually 2-4. Other assistantships may be funded by individual faculty members who have research grants.

To determine the rank order of the nominees for departmental or Graduate School assistantships among Neuroscience and Behavior students, the Program faculty meets typically in March each year and ranks all students who have applied and who are eligible (regarding eligibility, see the departmental *Graduate Studies Policy Manual*). This ranking is done only after:

1. Review of certain data common to all students (e.g., GRE scores and GPAs).
2. Review of each eligible student's curriculum vitae [CV] and research achievement summary prepared by each student according to Program guidelines.
3. Consideration of each student in general discussion by the Program faculty. The guidelines for the CV and research summary will be distributed by the Program Chair around February 1 each year, and the CVs and research summaries are due March 1.

Major Professor and Advisory Committees

Each incoming graduate student in the Neuroscience and Behavior Program will be assigned a faculty advisor who will counsel the student about course work and other matters related to the Program during the student's first few months of residence.

Each new student must have a Major Professor and, in most cases, two Advisory Committees appointed before the end of the first year of residence. The M.S. degree Advisory Committee consists of the Major Professor as Chair who must be a member of the Graduate Faculty and two additional faculty members at least one of whom must be either a provisional or regular member of the Graduate Faculty. The Ph.D. degree Advisory Committee consists of the Major Professor, as chair, and four additional faculty members. Membership on the two committees may overlap and the same person may be Major Professor and Chair of both. Rules and policies regarding the Advisory Committees and their duties and responsibilities may be found in the Graduate School *Bulletin*. The student, in consultation with the Major Professor, will submit a list of the proposed members of the Advisory Committees to the Chair of the Neuroscience and Behavior Program for approval. The approved list is forwarded to the Graduate Coordinator of the Department of Psychology. The Advisory Committees are appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the Graduate Coordinator.

Transfer students with a year or more of graduate work should have acquired a Major Professor and an Advisory Committee before the end of the first year in residence. This committee will

evaluate the graduate course work already completed and establish a date for the written comprehensive examination for the student.

A student has the option of seeking a new Major Professor if the student's interests develop in a direction such that another member of the faculty would be more appropriate. Similarly, the student, with the concurrence of the Major Professor, may request a change in the membership of the Advisory Committee. Changes and substitutions in the makeup of the Advisory Committee may be requested without prejudice and should follow the same procedures used in making the initial appointments. Faculty members who have been replaced on a committee will be notified of the change by the Graduate Coordinator.

Because students are admitted to the Neuroscience and Behavior program as prospective candidates for the Ph.D. degree, but are normally required to complete a Master's degree as part of their programs, the educational goals of some students may best be served by the appointment of different faculty members as Major Professors for the two degrees.

A faculty member may resign as Major Professor or from an Advisory Committee by writing a letter to the student concerned in which the reasons for the resignation are given. Copies of this letter will be sent to the Program Chair and the Graduate Coordinator. A student is expected to replace a Major Professor or committee member who has resigned within one academic semester.

Format and Policy for Theses and Dissertations

The style of the Thesis, Dissertation Prospectus and Dissertation must be consistent with the *APA Publication Manual* (current edition), except as altered to comply with Graduate School policy *and unless* an alternative style has been approved by the student's Advisory Committee. The length should be appropriate for publication. The emphasis should not be on length but on writing appropriately for publication.

A critical review of the literature, intended (a) to represent the critical issues related to the research and (b) to include the most relevant previous research, will be included as an appendix.

Additional appendices of experimental detail are permissible, but the main body must be able to stand alone as a manuscript for an article ready for journal submission.

The Major Professor will forward a Thesis, Dissertation Prospectus, or Dissertation to the Advisory Committee only after certifying s/he has reviewed, edited and approved the entire document. The committee will not begin to review a Thesis, Dissertation Prospectus, or Dissertation until the Major Professor has certified that s/he is satisfied that the manuscript is ready and formally requests the committee's review. Committee members shall be given two weeks to read and evaluate a Thesis or Dissertation Prospectus before the date of the scheduled defense. The Graduate *Bulletin* specifies an interval of three weeks for the completed Dissertation.

The goal of writing well is a basic requirement for all candidates for M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. Candidates should demonstrate the basic principles of good style, and errors in spelling and punctuation must be avoided. It is recommended that candidates use microprocessor software to check spelling and grammar. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th ed.) presents advice in Chapter 2 on principles of good scientific writing. Recommended also are:

Shertzer, M. (1986). *The elements of grammar* New York: MacMillan.

Sternberg, R.J. (1992). How to win acceptances by psychology journals: 21 tips for better writing. *APS Observer*, 5, 13-18.

Strunk, W., Jr., & White, E.B. (1979). *The elements of style* (3rd ed.) New York: MacMillan.

The Master's Degree

With rare exceptions, students are required to complete a Master's degree en route to obtaining the Ph.D. Normally, the M.S. degree can be obtained by the end of the second year in residence. All requirements for the M.S. degree must be completed not later than the end of the third calendar year from the first date of classes of the first semester that the student enrolled in the Neuroscience and Behavior Program, unless there are extenuating circumstances that have been approved in writing by 2 members of the M.S. advisory committee and, when applicable, by 4 members of the Ph.D. advisory committee.

Program of Study

The M.S. degree requirements in Neuroscience and Behavior are the same as those seen in the departmental *Graduate Studies Policy Manual*. Students with strong undergraduate backgrounds in any of the M.S. degree core courses should consider petitioning to exempt these courses under procedures established by the Department of Psychology; these procedures may be seen in the departmental *Graduate Studies Policy Manual*.

M.S. Thesis and Examination

While there is no Program or departmental requirement to write a Thesis proposal, some Major Professors require a written proposal to be evaluated by the M.S. Advisory Committee prior to initiating the research. The thesis must be written in compliance with the Program's policy; see above, *Format and Policy for Thesis and Dissertation*. At the final examination and defense of the M.S. Thesis (see *Graduate Bulletin* for a description of the *Final Examination*), the Major Professor and other members of the Advisory Committee vote to pass or fail the candidate. They also draft a recommendation to the Program faculty that the student (1) may continue for the Ph.D., (2) be placed on probation, or (3) be dismissed from the Neuroscience and Behavior Program. In cases where the

recommendation is for probation or dismissal, the Advisory Committee provides reasons for the recommendation. In recommending probation, the Committee shall specify what must be done to remove the probationary status. Copies of all recommendations by M.S. Advisory Committees will be forwarded to the program faculty and placed in the student's departmental file. Procedures specified in the *Probation and Dismissal of Graduate Students* section in the departmental *Graduate Studies Policy Manual* will be followed.

The Ph.D. Degree

General Requirements

The general requirements for the Ph.D., including a research skills requirement, are described in the Graduate School *Bulletin* and in the departmental *Graduate Studies Policy Manual*. Additional information concerning the requirements for graduate students in Psychology may be obtained from the office of the Graduate Coordinator, Department of Psychology.

All Neuroscience and Behavior students are expected to comply with the requirements and policies established by the Graduate School and the Department of Psychology. Departmental policies with regard to annual evaluations and student dismissals will apply. In addition, the Neuroscience and Behavior Program has established the following specific requirements:

Summary of Specific Requirements

1. All students in the Neuroscience and Behavior Program will take at least three 3-credit-hour laboratory apprenticeships (PSYC 8330) with at least three different faculty members.
2. All students are expected to conduct research, either individually or in collaboration with members of the faculty, in addition to their Master's and Ph.D. thesis work.
3. The remainder of the Ph.D. program will consist of the written and oral comprehensive examinations, the dissertation requirements as described in the *Bulletin* of the Graduate School and in the *Format and Policy for Thesis and Dissertation* section below, and a Program of Study developed by the student's Advisory Committee in accordance with Graduate School and departmental requirements.
4. Whereas the faculty in the Neuroscience and Behavior program believes that every student should obtain experience in applying for funds to support research as part of their training for careers in Neuroscience and Behavior, we therefore will require that all graduate students entering the program, beginning with Fall semester 2001, will make at least one application for funding to support their research. This application may take the form of an application for a fellowship from an agency not directly connected to the University of Georgia, or an application for a grant from any agency outside of the department of Psychology. The fellowship application must be for a fellowship based on proposed research in order to qualify as meeting

this requirement. The major professor will certify to the student's doctoral advisory committee that an appropriate application was prepared by the student and submitted before the doctoral advisory committee will consider a prospectus for doctoral dissertation research. The application need not be approved for funding in order to satisfy the requirement.

5. Other specific requirements occur among the policies below.

Written Comprehensive Examination

Scheduling. Assuming that all requirements for the M.S. degree have been completed and that the student has been recommended for continuation in the doctoral program, the Written Comprehensive Examination will be taken during the first Fall or Spring Semester immediately following whichever comes first: (1) the passage of three calendar years from the beginning of the semester in which the student first enrolled as a regular student, or (b) the completion of 60 credit hours of course work. In the case of a student who enters the Neuroscience and Behavior Program after earning elsewhere a masters degree in psychology, the previously mentioned contingencies will instead be: (2) the passage of two calendar years from the beginning of the semester in which the student first enrolled as a regular student in the program or (b) the completion of 36 credit hours of graduate course work. The Written Preliminary Examination will normally be scheduled the first full week in October or, when applicable, the first full week in March.

Exceptions to the above policy on when the Written Comprehensive Examination may be granted by the approval of 4 out of 5 members of the student's Advisory Committee. The committee may consider appropriate reasons to extend the deadlines for taking the Written Comprehensive Examination (such as, but not limited to, delay in progress due to physical well being or extreme hardship). Such approval will be reported to the Neuroscience and Behavior faculty and recorded in the student's departmental file together with (1) an explanation of the waiver of the requirement, and (2) a statement designating an alternative plan for scheduling the Written Comprehensive Examination.

A special case of concern may arise when a student's failure to complete the M.S. degree requirements within three years results in a delay in taking Written and Oral Comprehensive Examinations according to the expected schedule. In such cases, both Advisory Committee approval and Neuroscience and Behavior Program faculty approval of the delay will be required. If such approval is not granted, dismissal of the student from the Program may result. When a delay is granted, the student will be placed on probationary status with stipulations specified by the Advisory Committee and the Program faculty.

Format and Evaluation. In accordance with the policy of the Graduate School, the format and evaluation of the Written Comprehensive Examination is determined by each student's Advisory Committee. The Neuroscience and Behavior program has agreed that the written and oral comprehensive examinations will be inclusive examinations within the student's field of study. While

some programs in the Department of Psychology have elected to standardize their examinations, the Neuroscience and Behavior Program assigns authority for the conduct of the examination to the Advisory Committee. Four out of five votes for **APass** are required to pass the examination.

Although the Graduate School recognizes only grades of Pass or Fail on the Written Comprehensive Examination (the grade being reported at the time the grade on the Oral Comprehensive Examination is reported), the advisory committee initially shall grade the Written Comprehensive Examination as Pass, Conditional Pass, Fail With Option to Retake, or Fail Without Option to Retake. Conditions associated with a Conditional Pass will be specified by the Advisory Committee. A grade of Fail Without Option to Retake shall constitute a recommendation to the program faculty to dismiss the student from the program.

Written Comprehensive Examinations will be scheduled by the student's Advisory Committee and coordinated by the program Chair when examinations for more than one student are scheduled during the same semester. Normally, examinations are scheduled to take place during five consecutive days during either the Fall or Spring Semesters, but Advisory Committee members can elect to deviate from this schedule as appropriate.

Oral Comprehensive Examination

Scheduling. Oral Comprehensive Examinations shall be scheduled not later than the end of the next academic semester (summers may be exempted) following the semester in which the Written Comprehensive Examination is passed. Exceptions may be granted with the approval of 4 of the 5 members of the Advisory Committee.

Format and Evaluation. By Graduate School policy, the Oral Comprehensive Examination is open to all members of the University Faculty; it is administered by the Advisory Committee. It is an inclusive oral examination intended to assess the student's mastery of the field(s) of study in which the doctoral degree is being sought. An examination of the student's Dissertation Prospectus may precede or follow the Oral Comprehensive Examination, but may not be substituted for this examination. Evaluation is done by the Advisory Committee using the categories Pass or Fail, with at least 4 out of 5 votes required for a passing grade to be awarded on the examination.

Dissertation Prospectus

The Major Professor and the Advisory Committee guide the student in planning the dissertation. The student prepares a prospectus consisting of an introduction and a methods sections with a critical review of the most relevant literature and submits it to the Major Professor for consideration. The literature review will be included as an Appendix. When the Major Professor certifies that the Dissertation Prospectus is satisfactory, it is submitted to the other members of the Advisory Committee for their review and comments. Formal approval of the Dissertation Prospectus is given by the Advisory Committee following a public presentation of the proposed research to the faculty and the students of the Neuroscience and Behavior Program. A favorable vote by 4 of the 5 members of the

Advisory Committee is required for approval.

Admission to Candidacy

Following (1) the approval of the program of study by the Advisory Committee, Graduate Coordinator, and the Graduate Dean, (2) the passing of the written and oral comprehensive examinations, and (3) the completion of all other program, departmental, and Graduate School requirements for admission to candidacy, the student initiates an application for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree with the Dean of the Graduate School at least two semesters before the expected date of graduation. Following admission to candidacy, the student must register for a minimum of three semester hours of dissertation or other appropriate credit for each of two semesters. In conjunction with this, the student must register for a minimum of three semester hours in *any* semester that the student uses university facilities and/or staff time.

Dissertation Approval and Defense

The completed Dissertation is first submitted to the Major Professor. After the Major Professor approves the Dissertation, it is submitted to the other four members of the Advisory Committee, a final oral defense is scheduled, and the Graduate School is so notified. The Graduate School will announce the time and place of the defense of the dissertation to the University community.

The written assent of three of the four Advisory Committee members (other than the Major Professor) is required before the Dissertation is approved for final defense. If the committee declines to approve the Dissertation as ready for defense, the Major Professor will notify the student and the Graduate School. The defense of the Dissertation is chaired by the Major Professor. Four of the 5 members of the Advisory Committee must approve the defense and so certify in writing.

According to the Graduate School *Bulletin*, the Advisory Committee is allowed three weeks to read and evaluate the completed Dissertation. The defense of the Dissertation must be scheduled so that the results of the defense can be reported a minimum of one week prior to graduation. This means that the completed Dissertation will have to be submitted to the committee at least 30 days before the expected date of graduation.

Annual Evaluation of Neuroscience and Behavior Graduate Students

The performance of each student in the Neuroscience and Behavior Program shall be reviewed in a meeting of the program faculty to be held not later than April 15th each year. Highly important in these annual evaluations is whether the student has met critical deadlines which are indicative of satisfactory progress. In conjunction with this, each student should maintain a status checklist such as that appended to this program policy document. Additional performance, ethical, or other relevant considerations may determine whether a student's performance is satisfactory for continuation in the Neuroscience and Behavior Program. The Major Professor for each student will make a

recommendation that the student's performance, progress, or both are judged to be **Satisfactory** or **Unsatisfactory**. The student's case will be considered until a judgment which has the approval of a majority of the Program faculty has been made.

If the judgment is that a student's performance or progress is **Unsatisfactory**, a letter shall either be handed to the student or placed in her/his departmental mailbox not later than the end of the Spring Quarter. In any event, it is *the student's responsibility* to obtain the results of her/his annual evaluation. The letter will specify (a) the reasons for the **Unsatisfactory** judgment and (b) the conditions which the student must meet to change the judgment. Failure to meet the specified conditions in the specified time limit will be considered grounds for recommending that the student be dismissed from the Neuroscience and Behavior Program.

Probation and Dismissal of Graduate Students

The departmental *Graduate Studies Policy Manual* includes the general departmental policy on probation and dismissal of graduate students.

Faculty Role in Selection and Evaluation

The faculty of the Neuroscience and Behavior Program acts as a committee of the whole in matters relating to admissions, evaluation of students, and in making recommendations for University-wide and departmental assistantships. Each faculty member has one vote, and decisions are made by majority rule. In cases where multiple nominations are made, as in awarding assistantships, the faculty evaluates all nominees and establishes a rank order. No individual faculty member has the sole authority to approve or deny the admission, continuation, or financial support of any student in the Neuroscience and Behavior graduate program.