DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
STUDENT HANDBOOK 2024

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Developmental Psychology Graduate Training Program at the University of Pittsburgh represents a broad community of scholars dedicated to the study of normal and abnormal development and related social policy. Doctoral training is based on the apprenticeship model and encourages close collaboration with faculty and interdisciplinary scholarship.

The primary goal of the Developmental Psychology Program is to train researchers and scholars who will contribute substantive knowledge to the field of developmental science and related disciplines. Research in the program focuses on infant, child, and adolescent development within diverse family, peer, school, community, and cultural contexts, as well as how developmental science may inform social policies that affect children and families. Doctoral training encompasses normative cognitive, language, motor, and socioemotional development and individual differences in these domains.

More specifically, the program's research and training focus on several inter-related areas: cognitive, language, motor, and social development in the early years of life; developmental psychopathology and family and peer processes; longitudinal studies of normative and atypical development; and social policies related to poverty, child care, and early prevention and intervention. Because research and professional training emphasizes research, students work closely with their faculty advisor in line with a mentorship model of doctoral training and they participate in ongoing, programmatic research and publication throughout their graduate careers.

Program regulations specify a minimum number of required courses and minimum research requirements. Within the constraints of program requirements, students are encouraged to individualize their research and professional experiences and elective course work to meet their specific career goals. Students are expected to be involved in research and scholarly activities throughout their training.

In addition to program requirements, students should be sure to consult with the department Graduate Studies Coordinator for additional or complementary departmental and university requirements (see Graduate Requirements on the department website).

Students in the Joint Clinical/Developmental Program will generally follow the guidelines for the Clinical Program in terms of course sequences, clinical practicum training, and other related requirements. However, note that the required and elective courses in the Developmental curriculum fulfill breadth requirements in the Clinical Program and other courses can serve as electives in both programs.

Note that the teaching requirement and major milestone requirements are department- wide and are generally similar across programs. Thus, all students are required to fulfill the teaching requirement and to complete a master's thesis or equivalent, a specialty paper, and a dissertation. Students in the Joint Program follow slightly different guidelines for the specialty paper. In addition, the timing of the dissertation proposal may differ because of the clinical internship year for Joint Clinical-Developmental students. Committee membership stipulations are based on both program-level and university Graduate School guidelines and also sometimes differ between

programs.

As part of their research experiences during graduate training students are also expected to present their work at national and international scientific meetings and to publish their work in scholarly journals.

For further general description of the Psychology Department, the Developmental Program, and the Joint Clinical/Developmental Program see http://www.psychology.pitt.edu.

CURRICULUM

A. Statistics

Psychology 2005 Statistical Analysis I Psychology 2010 Statistical Analysis II

These courses are required by the Department. Students wishing to substitute another course for either of these courses must obtain permission from the program.

B. *Core courses.*

Three core courses are required and <u>must</u> be taken in the Psychology Department; no substitutions will be granted. These are generally offered every other year:

Foundations of Developmental Psychology
Cognitive Development
Social Development

<u>Clinical-Developmental students</u>: these courses can count as electives in the Clinical Program curriculum.

C. *Research Methods* (one course)

Applied Developmental Methods (PSYED 3190: Research Seminar in Psychology in Education or PSY 2301: Developmental Research Methods)
Clinical Research Methods (required for joint Clinical-Developmental students)

D. *Breadth Courses.* Two courses from among the following; other courses may not be substituted.

Adolescence
Autism
Child Development & Social Policy
Child Psychopathology (N.B.: this course is *required* for Joint students)
Culture, Parenting & Literacy
Developmental Psychopathology (N.B.: this course is *required* for Joint students)
Family Influences on Child Development (taught in Applied Developmental Program)

Family Systems (treatment module in the Clinical Program)
Human Developmental Neuroscience
Infancy
Language Development
Language Acquisition in Infancy (CMU)
Social Cognitive Development

Faculty Approved Courses: Students may request courses not listed above be considered for the breadth requirement. These courses may be either within or outside of the department but must have a primary focus on Developmental Psychology. To have these courses approved, students should submit a current syllabus from the course to the Program Chairperson who will then bring it forward for faculty approval.

Clinical-Developmental students: Child Psychopathology, Developmental Psychopathology, and Family Systems are required by the Clinical Program thus fulfilling the Breadth requirements for the Developmental Program. However, students are encouraged to round out their training by taking or auditing other Developmental courses.

E.   *Interdisciplinary electives.*

Three additional electives are required within or outside the department. Two must be advanced seminars. One or more may be advanced methods courses. Elective courses are chosen in consultation with the advisor based on students' individual research interests and career goals.

Clinical-Developmental students: Required Clinical courses count as electives in the Developmental Program, thus no additional electives are required to complete Developmental training for students in the Joint Program.

Definition of Core Courses

A subset of the required courses is defined as core course requirements for purposes of the Preliminary Examination as required by the university and referred to in the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences Graduate and Professional Bulletin (http://www.bulletins.pitt.edu/graduate/FASinfo.htm).

Students are certified as having met the core course requirements when they have taken all of the basic developmental courses (three required and two breadth) and the tworequired statistics courses as specified above. Ordinarily these courses are completed during the first two years.

Certification is typically obtained in conjunction with the Master's Thesis defense and is indicated on the same card that certifies successful completion of the oral defense ("Report on Examinations for Master's Degree," obtained from the department Graduate Studies Coordinator). If the Master's defense occurs prior to completing core course requirements, a second card will need to be submitted to the advisor or program chair for signatures once the courses are complete.

Grades

Students must obtain grades of A or B in all required and elective courses and maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 or better. In the rare event that a student receives a grade of B-, the program will decide whether the course can be considered to have satisfied the requirement. Any grade below a B- is not satisfactory and is equivalent to a failure; more than one such grade will result in early termination from the program.

ADVISORS & LAB RESPONSIBILITIES

Incoming students are selected based on academic qualifications and research interests. Students are matched with a faculty advisor on the basis of compatible research interests. In addition to mentored research training, advisors provide guidance on educational and career plans, professional development matters, and approve registration forms each term.

A centerpiece of graduate training in the Developmental Program is the unique learning experience that students obtain as active participants in their advisor's program of research. Thus, all students are expected to work in their advisors' labs and participate in their research programs. During the first year of graduate study, lab work may provide the basis for the first/second year project or thesis proposal. Students are of course free to devise master's or master's equivalent projects on their own initiative and of their own design and are encouraged to do so in consultation with the advisor.

Graduate students are expected to work 10 hours per week in their advisor's lab, regardless of the student's funding source (e.g., individual fellowship, teaching assistant/fellow, or GSR), with 20 hours for students working as a full-time GSR. Note that advisors will vary considerably in their expectations for student time in the lab depending on the specific duties required and their relationship to the student's own research. For example, in some labs students may work as co-investigators on projects that relate directly to their developing research programs or their program milestones, and that result in co- authorship on publications. In this circumstance the student's weekly time in the lab may exceed the program minimum of 10 hours per week. In other scenarios, students may act as project managers and/or collect and code data for projects that are less relevant to their own research priorities. Under these conditions, the student's weekly expectations should generally be less than 10 hours per week if the student is not supported as a GSR. It is expected that the advisor and student will discuss these expectations on a regular basis and that both will be in clear agreement about lab responsibilities.

Based on the myriad and sometimes shifting demands on students' time, advisors and mentees should meet at least once each semester to discuss and plan for expectations for students' time commitment in the advisor's lab, including duties for and progress on expected projects. This discussion should balance the student's current coursework, plans for milestone completion, and other training or funding-related commitments (e.g., teaching), as well as the expected outcomes for the student of the planned work in the lab (e.g., papers or presentations). Meeting more than once a semester to discuss these matters may be of value for some students. If a student believes that he or she is committing too much time to the advisor's lab, the student should request a meeting with the advisor to discuss the issues and formulate a workable and mutually acceptable

plan. If a student finds that the advisor is unresponsive to his or her concerns, or if a mutually ~~ation cannot be found, the Developmental Program chair, the~~ ~~ment chair should be contacted to discuss~~ confidentially.

Ideally the advisor-student relationship is mutually beneficial for the student and faculty member throughout graduate training. However, if research interests diverge or stylistic differences emerge that undermine a productive working relationship, students may opt to change advisors. Although it is generally not advisable, students can select a new advisor as late as the point of dissertation proposal, i.e., to supervise the dissertation. Changes of advisor must be discussed with the Director of Graduate Studies and approved by the Developmental Program and, for Joint Clinical-Developmental students, by the Clinical Program. Once decided, the department Graduate Studies Coordinator must be informed of the change. If the new research advisor is not a core member of the program, the student will be assigned a core program faculty member to serve as academic advisor.

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MENTORING COMMITTEE

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Each student is assigned a mentoring committee to assist with advising needs and questions and to facilitate students' academic progress under the department milestone policy. For students in the Developmental Program, a co-advisor will be assigned by the program upon admission and together with the primary advisor will constitute the Mentoring Committee. For students in the Clinical-Developmental Program, the Clinical Program will assign the committee with the approval of the Developmental Program. At the end of their first year, in consultation with their primary advisor, students may opt to change their co-advisor by notifying the program chair of their decision.

Students are required to meet annually with their Mentoring Committee until they have proposed their dissertations. Mentoring meetings typically occur in the second term and must be scheduled to occur no later than May 15. *Students in their first year are required to have an additional meeting at the end of their first term in residence.* For students past the first year, additional meetings are encouraged and may be called at any time at the student's discretion. Students schedule annual mentoring meetings themselves, as detailed below, and are required to submit a brief report (1 – 2 paragraphs) to the program chair and the Mentoring Committee after each meeting to ensure that there is general agreement about what was discussed and any actions that were decided.

The purpose of the Mentoring Committee is to support students in making and implementing plans for academic progress and professional growth. The structure and content of the meeting will vary depending on the student's year in the program and current progress. It can include providing advice regarding courses and course planning; clarifying expectations of the department and the program regarding advising and/or student performance as necessary; and troubleshooting barriers to progress or professional growth and helping to address any problems. To facilitate open communication the *co-advisor* will chair the meeting.

During the Mentoring Committee meeting, students should plan to discuss their training and

professional development goals, course planning, progress since the last meeting in accomplishing their goals, and future goals and plans. Students' questions, concerns, or issues about progress and performance should be raised here and discussed in a supportive manner. If there is confusion or concern about the balance between the advisor's expectations for student accomplishments and the program or department expectations for milestone progress, it should be explicitly addressed during the meeting, with the discussion led by the co-advisor. Department expectations should be reviewed and clarified, and a plan should be made for achieving a satisfactory balance.

Annual meetings of the Mentoring Committee should be scheduled by students in late spring (March – May) in concert with self-reports and annual evaluations. Students should email their program chair(s) to report when the meeting has been scheduled. If the meeting has not been scheduled by May 15, program chair(s) will remind the student to do so. At the conclusion of the meeting, students should send a brief summary to the committee with a cc to the program chair(s).

First-year students must schedule an additional meeting toward the end of their first term (November – December) to help them assess their own progress and performance, to address any issues in making the transition to graduate school before they become problematic, and to provide feedback as needed.

Students are encouraged to contact the program chair, director of graduate studies, department ombudsperson, or department chair to discuss any problems with advising or other training and professional development matters that cannot be resolved during Mentoring Committee meetings.

FULL-TIME STUDY

Students are admitted to the department and the Developmental Program with the understanding that they will engage continuously in full-time study and research toward the PhD. The assumption is that successful doctoral training requires a full-time commitment. Full-time study typically means: 1) being in residence on campus for all 3 terms; 2) registering for appropriate course credits every term; and 3) employment for a maximum of 20 hours per week every term, limited to teaching assistant (TA) or teaching fellow (TF) in the Department of Psychology, graduate student researcher (GSR) with a primary or secondary faculty member in the Department of Psychology, or a university or national fellowship for study in psychology. Any other arrangement, including summer internships, requires the written approval of the program. This policy does not apply to unpaid clinical practicum experiences as required or recommended by the Clinical Psychology Program.

Employment overloads, in which additional teaching (TA or TF) or research employment exceeds the 20 hours per week maximum, require the approval of the advisor, program, department, and Dean's office. Employment cannot exceed a maximum overload of 10 hours per week. If a student wishes to commit to more than 20 hours per week, the Associate Chair must be informed *before* the student agrees to the assignment so that approval of the Dean can be obtained. Note that failure to obtain such approval in advance usually means that the student will

not be paid for the overload.

Leaves of absence from the program may be ==requested for one year only.== Leaves are granted in exceptional circumstances (e.g., medical issues). Once advisor approval is obtained, the student must submit a written request and justification to the program for approval. Official leaves of absence are processed through the department Graduate Studies Coordinator and must be approved by the Dean's office.

TEACHING REQUIREMENT

All students in the department are required to demonstrate proficiency in teaching. This requirement may be fulfilled *only* by teaching an undergraduate course as a Teaching Fellow (TF) or by leading recitation sections as a Teaching Assistant (TA) in Research Methods or Cognitive Psychology and must be supervised and evaluated by a faculty member. The requirement cannot be fulfilled by course presentations, conference presentations, guest lectures, teaching assistantships that primarily involve monitoring and grading exams, or undergraduate mentoring. The supervising faculty member must indicate in writing when this requirement is fulfilled. Exemptions (e.g., for prior college teaching experience) may be requested in writing with appropriate supporting documentation and must be approved by the program(s), the Assistant Department Chair, and the Graduate Education Council. ==Students are also required to complete Teaching of Psychology (PSY 2970).== We strongly encourage students to take the teaching course early in their training so that they are sure to have completed it prior to the term in which they will teach for the first time. We also strongly encourage all students to serve at least one term as a TA before taking on full teaching responsibilities as a TF.

RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

Overview of Major Milestones and Timeline

There are three major requirements for the PhD beyond course work: 1) the 1st/2nd Year Project or Master's Thesis; 2) the Specialty Paper/Comprehensive exam; 3) the Dissertation. The expected timeline for completing the PhD and each milestone are governed by university, Graduate Education Committee, and Developmental Program requirements. Note that although all students in the department must follow the same standards with respect to milestone timing, the details of each milestone requirement may vary somewhat across programs. Additionally, some requirements are university-wide (e.g., basic composition of the dissertation committee; 8-month minimum between dissertation proposal and defense; statute of limitations; ETD). The best policy is to check with the department Graduate Studies Coordinator for current university requirements before completing a major milestone.

Graduate students in the Department of Psychology are expected to complete a doctoral degree in 5-6 years, excluding a final internship year for Clinical and joint Clinical- Developmental students. To meet this goal, students and faculty must be aware of the department's expectations and must work together to ensure that each student is making adequate progress. To this end, the Graduate Education Committee has established a timeline that outlines optimal, potentially problematic, and unacceptable rates of degree progress. In addition to indicating students'

expected time to complete the PhD, this timeline plays a role in the annual evaluations of student accomplishments and the quality of faculty mentoring.

Table 1 outlines the rate at which students are expected to progress through the milestones established by the department's graduate training programs. Departmental faculty recognize each student's progress will vary, and for this reason, rates of progress are defined in terms of "zones" rather than specific cut-off dates for each requirement. The three zones – Green, Yellow, and Red – are defined below.

Table 1: Expected Rate of Progress

Year	1			2			3			4			5			6			7			8		
Term (Fall=1, Spr=2, Sum=3)	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Propose Masters Equivalency		X	X	X	X	X	X	X																
Defend Masters Equivalency				X	X	X	X	X	X	X														
Propose Specialty Exam							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
Defend Specialty Exam*								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X								
Propose Dissertation										X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Defend Dissertation													X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

* Estimate: Time limits for completion of the Speciality Exam are established by each program, based upon when the exam is commenced.

Green (optimal) zone: Completing each milestone requirement within a Year/Term that is coded as green will yield a completed doctoral degree in the expected 5-6 years.

Yellow (cautionary) zone: This is considered to be a cautionary zone. For some students (e.g., those with other markers of high performance, including strong coursework, productive research endeavors), spending some or most of the time in the Yellow Zone is not a problem as long as milestone progress does not slip into the Red Zone. For other students, time in the Yellow Zone may be viewed with a high degree of concern by faculty; this is especially true when the outer range of the Yellow Zone is approaching without a successful milestone event in sight, or when slow progress toward the degree is coupled with other signs of lackluster or problematic performance.

Red (danger) zone: Students who reach the Red Zone will be placed on Provisional Status. Entry into Provisional Status will trigger a formal letter outlining the performance criteria that need to be met (including dates for successful completion) to avoid even more formal actions, such as progression to University Probation or termination from the student's doctoral training program.

To review the complete and most up-to-date departmental milestone policy, please see https://www.psychology.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Graduate_Student_Handbook-V4.0.pdf

FIRST / SECOND YEAR PROJECT OR MASTER'S THESIS

Students are required to complete a Master's thesis or an equivalent first/second year research project. Application for the Master's degree is optional, but most students opt to receive the degree after completing their 1st/2nd year project and their required course work. Thus, the

1st/2nd year project may serve as a Master's thesis and the required core courses (5 developmental courses and 2 statistics courses – see above) will meet the department requirements for the Master's degree. Note that the graduate school requires a minimum of 30 credits for the Master's degree. To apply for the Master's degree, students must submit their project and associated paperwork to the graduate school in a format consistent with university guidelines (ETD). Additional details about graduate school requirements can be found in the Graduate Student Handbook.

Whether or not they choose to apply for the master's degree, students must follow the guidelines below in regard to the scope and procedures for the Master's research project.

Scope of Project

The Master's thesis or first/second year project should be an empirical study of potentially publishable quality. The scope of the thesis should be broad enough to merit publication, but also a study that can reasonably be completed and defended within approximately one year after the proposal has been approved by the committee, barring unforeseen circumstances. The thesis may employ either archival or newly collected data. In either case, the student should demonstrate the degree of independence in formulating the question(s), design, and conduct of the study that is appropriate to the student's stage of training and that would justify a first-author publication.

Thesis Committee

The thesis committee is composed of at least three faculty members and is chaired by the student's advisor, who must be a core or affiliated member of the Developmental Program. At least one committee member (or the chair) of the committee must be a member of the Graduate Faculty. The department Graduate Studies Coordinator has information about which faculty are members of the Graduate Faculty. Committee members are selected in consultation with the advisor based on their expertise in the topic area.

Procedure

After identifying potential committee members in consultation with their advisor, the student should talk with the faculty members and invite them to serve on the committee. It is the student's responsibility to schedule a proposal meeting. The written proposal, after it has been approved by the student's advisor, should be circulated to the committee members at least one week prior to the proposal meeting. Master's thesis proposal meetings are typically scheduled for 2 hours. It is customary for the student to present a brief overview of their proposal (approximately10 - 15 minutes) prior to responding to questions. The committee may request revisions in design, procedures, or the proposal document itself before approving the project. An approved proposal is required before beginning the thesis research. When the project is completed and the thesis written, the student presents it to the committee at an oral defense meeting. The student is responsible for scheduling a 2-hour defense. After being approved by the advisor, the thesis should be circulated to committee members at least one week in advance of the defense meeting. Following a successful defense or after successful completion of required revisions, the Report on Examinations for Master's Defense card should be completed by the

committee and submitted to the department Graduate Studies Coordinator. It is the student's responsibility to obtain said card and to return it, signed, to the Graduate Studies Coordinator. Failure to do so will delay graduation and granting of the degree.

Format

The Master's thesis should be in journal article format using APA guidelines. Proposals should be approximately 15 - 25 pages and the final document no more than 35 pages (excluding references and tables; 1" margins; 12 pt font). Students are encouraged to submit the thesis for publication and presentation at national scientific meetings. The format as a journal article is meant to facilitate submission for publication with minimal revisions. If the student decides to submit the thesis for a Master's degree, the final document must be submitted to the Graduate School in ETD format. Note that this may require an additional form and signatures from the committee, which should be obtained at the time of the defense. See the university's Graduate School webpage for detailed instructions (www.pitt.edu/~graduate).

Timeline

As for all major milestones, students in the Developmental and Joint Clinical- Developmental programs are governed by the department-wide "zone" system. This means that students should propose the Master's thesis as early as possible, preferably by the end of the first year or the first term of the second year, but no later than the summer term of their second year. Students who fail to propose a thesis by the end of their second year will enter the Red Zone and be placed on provisional status with one term to complete the requirement.

Students should defend their thesis as early as possible, preferably by end of their second year, but not later than the end of the third year. Students who fail to do so will enter the Red Zone and be placed on provisional status with one term to complete the requirement.

Students who are placed on provisional status more than once (even if the milestones are completed while in the Red Zone) are likely to be dismissed from the graduate program, i.e., will not be permitted to continue on to doctoral candidacy.

Students who have completed a Master's thesis at another institution may request an exemption from the thesis requirement. Exemptions are granted by the Developmental faculty upon request by the student or advisor, and after determining that the completed thesis is equivalent to our requirements. At a minimum this means a formally prepareddocument reporting an empirical study that the student completed under the supervision of a faculty member. In most instances, a reading committee of up to three program faculty is formed to evaluate whether the thesis meets program requirements. In some instances the committee may request that the student be orally examined as well.

Preliminary Evaluation

While the Psychology Department does not admit students into a separate Master's degree program, students are not automatically eligible to pursue the PhD degree upon completing the

Master's thesis or first/second year project requirement. Rather, following university requirements, the program conducts a formal Preliminary Evaluation of each student after completion of the Master's thesis to determine whether the student will be recommended to continue in the graduate program. Successful completion of earlier requirements does not guarantee that the student will be recommended to continue his/her studies toward the PhD. The program faculty also consider other critical factors, such as overall quality of performance, and professional ethics and competence, in making a determination.

The Preliminary Evaluation will be conducted after the successful defense of the Master's thesis but before the student is permitted to take the Comprehensive Examination. If the faculty concludes that the student is not eligible for further study, he/she will be terminated from the program at that point. If the decision is positive, the student will be permitted to take the Comprehensive Examination. It should be noted that this action is highly unusual, given the high caliber of our students.

SPECIALTY PAPER / COMPREHENSINVE EXAMINATION

Prerequisites and Sequence

As one of the university requirements for the PhD, all students must pass a Comprehensive Examination. In the Psychology Department this takes the form of a Specialty Paper. This consists of a scholarly review paper and an oral defense. To be eligible to write the Specialty Paper, students must have completed the program's core required courses and the Master's thesis. Students cannot form a dissertation committee until the Specialty Paper is successfully defended. Exceptions to this sequence are extremely rare and must be approved by the program based on a written petition.

Note that length, writing time, and the nature and amount of permitted feedback vary across programs. Students in the Joint Clinical-Developmental Program are governed by the Clinical Program requirements for this milestone.

Refer to the Specialty Paper guidelines in Appendix A for full details, which are abbreviated below.

Scope and Timing of Specialty Paper

The Specialty Paper is students' opportunity to critically think and write independently about an area of scholarship. These are key competencies for doctoral trainees to demonstrate before embarking on their dissertation projects and are crucial for establishing an independent program of research as they move forward with their doctoral training. The general aims of the Specialty Paper are:

1. To consider a focused question in light of a broader literature. There should be a central question that is especially illuminated by review of literatures that are not typically

considered in reference to the question. Thus, secondary literatures should be brought to bear on some primary literature.

2. To provide a critical, integrative review of the research that will motivate the dissertation. The Specialty Paper should be able to stand alone (without the empirical studies that will follow from it) as a conceptualization of an area of inquiry.

The Specialty Paper should generally be proposed within 8 months of defending the Master's thesis, typically by the end of the third year and not later than the end of the fourth year. Ideal writing time is six months to facilitate timely completion of graduate training. If a student is in the green or yellow zone at the end of the six-month writing time, the student is permitted to request an extension. Students in the red zone are not permitted to request an extension due to their provisional status.

Extension to Specialty Paper Writing Time

Students are permitted to request an extension to the writing time from the program chair in consultation with their committee as long as the extension would not put the student in the red zone. Students in the red zone cannot request an extension. Students may request up to two extensions and each extension can be up to six months. Students have to defend the Specialty paper when they reach the end of the second extension even if they have not reached the red zone. All aspects of the Specialty Paper, including revisions after the defense, must be completed within two years from the date that the proposal was approved by the committee, unless the student enters the red zone prior to the end of the two-year timeframe. This two-year timeframe accounts for times that students may be waiting for feedback from their advisor or scheduling meetings with the committee and the possibility of a second defense (see below). A student who has not defended and completed their Specialty Paper by the end of the two-year timeframe will be moved to termination from the program. Under extremely rare extenuating circumstances (e.g., severe medical conditions) a request for an exception to these rules may be submitted to the program chair who will consider the request in consultation with the program faculty and the Director of Graduate Studies.

To request an extension to the writing time, the student must provide a detailed timeline for completion of the Specialty Paper and submit the current draft of the Specialty Paper to their advisor. The advisor will read the current draft, must approve the timeline, and verify that the committee has been informed and agrees to the extension. The extension request and approval by the program chair will be sent to the Graduate Studies Coordinator to be added to the student's file.

If the student has not defended their Specialty Paper twelve months after their proposal was approved, the student is required to meet with the entire committee. At least one week before the meeting, the student must provide a draft of the Specialty Paper to their advisor to document progress since the proposal. The advisor will not provide written feedback on the document. During the meeting with the committee, the student will provide an update on their progress, lay out a detailed timeline for completion of the Specialty Paper, and address any questions the committee may have about the current draft or the feasibility of the timeline for completion.

After the meeting, the student needs to send an email to the program chair summarizing the meeting and copy their primary advisor and Director of Graduate Studies.

Specialty Paper Committee

The Specialty Paper committee is composed of at least three faculty members and is chaired by the student's advisor, who must be a core or affiliated member of the Developmental Program. At least two members of the committee must be core faculty members of the program. Students are encouraged to invite faculty members from outside the department if their paper would benefit from additional expertise. The general expectation is that Specialty Paper committee members will also serve on the Dissertation committee, although this is not a requirement.

Should a committee member step down from the committee after the proposal has been approved but before the student defends, the student needs to find a replacement in consultation with their advisor. When inviting another faculty member to serve on the committee, the invitation should include the already approved proposal, and the faculty member should only agree to serving on the committee if they approve of the proposal. The student does not need to re-propose. The new committee must be composed of at least three faculty members and should be chaired by the student's advisor, who must be a core or affiliated member of the Developmental Program. At least two members of the committee must be core faculty members of the program. Any changes to the committee need to be documented with an email to the Graduate Studies Coordinator including an email from the new committee member stating their willingness to serve on the student's committee. If the student fails to secure a replacement, the student and advisor should consult with the program faculty to determine an appropriate course of action.

Specialty Paper Proposal

The proposal for the Specialty Paper should be developed in consultation with and approved by the student's faculty advisor. The proposal should be approximately 5 - 15 double-spaced pages excluding references and should include the central question of the paper, the rationale for its importance, a description of the literatures that will be brought to bear on it, and the rationale for their inclusion. The typical proposal also includes an outline and a representative reference list that goes beyond the references cited in the proposal to illustrate the breadth and depth of the literature to be reviewed. Systematic reviews are discouraged to ensure feasibility of the proposed work within the given timeframe. Students should work closely with their advisors to develop a topic that is appropriate in scope. For example, advisors should review search terms to ensure that the literature is searched thoroughly but also yields a manageable number of papers. Reading ~50-150 papers thoroughly for the Specialty Paper is deemed appropriate, but the exact number may vary depending on the particular topic and research area of the student's Specialty Paper. Advisors are permitted and encouraged to provide written feedback on proposal drafts. The proposal should be viewed as a work in progress that may be revised based on committee comments during the proposal meeting. If revisions of the proposal are requested, the 6-month writing clock begins once revisions are approved by all committee members.

Procedure (see figure below for schematic overview)

After identifying potential committee members in consultation with the advisor, the student should contact the potential committee members to determine their willingness to serve. After approval by the advisor, the written proposal should be circulated to the committee members at least one week prior to the proposal meeting. Specialty paper proposal meetings are typically scheduled for 2 hours. It is customary for the student to present a brief overview of the proposal (approximately 10 - 15 minutes) prior to responding to questions.

Following approval of the proposal by the committee, students should work independently on the paper. Deviations from the original approved outline based on a more complete literature review are fine and may be discussed with the faculty advisor and with committee members. Discussions with the faculty advisor and committee members about the Specialty Paper are encouraged, including discussions after the review of written drafts. The faculty advisor is permitted to read drafts of the Specialty Paper and provide oral, but not written feedback throughout the process. The advisor may provide broad written feedback on the penultimate version of the paper, i.e., only suggestions for conceptual and structural changes are permitted, no line edits of the actual text. The student decides when they have reached the penultimate draft and the advisor can only provide written feedback once. Furthermore, defense of the Specialty Paper must occur within two months of the student receiving the advisor's written feedback on the penultimate version of the Specialty Paper.

Discussion with other students and other external experts is encouraged, including exchange and verbal discussion of preliminary and final written drafts, but no written feedback is permitted. Students are permitted to seek assistance with writing from the Writing Center at the University of Pittsburgh, but under no circumstances may students seek assistance from professional editors. Students may also use writing software (e.g., Grammarly) to ensure proper spelling and grammar, but the final written document must be the student's own work and reflect their own thoughts and scholarly reflections on the topic. Generative artificial intelligence programs are permitted to conduct research on the topic of the Specialty Paper including identifying relevant literature, but under no circumstances is the text of generative artificial intelligence programs to be used in the written document.

The page limit for the Specialty Paper is 45 pages of text (double-spaced, 1" margins, 12 pt font), excluding references. The completed Specialty Paper must be distributed to all members of the Specialty Paper committee at least one week prior to the oral defense.

Specialty defense meetings are typically scheduled for 2 hours. It is customary for the student to present a brief overview of the final paper (approximately 10 - 15 minutes) prior to responding to questions. The oral defense meeting should be attended by all committee members. Based on both the written paper and the oral defense, the Specialty Paper committee will decide among three grade options: fail, pass, or pass with honors. The committee may request revisions to the document before determining the grade. Students have two chances to pass the requirement. If the defense is not passed initially, the committee may both request revisions and schedule a second meeting, typically within one month unless revisions are extensive, but no more than three months after the first defense to keep within the overall two-year timeframe for completion of the Specialty Paper.

After successful completion of the requirement (including any revisions), the student requests a "Report of Examinations for the Doctoral Degree" card from the Graduate Studies Coordinator who will disseminate the card electronically to the entire committee. It is the student's responsibility to secure the necessary signatures, and to ascertain that the Graduate Studies Coordinator has received the fully signed card. Failure to do so will delay admission to candidacy.

If the specialty paper committee does not approve the second defense, the program faculty will make the final decision, based on the Specialty Examination and other performance indicators, concerning the student's status in the program. Although it is rare to fail a second defense, a student who does will be moved to termination from the program.

Figure: Schematic overview of Specialty Paper timeline
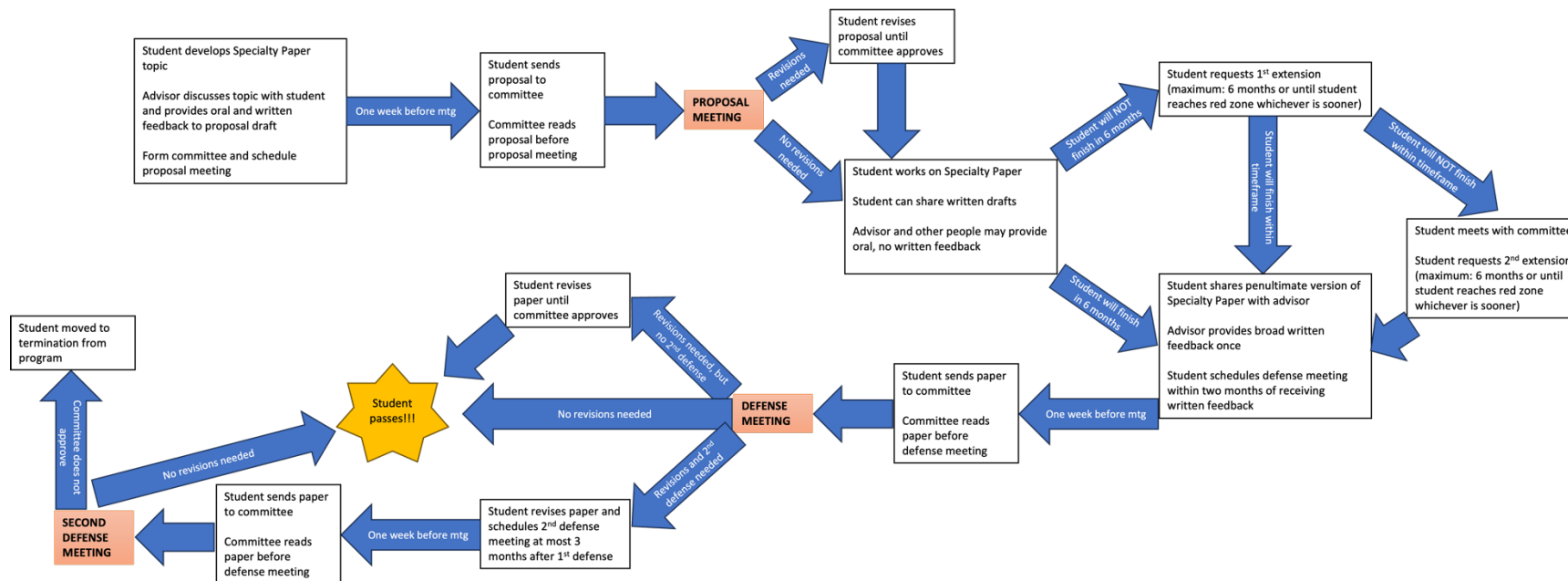
ADMISSION TO DOCTORAL CANDIDACY AND DISSERTATION

Prerequisites

Upon passing the Specialty Paper/Comprehensive Examination, and with the approval of the program, the student may begin the doctoral dissertation.

Scope of the Dissertation

The doctoral dissertation is a scholarly document that reports an original empirical contribution to the scientific knowledge base in a student's area of expertise. It should be of publishable quality. For the dissertation, students are expected: a) to play a significant role in the development of an important question or set of questions in their selected area of research; b) to be actively involved in the process of designing a study, collecting data, and/or developing measurement/analytic procedures to address the question(s). Under most circumstances, data collection will be designed specifically for the dissertation project, but it is understood that time or monetary constraints sometimes do not permit students to plan dissertations that depend on original data collection. In such cases, use of pre-existing data from large scale or longitudinal studies may be appropriate. When students use data from a pre-existing data set, they are still expected to play an independent role in formulating the questions (e.g., hypotheses drawn from the advisor's grant application do not constitute an appropriate dissertation topic), and in designing or facilitating new measurement or analytic procedures appropriate to the topic (e.g., the project must involve more than a simple data analysis involving existing variables).

Because candidates for research positions will be evaluated in terms of their projected ability to develop a laboratory and to produce novel scholarship, it behooves students to collect original data at some point in their graduate career if not for the dissertation.
Faculty mentors are encouraged to create opportunities for trainees to design and carry out empirical studies during their graduate training in addition to working with existing data sets. Toward this end, all students are encouraged to develop experience in a) writing grant and IRB proposals; b) collecting data or implementing relevant procedures that reflect the current state of the science; c) developing new measures; and d) participating in all stages of a project from start to finish inasmuch as possible.

Dissertation Committee

The dissertation committee is composed of at least four faculty members and is chaired by the student's advisor, who must be a core member of the Developmental Program. Four members of the dissertation committee must be members of the Graduate Faculty. Three members must have primary appointments in the Department of Psychology and two members must be core faculty members of the Developmental Program. One member must be a faculty member with a primary appointment outside the Department of Psychology who is also a member of the Graduate Faculty. Students often have five committee members (this is required of Joint Clinical-Development students), selecting an additional person with expertise in the student's area of interest. The department Graduate Studies Coordinator should be consulted about who is a

member of the Graduate Faculty as this changes frequently.

Procedure

An approved dissertation proposal is required before beginning the dissertation research. After identifying potential committee members in consultation with the advisor, the student should contact the potential committee members to determine their willingness to serve. Before finalizing the dissertation committee, the student should submit the names of committee members to the department Graduate Studies Coordinator for vetting. This will guarantee that the committee has been constituted according to current university regulations. Failure to so constitute the committee risks the denial of the PhD even after a successful defense.

Upon approval by the advisor, the written proposal should be circulated to the committee members at least one week prior to the proposal meeting. The dissertation proposal meeting is typically scheduled for 2 hours. It is customary for the student to present a brief overview (approximately 10-15 minutes) of the proposal prior to responding to questions. After final approval of the proposal (including any revisions) the committee will sign the "Application for Admission to Candidacy for Doctoral Degree" form, which should be returned to the department Graduate Studies Coordinator. The university requires this form to be signed and processed a *minimum of eight months prior to the final oral defense*.

Formal admission to doctoral candidacy does not occur until the student has an approved dissertation proposal, which may include revisions following the proposal meeting, and the required form is signed and processed by the Dean's office. Upon final approval, the student and each committee member will receive a formal letter from the Dean confirming admission to candidacy.

After completing data collection, analysis, and write-up, the dissertation must be defended before the committee at an oral examination. The university requires that all dissertation defense dates and locations be published in the University Times. Thus, the department Graduate Studies Coordinator must be notified as soon as the dissertation defense is scheduled so that it may be properly publicized to the department and university community. Upon approval by the advisor, the dissertation should be circulated to committee members at least one week in advance of the defense meeting.

Dissertation defenses should be schedule for 2 hours and should take place in the Martin Colloquium Room in Sennott Square or 424 Murdoch. All department faculty and students are invited and encouraged to attend. Family, friends, and undergraduate lab members are also invited to the defense. The public defense occurs first, during which students present their research in the form of a 45-minute colloquium. This presentation should be aimed at those who have not read the written document. The presentation is followed by a general question period of approximately 15 minutes during which any member of the audience may question the student. Following this, and no more than 60 minutes after the presentation has begun, non-committee members will be excused and the candidate will respond to additional questions during a closed meeting with committee members for approximately one hour. Other faculty are permitted to remain for this part of the defense, but typically do not ask questions. Minor or major revisions

may be requested by the committee, and the dissertation may be approved or, in rare cases, disapproved. After successful completion of the defense (including any revisions), the committee will sign the "Report of Examinations for the Doctoral Degree" card and the ETD forms and return them to thedepartment Graduate Studies Coordinator. It is the student's responsibility to secure the card and the required signatures and to return it to the department Graduate Studies Coordinator. Failure to do so will delay graduation.

Statute of Limitations

According to university regulations, students have a maximum of 10 years from matriculation to complete all requirements for the PhD degree. This clock is temporarily stopped during an official leave of absence.

STUDENT FUNDING

Traditionally students receive full financial support, including tuition remission and health benefits, while pursuing doctoral training in the Psychology Department. Usually, funding carries with it a work requirement (up to 20 hours per week), although some students are supported on fellowship or training grant funds with no formal work requirement. Funded positions include teaching assistantships, teaching fellowships, and graduate research assistantships. Competitive scholarships are also available through the University for incoming and advanced students of exceptional merit. Students are encouraged to apply for university and national fellowships beginning in their first year. See the department website for details about these opportunities.

DEPARTMENTAL STUDENT TRAVEL AND RESEARCH FUNDS

The Department offers travel and research funds to all students in good standing. All students receive $500/year for a total of up to $3,000 during their time in graduate training. Students may use their allocation to support a flexible mix of scientific travel, research expenses, and training-related expenses (e.g., internship travel costs, scholarly book purchases, academic workshop fees). Students must seek pre-approval from the Department of Psychology for any travel or research-related costs. Additional travel grants are available through the Dietrich School of A&S, the Graduate Student Organization, and the Graduate and Professional Student Government. See the department website for details about these opportunities and how to apply for them.

PROSEMINAR, COLLOQUIA, AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Developmental Proseminar

The Developmental Proseminar (and the associated course PSY 2305 – Developmental Program Research Seminar) is a seminar accompanying graduate training in developmental psychology and a venue for faculty and students in the developmental psychology program to engage in scholarly discussions. It consists of research presentations, discussions of the literature, and professional development in the field of developmental psychology. Presentations are made by graduate students and faculty of the developmental psychology program as well as outside speakers. Organized and coordinated by a committee of faculty and graduate students, they are

scheduled on a term-by-term basis and occur once or twice per month during the academic year. Because they contribute to the scholarly community and to students' professional development, regular attendance is expected by all Developmental students, including those in the Joint Clinical/Developmental Program, regardless of tenure in the program. Students are required to enroll in PSY 2305 (Developmental Program Research Seminar, offered every fall and spring semester) for four semesters during their graduate training; two semesters prior to completing their Master's, and two semesters after completing their Master's. Under exceptional circumstances, a student can request to shift enrollment in PSY 2305, for example if credit limits are reached (especially prior to completing the Master's). Such a request has to be made in writing to the Program Chair and approved by the program faculty. Regardless of enrollment status, absence is noted and figures in students' annual evaluation with regard to scholarly growth and participation in the program's intellectual community.

Presentations

All students are expected to present the proposed or completed master's project at the Developmental or Clinical Proseminar. Students are also encouraged to use the Developmental Proseminar as a forum to practice talks that they will be giving at conferences, as a forum to discuss work in progress (e.g., in form of a data blitz), other completed work, practice job talks, or fellowship ideas. Students will receive oral feedback from a group of faculty and graduate students after their presentations to enhance their presentation skills. Graduate students at all levels of training will take turns providing feedback to student presenters.

Departmental Colloquia

Department colloquia are research presentations given by nationally and internationally renowned senior scholars whose research is likely to be of general interest to the department. Regular attendance is expected for all colloquia, even those outside the student's interest/research area; as with the Developmental Proseminar, absence is noted and figures in the student's annual evaluation.

ANNUAL STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Each year the program's faculty evaluate graduate students' progress and scholarly development and provide written feedback. The specific items addressed in the evaluations depend on the student's year in the program and any unique issues or concerns applicable to that student. Yearly evaluations are based on input from students' self-reports and faculty assessments.

Student Self-Reports

Each spring semester every student must submit a self-evaluation form to the department that outlines their progress in degree requirements, training activities, and scholarly achievements during that academic year. Specifically, students are asked to report on courses taken and milestones achieved, journal submissions and publications, conference and colloquium presentations, ongoing research projects, and teaching and mentorship experiences. Each student also submits an updated curriculum vita. Self-reports provide an opportunity for students to

reflect on their own progress in meeting the program's requirements as well as their individual goals. These self-reports are shared with the program chair and utilized in faculty evaluations.

Student Evaluations

Faculty evaluate student progress at the end of each spring term. This process begins when students submit self-reports to the program. Faculty meet and review students' transcripts, self-evaluations, and reports of student performance by faculty who have had contact with students in classes, as committee members, and so on. These evaluations address several indicators of academic progress, professional development, and scholarly productivity: 1) completion of program milestones and course work; 2) mastery of disciplinary knowledge (theory, research, methods); 3) progress in research, writing, and presentation skills; and 4) overall professional growth and development, including publication activity and participation in scientific meetings. The program chair, in consultation with the advisor, then provides students with written feedback on their performance and standing in the program. Written evaluations identify students' areas of strength and weakness (as applicable), milestones remaining to be completed, and offer guidance on continuing development into independent researchers and scholars.

Students receive a formal evaluation letter from the program chair by the end of July. Joint students receive one letter that reflects the feedback from both the Developmental and Clinical faculty. Students are strongly encouraged to use their annual evaluation letter as a springboard for discussions with their advisors about their academic/scholarly progress and plans as they begin the next academic year.

Important forms to remember:

Master's Defense card signed by committee (and ETD form if Master's degree is sought)
Comprehensive Examination card signed by committee
Dissertation Proposal form and admission to candidacy form signed by committee Dissertation Defense form and ETD form signed by committee

DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM CORE FACULTY

Sophia Choukas-Bradley, Ph.D., Assistant Professor **Jennifer Cousins, Ph.D.,** Teaching Associate Professor
Jennifer Ganger, Ph.D., Teaching Professor
Jamie Hanson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Daphne Henry, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Diana Leyva, Ph.D., Associate Professor
Klaus Libertus, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Melissa Libertus, Ph.D., Professor, Program Chair
Andrea Medrano, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Rebecca Reed, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Daniel S. Shaw, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor
Jennifer Silk, Ph.D., Professor
Elizabeth Votruba-Drzal, Ph.D., Professor

Heather Bachman, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Health and Human Development, School of Education (Secondary appointment in Psychology)

Emeritus/Emerita Faculty

Celia Brownell, Ph.D. Professor Emerita, Department of Psychology
Susan B. Campbell, Ph.D. Professor Emerita, Department of Psychology
Carl Johnson, Ph.D. Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology in Education (Secondary appointment in Psychology)
Robert McCall, Ph.D. Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology
Sharon Nelson-Le Gall, Ph.D. Professor Emerita, Department of Psychology
Mark Strauss, Ph.D. Associate Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology

See department website for full details about faculty including CVs, research interests, selected publications, and links to research labs.

APPENDIX A. DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE SPECIALTY PAPER

The specialty paper fulfills the graduate school requirement for the PhD comprehensive exam. This requirement reflects a student's mastery of a specialized research literature, including relevant theoretical perspectives, the state of the empirical science, and the core conceptual and methodological issues in the topic area. The specialty paper is a literature review that demonstrates advanced scholarship and that often brings a novel theoretical perspective to the field. Typically, the scope of the review is broader than a dissertation, but often encompasses the questions to be addressed by the dissertation.

<u>What is a literature review</u>?

A literature review summarizes, synthesizes, and critiques the existing literature in a focused area of investigation. A good literature review is not simply a string of summaries of empirical research papers. Instead, it is a systematic, in-depth, novel, problem-oriented treatment of one or more specific research literatures, considering both theory and methods. A good review strikes a balance between the discussion of theoretical and/or conceptual issues and a focus on methodological concerns. Concretely, a good literature review does the following:

(1)   identifies one or more major unresolved conceptual issues in an area of investigation,

(2)   describes the primary theoretical frameworks that have been used to interpret the empirical results (note: this can include integrating different bodies of literature to inform a particular issue or question),

(3)   systematically synthesizes the empirical results in the area(s) to draw conclusions about the state of the research, attending both to the statistical significance of findings and to the strength (effect sizes) of underlying associations when relevant,

(4)   identifies methodological strengths and limitations in the research literature and considers whether these help to explain potentially conflicting results or conclusions,

(5)   evaluates conceptual or theoretical limitations of past work,

(6)   critically summarizes and integrates the existing literature around common themes and/or continuing issues,

(7)   identifies areas for further study, and/or suggests possible ways of resolving conflicting or inadequate empirical results, &/or proposes new conceptual models or methodological/statistical solutions for the identified issues,

<u>How does one write a literature review</u>?

The first step in writing a literature review is to search the literature for relevant papers, both historical and

current, theoretical and empirical. For the specialty paper, this will be a substantial literature and the initial search process could take some time. Next, one must read the papers and identify the major issues that each study addresses. In doing this, it may be helpful to create an annotated bibliography. An annotated bibliography summarizes each paper, noting (1) the research question(s) addressed by the study; (2) the methods used to investigate the research question(s); (3) the major findings and how they are interpreted; (4) patterns of findings and effect sizes to characterize the strength of associations; (4) any criticisms or concerns about the study. It can be useful to summarize each study on a separate page so that in writing the review they can be grouped and regrouped as needed. Some students find it more helpful to use tables to summarize studies along the main points of comparison. Note that not all of the literature read will be summarized in the final paper, and some will not be included or cited at all. However, all of it will contribute to mastery of the given area as well as one's ability to evaluate it and integrate it with other relevant literatures.

Next, the studies are grouped according to the major questions they address. Within each group, the studies are organized along dimensions that are relevant to the review (e.g., specific sub-issues, specific age groups, specific methodologies). It is often useful to develop a strategy for coding individual studies across these dimensions to identify patterns in the literature. This can be exceptionally useful in explaining inconsistencies in research findings. Based on these groupings, a detailed outline for the paper should be generated. This outline will provide the structure for the paper. It should be organized around a thesis or clearly articulated problem or question. It should identify and organize the specific questions or issues to be addressed and the argument(s) to be made and should anticipate the conclusions.

Finally, the paper is written using the outline as a guide. Particularly when the literature is especially large or methodologically varied, it is useful to use the outline as a guide in deciding what is most relevant. The final paper should include an introduction, a body, and a conclusion or set of conclusions. The introduction should provide a roadmap for the paper. It will introduce the area of study, articulate the thesis or problem, outline or foreshadow the major issues that will be addressed, and briefly state the conclusions that will be reached. The body should be organized into major sections that address the primary questions identified. The research reviewed in each section should be presented in terms of how it addresses that major issue. Each section of the review should systematically and thoughtfully synthesize empirical findings by identifying the strength and consistency of associations uncovered in prior studies. It is important to provide enough information about the methods of each study so that readers can understand the methodological strengths and weaknesses of the literature. Research synthesis tables are often a useful tool for summarizing empirical findings across studies. Instead of describing each study in detail in the text of the document, tables can be used to present detailed methodological information from each study, including effect sizes when relevant. The text of the document can then describe the major patterns of findings across studies and discuss methodological strengths and weaknesses. Students are encouraged to avoid broad generalizations about patterns in the literature (e.g., "the evidence is mixed") and to be specific about what the weight of the evidence suggests about the question. This document is not expected to be a formal meta-analysis, but meta-analytic techniques are often useful for converting the results of studies to a common metric for synthesizing the primary findings in a given literature. For more information on how to synthesize findings across research studies see Cooper, Hedges, & Valentine (2009), *The Handbook of Research Synthesis and Meta-Analysis*. The conclusion should integrate the main points made in the body of the review, evaluate the state of scientific

knowledge about the major issues addressed, and consider how these inform theory. This is also an important place to suggest continuing or new questions that have arisen from the review, unresolved conceptual and/or methodological issues, and other avenues for future research. This final section is more difficult than it may seem, so plenty of time should be allotted to it.

Format & scope of the paper

The specialty paper should be a critical, integrative review of research and theory that will motivate the intended dissertation. It should be able to stand alone as a critical evaluation of one or more literatures and a conceptualization of an area of inquiry.

It is strongly recommended that the student target a particular journal or two to which the paper will ultimately be submitted. This should be done before beginning the proposal and in consultation with the advisor. The target journal will depend on the topic and scope of the paper.

The specialty paper is considered an independent achievement by the student, not the product of collaboration. However, as indicated in other sections, the student should seek input from the advisor and/or committee members at every step of the process, and the advisor should be sure the student is making appropriate progress.

Proposal preparation

As part of preparing the proposal, sufficient time should be given to becoming familiar with the literature, including theory and conceptual issues, empirical approaches, findings, and issues for further research.

Regular meetings should be scheduled with the advisor while preparing the proposal, and written feedback on drafts of the proposal is strongly encouraged. A substantial reference list should be included as part of the proposal, although the student is not expected to have read everything that will ultimately contribute to the review. It may be useful to include an annotated bibliography or a table of relevant studies as part of the proposal. Although neither is required, this sort of summarizing can contribute to a more focused and detailed proposal. Superficial reading in preparation for the proposal can produce a vague or poorly informed document and is likely to make the proposal meeting more difficult and the writing of the specialty paper itself more challenging.

It is appropriate for the committee to ask for revisions of the proposal before approving it and permitting the student to begin writing the paper. The aim of revisions is to improve the quality of the paper and ensure its feasibility within the page and time constraints. Accordingly, the committee may recommend that the intended scope be expanded or reduced, that particular literatures be added or removed, or that the organization or focus be changed. Requested revisions may also be less substantive, such as adding detail to the outline or spelling out particular issues more precisely. If revisions are requested, they should typically be completed within one month of the proposal meeting.

The defense

The committee's final evaluation of the paper will be based in part on the written product and in part on the oral defense. The advisor should approve the final draft of the paper before it is presented to the

committee for final evaluation.

The courses of action open to the committee after the defense are: Pass with Honors; Pass, no revisions; Pass, contingent on revisions; Pass, contingent on re-examination orally (which may or may not include written revisions); Fail. As part of its final evaluation the committee should provide feedback that will not only improve the paper itself and move it toward publication, but that will also be useful in proposing the dissertation research.

Revisions may be requested under the following circumstances: incomplete or inadequate coverage or mastery of relevant literature; inadequate focus, analysis, or conceptualization of the problem area, of one or more particular issues, or of some aspect of the literature; need for clarification or further development of an idea, argument, or conclusion; need for greater attention to the conclusions and/or implications; poor writing or organization. Sometimes weaknesses in the written document can be remedied through discussion during the oral presentation, but sometimes such weaknesses are amplified during the oral presentation. In the latter case another oral presentation may be requested following rewriting. The rule of thumb is that revisions will be requested if they stand to improve the student's mastery, conceptualization, and/or presentation of the area. Revisions are not requested as an empty exercise.

Guidance and feedback from the advisor and committee

The program views the process of writing the specialty paper as similar to how any scholar might write a major paper or grant proposal. While the paper must be written independently, it is completely appropriate to seek input and feedback from one's advisor and committee members during the writing process; indeed, this is expected and encouraged.

The topic and coverage of the specialty paper should be discussed extensively with one's advisor while preparing the proposal. The proposal should carefully and precisely delineate the questions and issues to be addressed and clearly define the literatures that will be included in the review. It may be worthwhile to discuss the project with other committee members while preparing the proposal. Inadequate specificity in the specialty paper proposal can give rise to significant challenges during the proposal meeting and as students move forward to write the paper.

Discussions with the advisor and committee members can include both central ideas and organizational structure as the paper is initially formulated and outlined and as it takes shape during the writing process. This can include the coverage of the literatures to be reviewed, strengths and weaknesses of the literatures, and the major conclusions drawn from each of the literatures. Finally, discussions may also involve conversations and advice concerning specific challenges in systematically identifying and critically reviewing the literature, organizing one's thoughts and writing, and drawing larger conclusions. Students are encouraged to discuss openly with their advisor the most effective strategies for making progress and feeling satisfied with how the paper is developing, including how frequently to meet and the amount and level of feedback that would be most useful. For students in the Developmental program, oral feedback can be sought on partial drafts of the paper. The advisor may provide broad written feedback on the penultimate version of the paper, i.e., only suggestions for conceptual and structural changes are permitted, no line edits of the actual text. For students in the Clinical-Developmental program, Clinical program guidelines with respect to feedback are to be followed.

Examples

To assist students with this process, examples of successful proposals and final papers are available in the program's SharePoint folder on KennyNet. Published revisions of specialty papers are also available. It should be noted that in some cases extensive revisions were required to generate a publishable version. Please also check the Departmental Graduate Student resources for additional examples from other programs. If you do not have access to these documents, contact the Graduate Administrative Assistant for help.