

Boston College Department of Psychology

Graduate Program Information

Introduction

Welcome to Boston College's Department of Psychology. Each year the Department is pleased to welcome a small, highly select group of outstanding students. We know that you are the next generation of psychologists and that we are privileged to have the opportunity to work with you. You begin as students, and we all remain students throughout our careers, but we look forward to your quickly becoming our collaborators and then our leaders as you become independent researchers. Our hope is that in fulfilling the formal rules to which we now introduce you, you will acquire the professional skills and knowledge needed to pursue your intellectual interests and make your contributions to psychology.

General Information

Tuition

Ph.D. students receive full tuition remission each semester.

Stipend

BC graduate stipends provide approximately \$28,500 over nine months of the academic year. This amount is for 2022-2023 and increases each year.

Full funding for three summer months is considered \$7,500. Summer stipends are not guaranteed but typically provided by the research advisor through a research assistantship.

Beginning in the first year, a student receiving funding from GSAS serves as either a teaching assistant, teaching fellow, or research assistant (see below).

Stipend Requirements

In return for his or her stipend, a Ph.D. student serves as a Teaching Assistant, Teaching Fellow, or Research Assistant (see below).

All graduate students are required to seek pre-doctoral funding during the first and second year of graduate school.

Summer

Our program assumes that the graduate student is devoting 12 months per year to research and other endeavors in the graduate program. This continuous immersion is the ideal situation in which the student can develop a successful independent research program.

Vacation

Reaching this ideal requires that students work throughout the summer with, of course, a rest and recreation break. Graduate students receiving summer funding from Boston College are expected to have two weeks of vacation during the summer.

Teaching Assistants, Teaching Fellows, and Research Assistants

The duties of a teaching assistant (TA), teaching fellow (TF), and research assistant (RA) are described below.

By university regulation, full-time graduate students may not work more than 20 hours on the BC payroll. Because we expect students on a teaching assistantship or research assistantship to work 15 hours per week, and because teaching fellowships require substantially more time, our graduate students may not be employed elsewhere in the university.

Teaching Assistants

Teaching assistants (TAs) are expected to work on one or two courses per semester, spending an average of 15 hours per week totaled across all courses. Students are required to attend classes and hold office hours to supplement classroom instruction and explain grading decisions. Some weeks students will need to work more than 15 hours (e.g., when papers or other assignments must be graded), and some weeks students will need to work less.

Specific needs for TA support include the following:

- Large amounts of grading
- Significant writing required in a course, which often requires grading by TAs
- Making up exams
- Review sessions
- Break-out or discussion sections
- Guest lectures
- Class demonstrations
- Clerical duties (photocopying, tracking down relevant readings, administering scantron sheets, etc.)

Not all of the above tasks are relevant to all courses. The level of TA support provided to a course is based on assessment of the overall need.

The course instructor will assign duties to each individual TA as appropriate given the substantive background and skills of the TA and equity across TAs. For example, if a TA has extensive background in the content covered in a course, that TA might present a guest lecture or hold primary responsibility for a review session or a break out section. If a TA has little or no substantive background, he or she might spend a high proportion of time on clerical tasks and would typically not be expected to lecture or run review sessions.

Minimum Requirement

Graduate students with a stipend from grant funding are not required to be a TA. However, to ensure our students receive teaching experience, all students are required to be a TA for at least two semesters during their graduate career.

Teaching Fellows

Teaching fellows (TFs) teach their own course. Students must apply to the Department Chair and Graduate Program Director for the privilege of teaching their own course. There is no guarantee that the request will be granted. The needs of the undergraduate curriculum, the qualifications of the student to

teach the proposed course, and the availability of department funds will all be taken into account in deciding whether the student can teach the proposed course. If students do apply to serve as a TF (typically in their fourth or fifth year), they are encouraged to apply to teach a 3000-level course, research practicum, or small seminar in their specialty area. Having taught a broader class will probably prove more beneficial when on the job market.

Teaching fellows should state BC's policy on Academic Integrity on their syllabi and should provide a link to the website.

Research Assistants

A research assistant (RA) typically works on collaborative research with his or her advisor. This may begin with assisting the advisor but should evolve soon into the student developing a collaborative project with the advisor. The research assistantship is not to be used for clerical work unless the tasks are related to the research being carried out. (Thus, students should not be expected to make copies for their advisors, for example, if these copies are unrelated to a research project.) Students are expected to spend 15 hours per week as research assistants.

Miscellaneous Information

Graduate Research Day

In the spring of each year, the Psychology graduate students organize a one day conference called Graduate Research Day. Graduate students present their research in talks and posters. This is an excellent opportunity for students to develop skill in public speaking or poster presentation. This also helps students to bring their research projects to completion in time for formal presentation. All faculty and students are expected to attend.

Graduate Program Committee Student Member

The student member serves as a liaison between the Graduate Program Director and the graduate students, and attends Graduate Program Committee meetings when invited.

Graduate Student Center

The Murray Graduate Student Center is open to graduate students from all departments. This center serves as way for graduate students to meet socially. The center offers a computer lab, study rooms, dining facilities, and a staff that advocates for graduate students.

Professional Workshops

The office of Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) hosts programs for the research community.

The Connors Family Learning Center also provides one-hour workshops of a similar nature that are specifically on teaching.

Psychology Department Colloquium Series

The department invites distinguished speakers from time to time. The colloquium series is run by a graduate student committee in consultation with the Colloquium Committee. The graduate students are responsible for everything from organizing the speaker's day on campus to ensuring hotel reservations are made. In addition, they need to work with the Psychology office to locate a room for the presentation and plan room setup and refreshments. All students are expected to attend and participate.

Special Fellowships

The Graduate Program Director serves on the Graduate Evaluation Committee, which evaluates each student's progress yearly and makes decisions about special fellowships and awards.

Donald J. White Teaching Award

The university awards the Donald J. White Teaching Award to deserving teaching fellows. Each year, the Graduate Evaluation Committee can nominate one student to GSAS to receive this award, or two students to share this award. Nominations are made by the Graduate Evaluation Committee. The criteria for nominating a student for this award are the student's teaching evaluations and a written report of the student's teaching by a faculty member who has observed one of the student's classes.

Diversity Student Fellowship

The Graduate School has a number of fellowships for minority group students. These fellowships are renewable for a total of five years of support. Notification of this fellowship is made upon admission. Like those on standard fellowships, students on this fellowship serve as research and teaching assistants.

University-Wide Graduate Student Awards

The Graduate Student Association has a yearly awards banquet honoring three students from each graduate school for excellence in their field of study. Awards are also given for Outstanding Leadership, Outstanding Community Service, and the Sister Thea Bowman Award for outstanding service to the graduate office of the AHANA community (AHANA stands for African-American, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American).

Conference Funding

The university provides first-year graduate students up to \$725 in conference funding if presenting at the conference, or up to \$300 if just attending.

Beginning the Program

Years One and Two

Each incoming student is admitted with a primary advisor, who is the key person in the student's education. In our department, the advisor is a mentor to the student, providing much of the training through close collaboration. The advisor guides the student in setting up an empirical research program, which includes data collection, analysis and interpretation, and writing of articles. The advisor's role, and the expected advisor-advisee relationship, is spelled out in more detail elsewhere in this handbook. Each student must have an advisor at all times in order to stay enrolled in the program. Students can switch advisors, but only if they find another faculty member willing to serve in that role.

During your first semester here, you will work out a tentative plan for your first two years. This plan should specify which courses you will take and what your second-year research project will be. This plan can be revised, but by the end of your first year, the plan is formalized. In drawing up your plan, bear in mind that the formal requirements of the program are the minimum. You will serve yourself well by striving to establish yourself as an independent scholar and researcher as soon as possible.

Year One

Apply for External Funding

Due November 1: NSF applications.

Second Year Research Project Outline

Due December 1: Submit a 2-3 page outline of your proposed Research Project to your advisor.

Cumulative Student Progress Form (Form 1)

Due May 15: Students submit the Cumulative Student Progress Form each year. Save this form and update it whenever a requirement is completed.

Preliminary Advisory Committee Form (Form 2)

During your first year, you will need to create a Preliminary Advisory Committee comprised of your primary and secondary advisors, plus one additional faculty member. Form your committee by early spring so that it has time to review your research plan.

Due May 15: Submit the Advisory Committee Form with the signature of each of the three faculty members who have agreed to serve on this committee.

First and Second Year Plan Approval Form (Form 3)

Due May 15: Have the three members of your Preliminary Advisory Committee sign the First and Second Year Plan Approval Form. This form lists all courses the student has taken and plans to take in the first two years, as well as the topic of the second-year research project. Committee signatures indicates that the course plan is approved, and that a 2-3 page outline plan of the project has been reviewed and approved by the committee.

Year Two

Cumulative Student Progress Form (Form 1)

Due May 15: Students submit the Cumulative Student Progress Form each year. Save this form and update it whenever a requirement is completed.

Second Year Research Project Approval Form (Form 4)

Due March 31: The Second Year Research Project Approval Form must be signed by the members of the Preliminary Advisory Committee.

Master's Degree Option

Due April 1: Students who have completed 30 graduate course credits may obtain a Master's degree. Doing so requires the following forms (with the appropriate signatures).

- Second-Year Research Project Approval Form (Form 4)
- M.A. Degree Option Form (GSAS form)

External Funding

Students receive funding for five years, whether from Boston College or externally if the student is able to secure external funding for one or more of these years. For example, if a student receives external funding for two years, that student is entitled to three more years of department funding, not five more years. Students may request to stay on for a sixth year, but this is not encouraged and there is no promise of funding for a sixth year. You can view our policy on sixth-year funding in Continuing in the Program.

Students should continually seek external funding for their graduate work. The more research you have done and the clearer your ideas about future research, the greater your chances of getting funding. Try both public and private sources. The secret to success here is persistence. Your advisor will guide you in finding sources and preparing the proposal.

Second-Year Research Project

The primary focus of the first and second year is the Second Year Research Project. This project is an empirical study designed in consultation with the advisor. The work must be carried out by the student while in the graduate program at BC. The literature review, design, execution, data analysis, and written presentation should be of publishable quality, although publication depends upon whether a single or multiple-study paper makes the most sense for your topic. A list of possible journals to consider is provided in Section VI. Again, your advisor is likely to provide the best advice on the appropriate journal.

Proposal

Students should meet regularly with their advisors to plan their projects. Start work on this project as soon as possible, certainly sometime during the first semester here. Before initiating the actual data collection (optimally before winter break), you submit a 2-3 page outline plan to the three members of your advisory committee; the committee members must approve this plan by May 15 as described above. Once approved, the committee cannot require that the student alter the plan, though of course the student may wish to make alterations and receive approval by the committee. The committee should be kept informed throughout the project and receive regular updates.

Research Approval by Institutional Review Board (IRB)

All research projects involving animal or human subjects must be approved by the Boston College Institutional Review Board (IRB).

You have to take an ethics course administered by the IRB. It is very important that you keep your certificate when you pass because you will likely be asked to provide proof of course completion for other grants and projects in which you may be involved at a later date.

Final Draft to Committee

The Second Year Research Project must be completed and presented to the Preliminary Advisory Committee by March 15 of Year Two (after the advisor has read and approved that it go forth to the rest of the committee). This will allow time for revisions so that the final approval of the project will occur by March 31.

Defense

A formal presentation and defense of the research is given either to the preliminary advisory committee or at the student's Research Workshop. If the latter, the student should arrange to have all members of their Preliminary Advisory Committee present. This should occur after the committee has approved the final draft, but before March 31 (for a May graduation date).

Presentation at Graduate Research Day

We encourage students to present their Second-Year Research Project at Graduate Research Day (held in the spring of each year).

Flexibility

Additional Courses

The department may ask you to take an additional course if there is a deficiency in your background that is considered to impede graduate training and/or professional success. These requirements will be discussed with you and the Graduate Student Evaluation Committee during your first semester.

Students may take additional courses, either within the department or in other related departments, in consultation with their advisor. Students may elect to take the History of Psychology course, usually taken in year three, during the first two years. Students may take additional electives in the department or in other departments at Boston College, or they may cross-register for courses at universities that form part of the consortium, with special permission of the Graduate Program Director.

Consortium Schools: Boston University, Brandeis University, Tufts University

While students are welcome to take courses beyond those required, your primary professional goal is to conduct research and submit papers for presentation at conferences and publication in appropriate journals.

Students Entering with a Master's Degree in Psychology

Students accepted into the program who have a Master's in Psychology in their area of concentration in our program, who have completed course work in this area, and have written an empirical Master's thesis, are typically accepted as third-year students. Some students entering with a Master's may be asked to take one or more of the required courses from years one and two, depending on the student's background. These decisions will be made upon admission by the Graduate Student Evaluation Committee in consultation with the student's advisor.

Continuing On

At the end of the second year, students are either invited to continue on in the program or are asked to leave, with a Master's Degree if possible. This evaluation is based on the Second Year Research Project, other research, the student's writing, and performance in required courses.

Early Completion of First Two Years' Requirements

If a student completes the requirements of the first two years early, he or she is free to start on requirements for year three.

Late Completion of Requirements

Students are expected to complete the requirements listed within the allotted two years. If circumstances arise such that a student needs more than two years to complete the requirements, an extension may be granted by the Graduate Student Evaluation Committee on the recommendation of the Preliminary Advisory Committee. Continued reliance on extensions could affect whether doctoral students are invited to complete the Ph.D.

Continuing in the Program

Years Three, Four, and Five

The second period in our graduate program is characterized by a shift to more independent work and an even more intensive focus on research. The third year focuses on two requirements that you work on simultaneously, the Third Year Literature Review and the Dissertation Proposal. The fourth year focuses on dissertation research. Even more than in the first two years, however, meeting the formal requirements is the minimum. The student's principal job is carrying out research and building up a CV.

Early in the third year, students should meet with their committee to form a tentative plan for Years Three and Four. Students are encouraged to begin pilot research for their dissertation, if they have not already done so, during the first semester of Year Three.

Dissertation Advisory Committee and Dissertation Defense Committee

When you are ready to write the Dissertation Proposal, you will form a Dissertation Advisory Committee. The Dissertation Advisory Committee consists of two members from the student's area and one faculty member from outside the student's area (who will provide an outside, broader perspective). The member who is outside the student's area must not have training in the student's area. At least two members of the committee must be from the department.

It is possible that the student's preliminary advisory committee from the first two years will already have a member outside the student's area, and in this case no change is needed unless the student wishes a change.

At the time of the Dissertation Defense (but ideally earlier), the Dissertation Advisory Committee is supplemented with one additional member from outside the Department to form the Dissertation Defense Committee. The fourth member must be from outside the Psychology Department and can be from any university and any area (whether this be the student's area, another area in psychology, or even another related discipline). The student's Dissertation Advisory Committee recommends a fourth member to the Graduate Program Director, who must approve this recommendation and sign the Dissertation Defense Committee Form (Form 10). Note that it is possible to have a defense committee with only two members from the Psychology Department and with only two members from Boston College. It is recommended but not required that the fourth member be added to the committee early enough to include that individual in the plan and proposal defense. The minimum number on the Dissertation Defense Committee is four; the student, in consultation with the advisor, can add a fifth member if deemed appropriate. The fifth member can be from any area, any department, and any university.

Courses in Years Three, Four, and Five

Course requirements in Years Three, Four, and Five depend on the Ph.D. track. While students are welcome to take courses beyond those required, we remind you that your first responsibility to yourself is to conduct research and submit papers for presentation at conferences and publication in appropriate journals.

Students who have completed all course requirements and are not taking a course register each semester for the one-credit Doctoral Continuation course.

Third Year Literature Review

Students identify an area (typically one in which they will carry out their dissertation research) and write a scholarly integrative review of the literature in that area. This paper is not merely of the kind used as an introduction to an empirical paper. Nor do we have in mind an old-fashioned annotated bibliography that reads like a list of unintegrated summaries. Instead, the third year literature review has the breadth and depth of a scholarly review to be published on its own. The aim is for an article that is a scholarly contribution to the field, providing an integration of the literature, a novel perspective, a tightly reasoned argument, and a firm conclusion. We have in mind the type of paper now published in *Psychological Bulletin* or *Psychological Review*. Some emphasize integration of empirical studies, others emphasize conceptual issues. Of course, the approach and emphasis are up to you.

Preparation

Students should meet regularly (at least once a week) with their advisor to identify an area, plan their review, and discuss the ongoing work of the review. A good idea is to read a number of review articles in your field. These are typically published in journals specializing in reviews. You should also consult with other members on your Preliminary Advisory Committee.

Before writing the Literature Review, the student prepares a preliminary plan for the review (Form 6), which is to be approved by the preliminary advisory. Once signed by the committee, this plan is similar to a contract. While changes may be made (with approval from advisors), the committee cannot require new changes. The third year literature review must be authored solely by the student when it is turned in to the committee. If the paper is later submitted for publication, it can be co-authored with the advisor, but the student should always be first author.

Evaluation

The final project is evaluated by the Preliminary Advisory Committee. Their standard is whether the article is of publishable quality. All members of the committee must sign Form 7 indicating that the project has been accepted.

Submission for publication

The ideal paper would be submitted for publication to a review journal. (Of course, whether this work constitutes a stand-alone journal publication, or whether it should be combined with other studies, will depend upon judgments by the student and faculty advisor.)

Dissertation Proposal Defense

Work on the Dissertation Proposal should begin at the start of Year Three. Throughout Year Three students should meet with their advisor to plan the dissertation, while at the same time working on the Third Year Literature Review and completing course work. At some point in Year Three, student and dissertation advisory committee will typically formalize the plan into a formal Dissertation Proposal. After the committee approves the written proposal, the student defends the proposal at a formal meeting with the Dissertation Advisory Committee which is open to all faculty and graduate students in the department. Students should aim to hold this meeting by the beginning of the fourth year.

The format of the proposal is up to your committee. Perhaps an ideal format is that of a grant proposal. In any case, typically, the dissertation proposal includes:

- A statement of the research question
- A review of the relevant literature, which can be a condensed version of the Third Year Literature Review (typical length of this section is five pages)
- Clear statement of hypotheses and how they will be tested in this research
- A presentation of pilot research results if relevant
- A full description of the methods and data analysis to be used and power analysis

The dissertation proposal is evaluated in light of the importance of the research question; adequacy of the design; and likelihood of completion in time proposed. The dissertation should make an original contribution to our understanding of some question in psychology.

For those working with human subjects, remember to make timely application to the IRB for approval to proceed with data collection (if not already covered by one of your advisor's protocols)!

Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy

After students have completed all of the program requirements, including the Third Year Literature Review, and have successfully defended their dissertation proposal, they will be advanced to doctoral candidacy.

Dissertation Format

Visit the GSAS website for dissertation forms and Boston College regulations for format of dissertations.

Full text access to all dissertations, including Boston College dissertations, is available from the Libraries' website.

Dissertation Defense

If the student has not already done so, now is the time to add a fourth member to the Dissertation Committee, thereby forming the Dissertation Defense Committee (see above). The dissertation is defended at a public hearing open to faculty, graduate students, and other members of the BC community. The Chair of the Defense Committee will be someone other than the student's advisor. The member from outside the Department must be present at the defense. Your advisor contacts the Graduate Program Director at least two weeks in advance of the proposed date of the defense. The student also notifies the Psychology Office so that the time and date of the Defense can be announced publicly. The student obtains all necessary paperwork and brings it to the defense. Students wishing to graduate in May must turn in a signed and approved copy of their dissertation around April 1 (See Academic Calendar on GSAS website).

Presentation at Professional Conferences

During the second two years, we especially encourage students to attend professional conferences. Ideally, every student submits a paper or poster for presentation each year. Travel to a conference to present a paper or poster is partially subsidized.

Fieldwork

In some areas, students may elect to carry out fieldwork in order to study the application of psychology in real-world settings. Consult with your advisor on arranging a suitable placement.

Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program

When departmental doctoral programs are unable to satisfy the interests of the student, an interdisciplinary doctoral program remains a possibility. A student interested in exploring such a possibility should make an inquiry to the Graduate School Office

External Funding

For third- and fourth-year students, there is pre-doctoral funding available from the APA and NIMH, as well as a wide variety of private foundations. Getting a grant in your third or fourth year will allow you to extend your time in graduate school, do more research, get more publications, and in the end, do better on the job market. (Getting grants looks very good on your CV.)

Policy on Sixth Year Funding for Doctoral Students

Our doctoral students are fully supported for five years, either through grants that they or their advisors receive, or through university funding. Occasionally a student may wish to remain for a sixth year.

When the student is externally funded (directly, or via a faculty grant) or funded by a faculty member's start-up funds, this decision is left up to the student and the student's advisory committee. Students who believe they might require a sixth year are strongly encouraged to seek external support well in advance.

When the student requires university funding for a sixth year, the student must apply to the Graduate Program Director, explaining the need for a sixth year. Their advisor must also write in support of the additional year.

Applications are due by July 1 prior to the student's fifth year. The applications are reviewed and ranked by the Graduate Evaluation Committee. The kinds of criteria to be considered in ranking include whether the student has fulfilled all previous requirements in a timely manner and the number of years of external support that the student has had (taking into account the fact that non-US students are eligible for fewer grants and fellowships). Other criteria may be used as well.

The Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Admissions Director will together determine the number of available university stipends for the coming year, and the total number of students that faculty desire to admit as incoming students. In rare circumstances, a particularly strong case for a sixth year could take priority over admitting a new student. If it is clear that there is an available slot to grant the request for a sixth year, a decision can be made within a month after applications are due.

However, when it is not clear how many university funded slots will be available, a decision must wait until April 15 of the student's fifth year, when acceptances from newly admitted students are due. If there are unused university funded slots at that time, a sixth year of support may be granted.

Students who apply for a sixth year of university funding that is not granted may appeal to their advisors for support through the advisor's funds.

Three-Paper Option

As an alternative to a traditional dissertation, Ph.D. students can compile three first author peer-reviewed papers as a dissertation. These papers must be empirical in respected journals, with the work initiated after the student started at Boston College. A student who has published three papers has completed an impressive amount of research that has been approved by experts in their field. If a

student chooses the three-paper option, it will require the approval of their dissertation committee, and the student will be required to write scholarly introduction and discussion chapters that consider the three published papers as a related body of research.

Developmental, Social, and Cognitive Track

Course Requirements

Students must complete at least 30 credits but typically complete 33-39. The required 30 credits must include the following courses:

- 6 credits: two 5000-level courses in the student's area
- 6 credits: two 5000-level courses outside the student's area
- 3 credits: PSYC5501 Experimental Design and Statistics
- 3 credits: a second statistics course
- 12 credits: four Research Workshops
- 0 credits: Professional Development Workshop

Research Workshops and Independent Studies meet “by arrangement” with your advisor. The remaining courses have scheduled meeting times.

Course Timeline

Ph.D. students typically take 18 credits in the first year, 12 credits in the second year, and a 1-credit Doctoral Continuation course each semester thereafter.

Year One

- PSYC5501 Experimental Design and Statistics (3 credits)
- Second statistics course (3 credits)
- 5000-level area course (3 credits)
- 5000-level area course (3 credits)
- Research Workshop I (3 credits)
- Research Workshop II (3 credits)
- Professional Development Workshop (0 credits)

Year Two

- 5000-level breadth course (3 credits)
- 5000-level breadth course (3 credits)
- Research Workshop I (3 credits)
- Research Workshop II (3 credits)

Year Three

- PSYC9999 Doctoral Continuation (1 credit)
- PSYC9999 Doctoral Continuation (1 credit)

Year Four

- PSYC9999 Doctoral Continuation (1 credit)
- PSYC9999 Doctoral Continuation (1 credit)

Year Five

- PSYC9999 Doctoral Continuation (1 credit)
- PSYC9999 Doctoral Continuation (1 credit)

Progress Timeline

Guidelines for the first two years of the program are spelled out in Beginning the Program. For the remainder of the program, the different Ph.D. tracks have different deadlines. See the Progress Forms page.

Year Three

Cumulative Student Progress Form (Form 1)

Due May 15: Students submit the Cumulative Student Progress Form each year. Save this form and update it whenever a requirement is completed.

Third and Fourth Year Plan Approval Form (Form 5)

Due December 1

Third Year Literature Review Plan (Form 6)

Due December 1

Dissertation Advisory Committee Form (Form 9)

Due April 1

Third Year Literature Review Final Approval Form (Form 8)

Due May 15

Dissertation Committee Form (Form 10)

Due May 15

Year Four

Cumulative Student Progress Form (Form 1)

Due May 15: Students submit the Cumulative Student Progress Form each year. Save this form and update it whenever a requirement is completed.

Dissertation Proposal Defense Approval Form (Form 7)

Due December 1

Ph.D. Thesis Forms

If you are finishing your Ph.D. in four years, the approval forms are due April 1. Students who successfully defend by early April can march in the May commencement.

Year Five

Ph.D. Thesis Forms

Due April 1. Students who successfully defend by early April can march in the May commencement.

Cumulative Student Progress Form (Form 1)

Due May 15: Students submit the Cumulative Student Progress Form each year. Save this form and update it whenever a requirement is completed.

Neuroscience Track

The goal of the Neuroscience Concentration is to promote research training in the basic neural processes and brain mechanisms that regulate behavior, cognition, and emotion. This concentration offers flexible programs of study and will be appropriate for students with interests in behavioral and cognitive neuroscience. The concentration is housed within the Psychology Department, but may include courses taught in the Biology Department.

Description of Program

Brain activity is the foundation of human nature: it makes us who we are, enables how we think, how we feel, and how we act. Neuroscience encompasses a diverse array of research, all centered on understanding how the nervous system functions, and how its functioning gives rise to mental processes and to behavior.

Neuroscience research can broadly be divided into three separate clusters, defined primarily by the level of analysis used by researchers:

- Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Neuroscience investigates the characteristics of single neurons and the communication among small groups of neurons. Researchers in this sub-area are interested in how neurons develop their specific characteristics (e.g., the neurotransmitters they contain), in how genes influence the function of neurons, in how neurons communicate with one another, and in how the function of single neurons or small cell assemblies can be changed by experience.
- Systems Neuroscience and Behavioral Neuroscience examines neural pathways within the brain and investigate how those neural circuits function to influence a particular behavior in an organism. Researchers in this sub-area are interested in understanding the anatomical features of brain regions, the connectivity between different regions of the brain, and the way in which brain areas and neural circuits give rise to memory, aggression, hunger, maternal behavior, or other outcomes. To address these issues, researchers use animal models, permitting them to directly manipulate neural circuits and to examine the resultant effects on behavior.
- Cognitive Neuroscience and Affective Neuroscience examines the human brain's role in mental and emotional processes. Because it is not permissible to directly manipulate human brain function, these researchers mainly rely on neuroimaging methods to examine the relation between brain activity and mental function. Other methods, such as research in patients with discrete brain lesions, can also be used to gain leverage on the connection between brain processes and mental function. Researchers in this sub-area are interested in many of the same questions as behavioral neuroscientists, including the brain processes that underlie memory and attention, affective responses, or social behavior.

Students who graduate from our program should have an unparalleled appreciation for the way in which research from multiple levels of analysis can be integrated to yield a more complete understanding of behavior and cognition. We believe that this ability to integrate across sub-disciplines will take on increasing importance over the next decade, and so the integrative training that we will provide to our students will allow them to be at the forefront of neuroscientific research.

Recommended Prerequisites

Applicants to the Neuroscience Concentration should have a strong science background. Many of our successful applicants will have received a B.S./B.A. in Psychology or Biology, although strong applicants from other academic backgrounds will be given full consideration. It is recommended that applicants will have completed one year of biology, one year of chemistry, one year of physics or organic chemistry, and one semester of calculus. If a student has a deficiency in one or more areas that is deemed by the student's advisory committee to preclude their successful completion of the requirements of the Neuroscience Concentration within Psychology's Ph.D. program, that student's advisory committee will propose a course of action which is likely to require the student to enroll in additional science courses during their first year of the Ph.D. program.

Course Requirements

The goal is to ensure that all students receive exposure to the primary neuroscience sub-disciplines:

- Molecular, cellular, and developmental neuroscience
- Systems neuroscience, neuroanatomy, and behavioral neuroscience
- Cognitive neuroscience and affective neuroscience

So that students will receive a background in each of these approaches, they will be required to select five one-semester courses with at least one course that covers material from each of the three clusters listed above.

The courses that are relevant to each cluster are listed below. These courses have been carefully selected to ensure a broad representation of the field of neuroscience, so it is anticipated that the majority of students will complete their course requirements by selecting courses from those listed. However, students may, through consultation with members of their advisory committee, substitute a different course (either from within the Psychology Department or from an outside department).

Psychology Faculty Affiliated with the Program

- Hiram Brownell
- John Christianson
- Elizabeth Kensinger
- Sean MacEvoy
- Michael McDannald
- Gorica Petrovich
- Maureen Ritchey
- Scott Slotnick
- Liane Young

Course Requirements

A total of six courses are required, as outlined below. Students seeking to fulfill the Master's Degree Option must complete at least 30 credits; Independent Study courses may be taken to bring students up to 30 credits.

Neuroscience Breadth Requirement (5 Courses)

Students take five cluster courses, with at least one from each of the three clusters.

Cluster 1: Molecular, cellular, and developmental neuroscience

- BIOL5510 Cell Biology of the Nervous System
- BIOL55xx Neurochemical Genetics
- PSYC5583 Molecular Basis of Learning and Memory
- PSYC5587 Cellular Perspectives on Motivated Behavior
- PSYC55xx Introduction to Neurophysiology
- PSYC55xx Epigenetics and the Development of Behavior

Cluster 2: Systems neuroscience, neuroanatomy, and behavioral neuroscience

- PSYC5580 Neural Systems and Stress
- PSYC5581 Neurobiology of Mental Illness
- PSYC5585 Brain Systems: Motivation and Emotion
- PSYC5589 Neural Systems and Social Behavior

Cluster 3: Cognitive and affective neuroscience

- PSYC5571 Controversies in Cognitive Neuroscience
- PSYC5574 Neuroscience of Sensation and Perception
- PSYC5575 Advanced Affective Neuroscience
- PSYC5576 Methods in Human Brain Mapping
- PSYC5577 The Hippocampus

Statistics Requirement (1 Course)

A firm knowledge of statistics is essential for branches of neuroscience research. Therefore, all students are required to take at least one semester of graduate-level statistics (usually PSYC5501).

Students are strongly encouraged to take additional statistics courses beyond this one-semester requirement. For some lines of research, additional statistics courses may be essential, and so students should consult with their advisory committees to determine into which statistics courses they should enroll.

Course Timeline

Ph.D. students typically take 15 credits in the first year, 15 credits in the second year, 4 credits in the third year, and a 1-credit Doctoral Continuation course each semester thereafter.

Year One

PSYC5501 Experimental Design and Statistics

5000-level cluster course

5000-level cluster course

Research Workshop I

Research Workshop II

Professional Development Workshop (0 credits)

Year Two

5000-level cluster course

5000-level cluster course

Research Workshop I

Research Workshop II

Independent Study

Year Three

5000-level cluster course

PSYC9999 Doctoral Continuation (1 credit)

Year Four

PSYC9999 Doctoral Continuation (1 credit)

PSYC9999 Doctoral Continuation (1 credit)

Year Five

PSYC9999 Doctoral Continuation (1 credit)

PSYC9999 Doctoral Continuation (1 credit)

Neuroscience Journal Club/Speaker Series

During every year of their graduate training, students are required to participate in a Neuroscience Journal Club that will include presentations by faculty members, students and outside speakers. These sessions will encourage interaction among the students and faculty conducting neuroscientific research.

Progress Timeline

Guidelines for the first two years of the program are spelled out in Beginning the Program. For the remainder of the program, the different Ph.D. tracks have different deadlines. See the Progress Forms page.

Year Three

Third and Fourth Year Plan Approval Form (Form 5)

Due December 1. In addition to approving the research of the dissertation, the committee also will approve the appropriateness of the research focus for the Neuroscience Ph.D.

Third Year Literature Review Plan (Form 6)

Due December 1

Dissertation Advisory Committee Form (Form 9)

Due April 1. The committee must have at least two committee members who are affiliated with the Neuroscience track.

Third Year Literature Review Final Approval Form (Form 8)

Due May 15

Dissertation Committee Form (Form 10)

Due May 15

Cumulative Student Progress Form (Form 1)

Due May 15: Students submit the Cumulative Student Progress Form each year. Save this form and update it whenever a requirement is completed.

Year Four

Dissertation Proposal Defense Approval Form (Form 7)

Due December 1

Ph.D. Thesis Forms

If you are finishing your Ph.D. in four years, the approval forms are due April 1. Students who successfully defend by early April can march in the May commencement.

Cumulative Student Progress Form (Form 1)

Due May 15: Students submit the Cumulative Student Progress Form each year. Save this form and update it whenever a requirement is completed.

Year Five

Ph.D. Thesis Forms

Due April 1. Students who successfully defend by early April can march in the May commencement.

Cumulative Student Progress Form (Form 1)

Due May 15: Students submit the Cumulative Student Progress Form each year. Save this form and update it whenever a requirement is completed.

Quantitative Track

Quantitative psychology is a core area of psychology that studies methodological issues that arise in conducting research in social and behavioral sciences. The methodological issues include research design, development and application of statistical methods for data analysis, psychometrics, and mathematical modeling of psychological processes.

The graduate program in the Quantitative concentration offers research training in quantitative methodology. The primary goal of the program is to train students to become quantitative psychologists who have their own line of research in quantitative methodology.

Psychology Faculty Affiliated with the Program

- Hiram Brownell
- John Christianson
- Sean MacEvoy
- Ehri Ryu
- Scott Slotnick
- Hao Wu

Courses in Quantitative Methods

PSYC5501 Experimental Design & Statistics

This course focuses on experimental design and related statistical methods. It covers between-subject, within-subject, and mixed designs with one and two factors. Statistical topics include the relevant statistical model and model assumptions, omnibus test, test of contrasts, multiple comparison, effect size, and power calculations. One and two sample t tests will also be revisited.

PSYC5502 Multiple Regression

This course is devoted to the study of multiple regression as a general framework for assessing the relationship of a dependent variable with a set of independent variables. The course covers the following topics: regression with a single predictor, multiple regression with two or more predictors, regression with a categorical predictor, multiple regression with interaction. If time allows, the course will cover additional topics in multiple regression, for example, regression diagnostics. Starting Spring 2018, SPSS and R will be used.

PSYC6601 Structural Equation Modeling

This course is to provide an introduction to the theory and application of structural equation modeling (SEM). In this course, it is assumed that (a) students are familiar with the use of statistical analysis, (b) have a good understanding of basic concepts in statistics, (c) are familiar with general linear model, and (d) are comfortable with basic matrix notation. The course covers the following topics: basic concepts of structural equation models, path models with observed variables, confirmatory factor analysis, structural equations with latent and observed variables, multiple group analysis, and advanced applications. LISREL and Mplus are used. Depending on the students' interest, an R package may be used instead of Mplus.

PSYC6602 Analysis with Missing Data

This course is to provide an introduction to the theory and application of analytic strategies for analyzing data with missing values. This course is designed as an advanced level graduate level course. It is assumed that students are familiar with multiple regression and structural equation modeling, and are able to conduct analysis using these techniques on their own. The following topics are covered: missing data mechanisms, traditional methods for dealing with missing data, maximum likelihood method, maximum likelihood with auxiliary variables, and multiple imputation. Mplus and SAS are used as primary software packages. R packages will be introduced for multiple imputation starting Fall 2018.

PSYC6605 Introduction to Multivariate Statistical Methods

Topics covered in this class include: Matrix algebra and basic concepts in multivariate statistics; Exploratory factor analysis of continuous, dichotomous and ordered categorical data with analytic rotation; Principle component analysis; Discriminant analysis; Correspondence analysis; Clustering; Multidimensional scaling. SPSS and R will be the main computational tool. Students should have taken a graduate level linear regression class before enrolling this class. Starting AY 17-18, R will be used along with SPSS.

PSYC##### Nonparametric Statistics

It is likely that a graduate level course in nonparametric statistics will be offered starting AY 18-19.

Course Requirements

Nine courses are required as outlined below, which is more than the six required for the other concentrations. There are four required courses, four quantitative electives, and a breadth course. Students are encouraged to take additional courses through consultation with their advisors.

As part of the requirements for an interim master's degree, students must complete 30 credits, including all the four required courses and four electives, by the end of the semester during which they complete a Master's research project.

Four Required Courses

The required courses are selected to ensure that all students acquire basic knowledge of a broad range of topics in quantitative methodology.

- PSYC5501 Experimental Design and Statistics
- PSYC5502 Multiple Regression
- PSYC6601 Structural Equation Modeling
- One of the following courses:
 - MATH4426 Probability
 - MATH4427 Mathematical Statistics
 - ERME7601 Introduction to Mathematical Statistics

Four Elective Courses

The following are candidate courses (the list is not inclusive). Students must take at least three elective courses. The course schedule and availability may change. Students should consult with their advisors.

- ERME8669 Psychometric Theory I
- ERME8670 Psychometric Theory II

- PSYC6602 Analysis with Missing Data
- PSYC6605 Introduction to Multivariate Statistical Methods
- PSYC66xx Bayesian Statistical Methods
- SOCY7704 Regression Models for Categorical Data
- SOCY7705 Advanced Statistics
- SOCY7706 Longitudinal Data Analysis
- SOCY7708 Hierarchical Linear Modeling
- SOCY7709 Quantitative Data Management
- SCWK9951 Survey of Research Methods in Social and Behavioral Research
- SCWK9953 Cross-Cultural Issues in Social and Behavioral Research
- SCWK9962 Multilevel and Longitudinal Data Analysis

One Breadth Course

Doctoral students are required to take an additional breadth course (outside student's focus area). The additional breadth course can be a course in quantitative methodology outside student's focus area, a course offered by other concentrations in psychology, or a history of psychology course.

Timeline

The timeline for Quantitative concentration allows three years for students to complete a Master's research project (though the project can be completed earlier if the student has completed all the course requirements). This timeline ensures that students have enough time to complete coursework requirements, which are heavier than those for most other concentrations, and to ensure that students receive sufficient training before initiating Master's level research. Students must have a comprehensive understanding of current quantitative methodology in order to develop a meaningful research question. Ideally the Master's research project leads to a peer-reviewed publication.

Deadlines for Progress Forms are listed in Section I.

Year One

Choose primary and secondary advisor.

Learn relevant computer software and programming language and review literature as preparation for master's thesis.

Begin independent research.

Year Two

Complete most required and elective courses.

Continue independent research.

October 1

2-3 page outline of master's research project proposal due to advisor

May

Attend and present at Graduate Research Day

Year Three

Complete all course requirements.

Complete Master's research project.

Students are encouraged to present research at a national conference.

Continue independent research.

Select a topic for literature review.

March 15

Near final draft of Master's research project to committee with advisor's prior approval.

Important: At the end of the third year or the completion of Master's research project, students may be invited to continue on in the program. Those not invited to continue will, if possible, leave with a Master's degree. The evaluation is based on the Master's research project, other research, the student's writing, and performance in required courses.

Year Four

Write a literature review.

Continue independent research.

Formalize Dissertation Committee.

Write dissertation proposal.

March 1

Dissertation proposal due to committee

May 15

Students are passed into Doctoral Candidacy when they have successfully defended the dissertation proposal.

Year Five

Work on dissertation, which should be successfully defended by June.

Students who successfully defend by early April can walk in the May commencement.

Progress Evaluation

There are two important kinds of evaluations, by oneself and by the department.

Self-Evaluation

How am I doing? Every student asks this question, and of course the answer depends on individual goals. Here are some benchmarks. By the end of August of your:

First Year: You have attended a professional conference. You are hard at work at your research. Your advisor is now your collaborator. You have done well in classes.

Second Year: You have presented a paper/poster at a professional conference. You have submitted a paper to a journal. You've received a Master's Degree.

Third Year: You have now presented a second poster at a conference, published a journal article and submitted two more, one based on your literature review and another on your research.

Fourth Year: You have now presented a third poster and have published two journal articles. Your dissertation research is well underway. You are taking the lead on your research, with your advisor in a secondary role. You are on target to complete your dissertation during your fifth and final year of department funding.

Departmental Evaluation

Throughout your time in the graduate program, the department must evaluate your progress. This handbook describes the minimal requirements all students must meet. These requirements must be met on a timely basis and in a way that demonstrates outstanding effort and results of high quality—including high course grades and conscientious fulfillment of teaching assignments. The Graduate Program Director is responsible for monitoring a student's teaching performance and will forward any cases of sub-standard performance for review by the Graduate Evaluation Committee. Sub-standard performance may result in the loss of a student's stipend.

Beyond this, students are evaluated against a standard of excellence. During their time in graduate school, students are expected to do much more than the minimal requirements laid out in this handbook. We expect each student to be immersed in psychology, doing research besides the dissertation: presenting at conferences, attending colloquia at Boston College and at other universities in the Boston area, and so forth. Graduate school is a full-time enterprise.

At the end of the second year—typically by June 1—Ph.D. students will be asked to continue on in the program or to exit, typically with a Master's Degree. Students who have successfully completed the requirements of the first two years, and who have shown the capacity to carry out excellent independent research, will be asked to continue on in the program as doctoral students. If the Graduate Evaluation Committee grants a student an extension on any of the requirements of the first two years, a formal evaluation will be conducted again once these requirements are completed, in order to determine whether the student will be asked to continue on in the program. Extensions are frowned upon and will not be granted unless the student is performing at an excellent level and has a good reason to request the extension.

Of course, all students must have made normal progress and performed well. Nevertheless, beyond these minimal requirements, the Graduate Student Evaluation Committee must consider the fit

between the student's evolving interests and career path and what our program has to offer. This second-year evaluation is a good time to assess that fit.

Unsatisfied Requirements

When, for good reason, a program requirement is unsatisfied at the time of the end of year evaluation, the Evaluation Committee may notify the student that he or she will be allowed one additional semester to complete the unsatisfied requirement, provided the committee deems that the student has the potential to complete the requirement. If the requirement is not fulfilled by the end of the additional semester, the Evaluation Committee may decide to suspend the student's registration in the program, suspend the student's financial support, or ask the student to leave the program. Before any decision, the student and his/her designee may make a presentation to the Evaluation Committee. Whenever a student is suspended, the conditions for restoring registration and financial support are specified. A student may, in addition to or instead of any of the above, request a leave of absence.

Advisor-Student Relationships

What to Expect

The key person in the student's education is the advisor. In our department, the advisor is a mentor to the student, providing much of the training through close collaboration. This training includes guiding the student in setting up a research program and in collecting, maintaining, analyzing, interpreting, and publishing data. The advisor provides the student with most of the specific information and resources needed to become an independent researcher.

Experience and research have demonstrated that the nature of supervision and the quality of communication between graduate students and their advisors are critical elements affecting graduate education. The quality of the dissertation and of the educational experience is enhanced, completion rates are increased, and time in the program are reduced when graduate students and their advisors work closely and effectively together. The guidelines here are necessarily broad, merely suggesting underlying principles and basic procedures that can enhance academic quality, safeguard student welfare, and expedite progress towards satisfactory completion of degree requirements.

The principal role of the advisor is to help the student achieve his or her scholarly potential. The student has a right to expect commitment, accessibility, professionalism, stimulation, guidance, respect, and consistent encouragement from the advisor. In turn, the advisor also has a right to expect commitment, professionalism, and respect from the student. The advisor should be available to help at every stage, from formulation of research projects through establishing the methods and discussing the results, to presentation and publication of the research, and finally to the entry into a professional career. At the same time, as the student demonstrates his/her commitment throughout all stages of the research process, the advisor must ensure that the student's work meets the requisite standards of the department and of the field of psychology.

The mark of a good student-advisor relationship is how quickly the student feels and is perceived as a colleague rather than as a student. Thus, students should not be expected to work for the faculty member, but should instead be expected to work with the faculty member as a collaborator on their joint programs of research. Of course, the relationship is an interactive one. The progression from the role of a student to a collaborative scientist requires the student to take the initiative to delve into the research literature in their field and gain expertise that within sub-areas of the field may surpass that of the advisor. The student should take the initiative when needed to formulate possible experiments that address interesting questions in their field. The role of professional collaborator is not one that is automatically given, at a certain point in time, but one that is earned by self-initiative and dedication to mastering the experimental literature in your field and spending time working on and revising experimental designs.

The relationship between a graduate student and advisor is ultimately voluntary. Either may withdraw from the relationship, although doing so should never be taken lightly. Every student must have an advisor. In entering an advisor-student relationship, both the advisor and the student make a good faith commitment to continue through to successful completion of the degree if at all possible.

The advisor and the student should work together to:

- Select and plan a suitable and manageable research topic for the student to pursue
- Establish (with input from the student and colleagues) a preliminary advisory committee, and convene a meeting, normally at least annually, to discuss the student's progress. When there is a conflict in advice or when there are different expectations on the part of members of the advisory committee, the advisor and student are expected to endeavor to achieve consensus and resolve the differences in perspectives.
- Keep each other informed of matters (such as leaves or vacations) that may affect their joint work and the student's progress. They should also work together to ensure the continuity of the student's supervision when the advisor will be absent for extended periods, e.g. a month or longer.
- Maintain awareness of and share information about current program requirements, deadlines, sources of funding, etc.
- Acknowledge appropriately their respective contributions in presentations and in published material, in appropriate cases via joint authorship.

The advisor should:

- Be accessible to the student for consultation and discussion of the student's academic progress and research. The frequency of meetings will vary according to the stage of work, nature of the project, and desired independence by the student. For many, daily or weekly meetings are essential; for others, monthly meetings are satisfactory. Only in exceptional circumstances should interaction be less frequent than this.
- Respond in a timely and thorough manner to written work submitted by the student, with constructive suggestions for improvement and continuation. The turnaround time for comments on written work should be short, not normally exceeding three weeks.
- Be sufficiently familiar with the field of research to provide guidance or have a willingness to gain that familiarity before agreeing to supervise the research. In other words, the research topic must be mutually agreed upon.
- Assist the student in gaining access to facilities or research materials.
- Ensure that the research environment is safe, healthy, and free from harassment, discrimination, and conflict.
- Encourage the student to make presentations of research results within the department and to outside scholarly or professional bodies as appropriate. The advisor seeks such opportunities, works to make them possible for the student and, whenever possible, attends the student's presentations.
- Encourage the student to complete the degree when it would not be in the student's best interests to extend the program of studies.
- Assist the student to comply with any changes needed to complete competency requirements and the dissertation in response to feedback from committee members.
- Advise and assist the student in finding appropriate placement after the degree.

The list above does not imply that the student is a passive recipient of the advisor's efforts. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to fulfill the requirements of the department and of Boston College, to develop needed expertise, to design and carry out research, and, in general, to exploit fully the opportunity afforded by graduate school.

The student should:

- Approach his or her work as a colleague, and take the intellectual lead as much and as soon as possible. Doing so happens less in the early years, more later on.
- Acquire the necessary background information for all research undertaken (even if this information is not provided or required through coursework).
- Initiate contact with the advisor and arrange needed meetings.
- Consult with all members of the advisory committee individually as well as collectively at formal meetings.
- Become immersed in psychology in general, and in joint student-advisor research projects in particular.
- Participate in the advisor's laboratory or other research projects.
- Participate in the activities of the department and Boston College.
- Take what opportunities arise (such as the Research Workshops, Grad Research Day, and conferences) to present research findings, including publication.
- Strive to complete the program in a timely fashion.
- Seek to solve problems that arise by discussing them with the advisor.

Handling Problems

We have tried to create a program that minimizes problems, but occasionally troubles emerge. When they do, you have a variety of options. Your advisor is typically the first person to go to. The other members of your committee are other people you can go to, and they are all there to help you in whatever way they can.

If you do not receive the help you need, you can go directly to the Graduate Program Director. Part of his/her job is to deal with students' problems, and you should always feel free to contact the Graduate Program Director. Any issue you raise will be taken seriously and held in confidence. If you still do not find a solution or for whatever reason these options are not suitable, you can speak to the Chair, again in confidence if you wish. In addition, other offices on campus exist to handle specific problems, and the Graduate Program Director or other members of the Graduate Program Committee can help you find the appropriate office.

Graduate students sometimes as a group have concerns, and we encourage you to voice your collective concerns about any aspect of the graduate program. In the past, suggestions, proposals, and complaints by graduate students have initiated reforms in the program. Participate in the Psychology Graduate Student Council or bring your concerns to the department.

Publication-Related Disputes

Occasionally a disagreement occurs over the publication of collaborative research. Such disputes are rare, but serious. If you face a problem like this that cannot be resolved, contact the Graduate Program Director. The best way to avoid such problems is for you and your advisor to talk openly about your expectations with regard to issues of publication such as order of authorship, and this discussion should take place prior to data collection.

Time-Related Problems

Students are expected to fulfill their requirements – write their second year Research Project, third year Literature Review, Dissertation Proposal, and Dissertation, as well as other research write-ups – in a timely manner. Nevertheless, circumstances can arise that produce delays. Conflicts with advisors and the Student Evaluation Committee can be minimized by bringing these circumstances to their attention ahead of time.

Faculty are expected to return student work in a timely manner as well, with three weeks being the longest amount of time a student should normally have to wait for feedback, provided the student has submitted the work at the appropriate time. The best tactic here is to make arrangements with your advisor ahead of time.

Problems as TA or TF

Any problems you encounter in your role as TA or TF can be brought to one of the committee members or the Graduate Program Director.

Bring Your Concern to Graduate Program Committee

The Graduate Program Committee's purpose is to serve as a forum to address concerns and questions which students and faculty might have relating to the graduate program. Issues concerning the graduate program are discussed by the Graduate Program Committee before being formally voted upon by the faculty. Topics may be proposed by any faculty or graduate student—so, feel free to bring your concern to either the Graduate Program Director or to any member of the Graduate Program Committee. The Graduate Program Committee makes recommendations to the department chair and faculty with the goal of promoting academic coherence and excellence of the program, promoting responsiveness to needs of the faculty and graduate students, and maintaining a positive atmosphere.