

PSYCHOLOGY - EXPERIMENTAL (PHD)

Doctor of Philosophy in Psychological Science

Unit: College of Arts and Sciences (<http://louisville.edu/artsandsciences/intro/>) (GA)

Department: Psychological and Brain Sciences (<http://louisville.edu/psychology/>)

Program Website (<https://louisville.edu/psychology/graduate/experimental/>)

Academic Plan Code(s): EPSYPHD

Program Information

Psychological scientists conduct research to better understand human and animal behavior. Their scientific findings provide insights that improve teaching and learning methods, promote healthy child development, and improve visual and hearing aids, to list a few examples.

The Psychological Science doctoral program at the University of Louisville is designed to prepare students for careers in academic, clinical, and applied research settings as well as industry positions involving psychological science, data analysis, and management. Our students are trained in core areas of psychology, research design and methods, data analysis, teaching, and oral and written communication, all of which makes our students highly employable.

Research Training

Students in our program get extensive training in research. From their first day of the program to the last, students are actively involved in research. A student's specific graduate training experience will depend in part on whom the student chooses as a graduate mentor and the student's specialized area of interest. Faculty mentors for the Experimental Psychology program are listed on the graduate program website (<http://louisville.edu/psychology/graduate/experimental/>). Areas of specialized training are:

- Cognition
- Development
- Visual and Auditory Sciences
- Neuroscience

Curriculum

Our curriculum is designed to be flexible and meet the needs of individual students in our program. Students in our program take classes in two of four core areas of psychology (selected by student and mentor), two statistics courses (required of all students in our program), and five electives or specialized seminars on special topics (selected by student and mentor). Additionally, first-year students attend a pro-seminar called First Year Introduction in the fall semester, in which Experimental Psychology faculty introduce students to the research used in their labs. Students also develop their own presentation skills in a weekly Research and Professional Development (RAPDS) seminar held in both the fall and spring semesters. Finally, students in our program complete a Master's Research Portfolio (typically right after the second year), a Preliminary Exam (typically in their third year), and a Dissertation.

Professional Development

Professional development is an important piece of our program. Graduate students in our program are highly encouraged to publish, present their

research, attend research conferences, and gain teaching experience either as a GTA or instructor of record. They are also encouraged to take advantage of the Graduate Schools' PLAN workshops, academies, and resources (<http://louisville.edu/graduate/plan/>), which are designed to help graduate students develop their professional skills. Their programs are geared toward students who want to develop their teaching, grant writing, publishing, community engagement, and entrepreneurial skills, just to name a few.

The department offers an intellectually enriching environment with a departmental Colloquium Series, the Psychological Science Research and Professional Development talk series, and the Clinical Psychology Colloquium and Professional Development Series. The department also hosts the Grawemeyer Award in Psychology (<https://louisville.edu/psychology/grawemeyer-award/>), a large monetary award given annually to a psychologist with a creative, influential idea in psychology.

Financial Support

Financial support for graduate students in the Psychological Science PhD program is available in the form of research assistantships, teaching assistantships, and University Fellowships. Most forms of support are for 12 months and include a stipend, full tuition, and health insurance.

Admission Requirements

We take a holistic approach to reviewing prospective student applications. Applicants who are admitted to our program typically possess the following qualifications, but they are not required:

- Complete graduate admissions application (<http://louisville.edu/graduate/futurestudents/apply-materials/application/>)
- Undergraduate GPAs of 3.0 or higher
- Strong letters of recommendation that speak to the applicant's scholarly ability and potential to succeed in a doctoral program
- A match between the applicant's and faculty mentor's research interests
- A psychology or neuroscience major

All applicants will be considered without discrimination on the basis of differences in age, ethnic or racial background, gender, physical abilities, sexual orientation or preference, or social background. Our program values diversity and has accepted applicants that vary on the above characteristics.

For more information, please visit our program's Application Instructions (<http://louisville.edu/psychology/graduate/experimental/apply/>) page.

Program Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
Statistics Core		6
<i>Students are required to take the following two courses:</i>		
PSYC 610	Advanced Statistics I	
PSYC 611	Advanced Statistics II	
Program Core		6
<i>Students are required to take two of the following courses:</i>		
PSYC 621	Cognitive Processes	
PSYC 631	Sensation and Perception	
PSYC 642	Behavioral Neuroscience	

or PSYC 645 Cognitive Neuroscience

PSYC 661	Advanced Developmental Psychology	
Electives ¹		15
<i>Students are required to take five additional 600-level or above graduate seminars/courses</i>		
Other Course Requirements		33
PSYC 602	Research in Experimental Psychology (PSYC 602-02, required first fall semester) ²	
PSYC 602	Research in Experimental Psychology (PSYC 602-01, repeated until in doctoral candidacy) ³	
PSYC 605	Independent Study (Research) (Repeated until in doctoral candidacy) ⁴	
PSYC 701	Dissertation Research ⁵	
	or DOCT 600 Doctoral Candidacy	
Minimum Total Hours		60

¹ Students who take more than two of the Program Core courses listed above may count the additional core courses as electives.

² [In this weekly 50-minute proseminar, faculty will rotate meetings to introduce students to the research used in their labs.](#)

³ The weekly 50-minute Research and Professional Development (RAPDS) series provides a forum for students and faculty to present completed or ongoing research, invite guest speakers, and discuss professional development topics.

⁴ Students are required to register for PSYC 605 Independent Study (Research) with the student's graduate research mentor every semester until the Preliminary Examination is successfully completed.

⁵ Upon passing the preliminary examination, students must maintain continuous enrollment at the University of Louisville until receiving their degree in one of two ways:

1. Enrolling in classes and/or PSYC 701 (Dissertation Research), **OR**
2. Enrolling in DOCT 600 Doctoral Candidacy.

Dissertation

An original research project conducted and described in a report (the doctoral dissertation) by the student. The dissertation is conducted in consultation with a faculty committee and must be approved by the committee.

Master of Science in Psychological Science

Students are required to earn a Master of Science in Psychological Science. To earn the MS degree, with an approval of the student's mentor, the student will prepare a portfolio of written work featuring research efforts and training primarily undertaken as a graduate student in the program at the University of Louisville. The portfolio should demonstrate scope and quality of research commensurate with the degree. The portfolio is typically completed in or after the summer of the second year and must be approved by the student's Master's Portfolio Committee.

After approval of the MS portfolio and completion of 45 credit hours of graduate study, including the Statistics and Program Core, the student is awarded the Master of Science degree.

Preliminary Examination

The Preliminary Examination consists of an original written review and critique of a research area. The Preliminary Examination will be evaluated based on the breadth of knowledge, integration of literature, critical thinking, and quality of scientific writing. Students will plan the preliminary examination in collaboration with their mentors and Preliminary Examination Committees. The Preliminary Examination is typically completed by the end of the third year of training.