

Requirements for Graduate Degrees

The Department of Psychology provides graduate education for students seeking a PhD in Psychology. There are three different routes to obtaining a PhD: (a) Students with a baccalaureate may enter the Master's program. After completing the Master's degree they would enroll in the PhD program. (b) Students with a baccalaureate may enter the PhD program directly. In this case, the degree requirements are substantively the same as completing the Master's first and then enrolling in the PhD program. (c) Students with a Master's degree from another institution may enroll in the PhD program.

The degree requirements are described in four sections: requirements for a Master's degree; requirements for a PhD after completing the Master's here; requirements for a PhD when entering the PhD program directly with a baccalaureate; and requirements for a PhD when entering the PhD program with a Master's degree from another institution. Notice that these are minimum requirements and that these requirements may be augmented by a student's supervisory committee.

The departmental requirements described here supplement, and are intended to conform to, the rules and regulations described in the [University of Alberta Calendar](#) and in the [Graduate Program Manual](#) of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR). Questions should be addressed to the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies or to the Department Chair.

Requirements for the Master's (MA or MSc)

Within the first year of the program, students must select a supervisory committee that consists of a supervisor and at least two additional faculty members. The supervisor (or co-supervisor) and at least one other member must be from the Department of Psychology. The composition of this committee must be approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies ([Master's committee approval form](#)) and the supervisor approved by FGSR ([Supervisor approval form](#)). The student and his or her committee shall formulate a tentative, one- to two-year plan of course work and research. The supervisory committee must meet annually to assess the student's progress.

Course Requirements

All Master's students normally must complete a minimum *17 of graduate-level courses. *8 of these courses consist of:

- (*2) Psychology 502: Professional and Ethical Issues
- (*3) Psychology 531: Design and Analysis in Psychological Research I
- (*3) Psychology 532: Design and Analysis in Psychological Research II

Psychology 531 and 532 are normally required, regardless of a student's area of research.

The additional *9 of graduate-level courses are designated to be:

- (*3) a course in the student's focal domain of knowledge; and
- (*6) of courses in related domains.

“Focal” knowledge is understood as knowledge that is directly relevant to the student's immediate research interests; in contrast, knowledge of “related” domains is knowledge that is relevant to the student's long-term research, teaching, and professional development. Focal and related courses are determined by the student's supervisory committee. The focal course may be an [approved methods](#) course, [PSYCO 600 \(Individual Studies\)](#), or some other course in the student's area of research. The courses in related domains would normally be courses in Psychology; however, courses outside of the Department may be used to fulfill this requirement with the express approval of the supervisory committee. [PSYCO 600 \(Individual Studies\)](#) may be used only once to satisfy either the requirement for a course in a student's research focus or for one of the two required courses in related areas.

All courses that are to be counted towards the degree must be approved by the student's supervisory committee. The supervisory committee may require the student to

take courses in addition to the minimum requirements to ensure that the student has sufficient background in his or her area of concentration. Students should consult the [course plans](#) for their area in planning their program.

Students are required to present a report of their research at least once every two years at the Department of Psychology's annual Joseph Royce Research Conference or at a major convention or conference, such as the annual convention of the Canadian Psychological Association or the Canadian Society for Brain, Behavioural, and Cognitive Science.

First-Year Research Project

Each student is required to conduct an empirical First-Year Research Project (FYRP) during the first year under the supervision of a faculty member. The rationale for this requirement is to help students become involved in research as soon as possible and to encourage them to remain active in research throughout their tenure in the department. The FYRP may evolve into, or become part of, later thesis research, but it may not serve as a substitute for thesis research. This requirement entails a series of deadlines that are publicized and monitored by the Associate Chair. Satisfaction of the FYRP requirement may be met through either an oral or poster presentation (Option 1) or a final report in the form of a brief APA-style journal article (Option 2), with the option selected by the supervisor. By August 31 of the first year, a [report](#) is submitted to the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies, indicating how the requirement was met. Further details are provided in a separate document ([First-Year Research Project](#)).

Master's Thesis

Students are required to write a Master's thesis and pass an oral Master's examination. In completing the Master's research project, the student normally takes greater responsibility for developing the project, as compared to the First-Year Research Project. The plan for research should be approved in advance by the student's supervisory committee. The thesis based on the research must be approved by the supervisory committee. When the committee decides that the candidate and report are ready, a Master's oral examination is held. The examining committee is composed of the student's supervisory committee plus one additional faculty member who is neither directly involved nor immediately familiar with the student's research. One examining member must be from outside of the Department. The examining committee must be approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and FGSR, and the examination is conducted in accordance with the [FGSR rules](#) and departmental guidelines for oral examinations. Normally, the Master's thesis should be completed during the second year of the Master's program. Further details are provided in separate documents ([Second-Year Research Project](#), [Master's Thesis](#) and [Oral Examinations](#)).

Requirements for the PhD for Students with a Master's from University of Alberta

After completing a Master's degree, students normally transfer to the PhD program and complete a written qualifying exam, an oral candidacy exam, and a PhD dissertation. The doctoral supervisory committee must be approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and by FGSR ([Doctoral committee approval form](#)).

Candidacy Examination

Students must demonstrate knowledge pertinent to the discipline and to their area(s) of expertise by writing a qualifying examination and by passing an oral PhD candidacy examination.

The structure and format of the written qualifying exam is determined by the supervisory committee. If the supervisory committee finds that the questions have not been answered adequately, the committee may require either that the exam be retaken with new questions or that other remedial activities (e.g., writing a paper on a particular issue) be completed satisfactorily prior to the scheduling of the oral exam.

The oral candidacy exam is conducted by an examining committee consisting of the supervisory committee and two additional members, one from the Department of Psychology and one from another department in the University. The examining committee is approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and FGSR ([Candidacy exam committee approval form](#)). Passing the candidacy exam means that the student advances from provisional to full candidacy for the PhD. Normally, for students holding a Master's degree from the University of Alberta, the candidacy exam should be completed no later than the end of a student's first year in the PhD program. Further details are provided in separate documents ([The Oral Candidacy Examination](#) and [Oral Examinations](#)).

PhD Dissertation

Students must complete a written dissertation proposal. The proposal is due after successful completion of the candidacy exam, and normally, no later than the end of a student's first year in the PhD program. The proposal may be as short or as lengthy as the student, supervisor, and supervisory committee agree upon; this may vary between areas and within areas, depending upon the participating people. In general, however, the proposal should conform to the guidelines presented in a separate document ([The Dissertation Proposal](#)).

Students must write and defend the dissertation. The oral defense is conducted by an examining committee, which consists of the supervisory committee and two additional members, one from another department in the university and one external to the university. The examining committee is approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate

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Studies and FGSR, and the examination is conducted in accordance with [FGSR rules](#) and departmental guidelines for oral examinations, as outlined in a separate document ([Oral Examinations](#)).

Requirements for the PhD for Students Entering with a Baccalaureate Degree

Students may enter the PhD program directly with a baccalaureate degree. In this case, the degree requirements are comparable to those for obtaining a Master's first followed by the PhD. However, students complete a Second-Year Research Project rather than a Master's thesis.

Within the first year of the program, students must select a supervisory committee that consists of a supervisor and at least two additional faculty members. The supervisor and at least one other member must be from the Department of Psychology. The composition of this committee must be approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and by FGSR ([Doctoral committee approval form](#)). The student and his or her committee shall formulate a tentative, one- to two-year plan of course work and research. The supervisory committee must meet annually to assess the student's progress.

Course Requirements

All students entering with a baccalaureate normally must complete a minimum *17 of graduate-level courses. *8 of these courses consist of:

- (*2) Psychology 502: Professional and Ethical Issues
- (*3) Psychology 531: Design and Analysis in Psychological Research I
- (*3) Psychology 532: Design and Analysis in Psychological Research II

Psychology 531 and 532 are normally required, regardless of a student's area of research.

The additional *9 of graduate-level courses are designated to be:

- (*3) a course in the student's focal domain of knowledge; and
- (*6) of courses in related domains.

“Focal” knowledge is understood as knowledge that is directly relevant to the student's immediate research interests; in contrast, knowledge of “related” domains is knowledge that is relevant to the student's long-term research, teaching, and professional development. Focal and related courses are determined by the student's supervisory committee. The focal course may be an [approved methods](#) course, [PSYCO 600 \(Individual Studies\)](#), or some other course in the student's area of research. The courses in related domains would normally be courses in Psychology; however, courses outside of the Department may be used to fulfill this requirement with the express approval of the supervisory committee. [PSYCO 600 \(Individual Studies\)](#) may be used only once to

satisfy either the requirement for a course in a student's research focus or for one of the two required courses in related areas.

All courses that are to be counted towards the degree must be approved by the student's supervisory committee. The supervisory committee may require the student to take courses in addition to the minimum requirements to ensure that the student has sufficient background in his or her area of concentration. Students should consult the [course plans](#) for their area in planning their program.

Students are required to present a report of their research at least once every two years at the Department of Psychology's annual Joseph Royce Research Conference or at a major convention or conference, such as the annual convention of the Canadian Psychological Association or the Canadian Society for Brain, Behavioural, and Cognitive Science.

First-Year Research Project

Each student is required to conduct an empirical First-Year Research Project (FYRP) during the first year under the supervision of a faculty member. The rationale for this requirement is to help students become involved in research as soon as possible and to encourage them to remain active in research throughout their tenure in the department. The FYRP may evolve into, or become part of, later thesis research, but it may not serve as a substitute for thesis research. Satisfaction of the FYRP requirement may be met through either an oral or poster presentation (Option 1) or a final report in the form of a brief APA-style journal article (Option 2), with the option selected by the supervisor. By August 31 of the first year, a [report](#) is submitted to the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies, indicating how the requirement was met. Further details are provided in a separate document ([First-Year Research Project](#)).

Second-Year Research Project

Students are required to complete a Second-Year Research Project (SYRP). In completing this requirement the student normally takes greater responsibility for developing the project, as compared to the First-Year Research Project. The plan for research should be approved in advance by the student's supervisory committee. Following completion of the research project, the student is to submit a report, usually in the form of an article for a scholarly journal, to his or her supervisory committee. This committee evaluates the report and may, at its option, require changes. When the committee decides that the candidate and report are ready, an oral examination is held. The examining committee is composed of the student's supervisory committee plus one additional faculty member who is neither directly involved nor immediately familiar with the student's research. The committee, along with the student, will decide on a suitable forum for the oral examination. Normally, the [SYRP](#) should be completed during the second year in the PhD program. Further details are provided in a separate document ([Second-Year Research Project or Master's Thesis](#)).

Candidacy Examination

Students must demonstrate knowledge pertinent to the discipline and to their area(s) of expertise by writing a qualifying examination and by passing an oral PhD candidacy examination.

The structure and format of the written qualifying exam is determined by the supervisory committee. If the supervisory committee finds that the questions have not been answered adequately, the committee may require either that the exam be retaken with new questions or that other remedial activities (e.g., writing a paper on a particular issue) be completed satisfactorily prior to the scheduling of the oral exam.

The oral candidacy exam is conducted by an examining committee consisting of the supervisory committee and two additional members, one from the Department of Psychology and one from another department in the University. The examining committee is approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and FGSR ([Candidacy exam committee approval form](#)). Passing the candidacy exam means that the student advances from provisional to full candidacy for the PhD. Normally, the candidacy exam should be completed no later than the end of a student's third year in the PhD program. Further details are provided in separate documents ([The Oral Candidacy Examination](#) and [Oral Examinations](#)).

PhD Dissertation

Students must complete a written dissertation proposal. The proposal is due after successful completion of the candidacy exam, and normally, no later than the end of a student's third year in the PhD program. The proposal may be as short or as lengthy as the student, supervisor, and supervisory committee agree upon; this may vary between areas and within areas, depending upon the participating people. In general, however, the proposal should conform to the guidelines presented in a separate document ([The Dissertation Proposal](#)).

Students must write and defend the dissertation. The oral defense is conducted by an examining committee, which consists of the supervisory committee and two additional members, one from another department in the university and one external to the university. The examining committee is approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and FGSR, and the examination is conducted in accordance with [FGSR rules](#) and departmental guidelines for oral examinations, as outlined in a separate document ([Oral Examinations](#)).

PhD Requirements for Students Entering with a Master's Degree from Another Institution

Within the first year of the PhD program, students must select a supervisory committee that consists of a supervisor and at least two additional faculty members. The supervisor and at least one other member must be from the Department of Psychology. The composition of this committee must be approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and FGSR ([Doctoral committee approval form](#)). The student and his or her committee shall formulate a tentative, one- to two-year plan of course work and research. The supervisory committee must meet annually to assess the student's progress.

The supervisory committee is responsible for ensuring that, by completion of the program, the student's course- and research-related experience is comparable to that of students who entered the PhD program with a BA or BSc degree.

Students are required to present a report of their research at least once every two years at the Department of Psychology's annual Joseph Royce Research Conference or at a major convention or conference, such as the annual convention of the Canadian Psychological Association or the Canadian Society for Brain, Behavioural, and Cognitive Science.

Course Requirements

All courses that are to be counted towards the degree must be approved by the student's supervisory committee. Students are required to take (*2) Psychology 502: Professional and Ethical Issues. The supervisory committee may require the student to take additional courses to ensure that the student has sufficient background in his or her area of concentration. Students should consult the [course plans](#) for their area in planning their program.

Candidacy Examination

Students must demonstrate knowledge pertinent to the discipline and to their area(s) of expertise by writing a qualifying examination and by passing an oral PhD candidacy examination.

The structure and format of the written qualifying exam is determined by the supervisory committee. If the supervisory committee finds that the questions have not been answered adequately, the committee may require either that the exam be retaken with new questions or that other remedial activities (e.g., writing a paper on a particular issue) be completed satisfactorily prior to the scheduling of the oral exam.

The oral candidacy exam is conducted by an examining committee consisting of the supervisory committee and two additional members, one from the Department of

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Psychology and one from another department in the University. The examining committee is approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and FGSR ([Candidacy exam committee approval form](#)). Passing the candidacy exam means that the student advances from provisional to full candidacy for the PhD. Normally, for students entering with a Master's degree from another university, the candidacy exam should be completed no later than the end of a student's second year in the PhD program. Further details are provided in separate documents ([The Oral Candidacy Examination](#) and [Oral Examinations](#)).

PhD Dissertation

Students must complete a written dissertation proposal. The proposal is due after successful completion of the candidacy exam, and normally, no later than the end of a student's third year in the PhD program. The proposal may be as short or as lengthy as the student, supervisor, and supervisory committee agree upon; this may vary between areas and within areas, depending upon the participating people. In general, however, the proposal should conform to the guidelines presented in a separate document ([The Dissertation Proposal](#)).

Students must write and defend the dissertation. The oral defense is conducted by an examining committee, which consists of the supervisory committee and two additional members, one from another department in the university and one external to the university. The examining committee is approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and FGSR, and the examination is conducted in accordance with [FGSR rules](#) and departmental guidelines for oral examinations, as outlined in a separate document ([Oral Examinations](#)).

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Revision History

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