



Eastern Michigan University

Psychology Department

Program Handbook: Masters of Science in
Psychology— EXPERIMENTAL

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Experimental MS Program Handbook. This comprehensive guide has been meticulously crafted to provide valuable information to both current and prospective students of our program. Within these pages, you will find essential details regarding our program's mission, requirements, registration procedures, student performance and conduct evaluation, graduate school prerequisites, opportunities for Graduate Assistants/Teaching Assistants (GA/TA), general advice for a successful graduate school journey, and a self-evaluation tool to track your progress in mastering the competencies at the heart of our program. To enhance your understanding and access to resources, we have included hyperlinks to external references such as the EMU Graduate School and the American Psychological Association Ethics Code.

Mission Statement

The Experimental Program's core mission is to cultivate scientists who are equipped to harness the foundational principles of experimental research methods and philosophical underpinnings of psychological inquiry. Our aim is to empower our graduates to contribute to the enhancement of human behavior, health, and the understanding of various aspects of human existence. We firmly believe that these foundations are not only essential for a fulfilling career but also integral to fostering a lifelong commitment to learning and professional development post-graduation.

Our program stands as a mentor-based learning model, where students receive invaluable laboratory training. This training develops them as highly competitive candidates for research-focused careers and Ph.D. programs across various disciplines, including Neuroscience, Developmental Psychology, Social Psychology, Statistics and Methods, Learning, and Cognition. The principles and practices of research methodology form the bedrock of scientific psychology and its related fields.

Our curriculum comprises courses spanning physiology, statistics, and specialized disciplines (e.g., social psychology), each designed to equip students with the skills necessary for conducting research. Furthermore, these courses instill a profound understanding of the philosophical underpinnings that drive scientific methods. Armed with this knowledge, our students become innovative practitioners who creatively apply these methods to a diverse array of practical domains, contributing to advancements in their chosen fields.

Personnel

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Advising

The Experimental MS program operates on a mentorship model, and upon admission, each student will be paired with a compatible mentor. Regular communication and consultation with your mentor are essential when making decisions that impact your academic journey. Your mentor is here to assist you in achieving your academic and career goals, so don't hesitate to reach out for guidance and advice. Your mentor will be a valuable resource throughout your academic journey, offering guidance on course selection, career aspirations, research prospects, professional matters, and your overall study plan.

As you progress in the program, you may discover shared interests with another member of our experimental faculty and decide to switch mentors. This option is available to you at any time.

However, we encourage you to initiate a discussion about the change with your assigned mentor first. Subsequently, please inform the Experimental Program Coordinator to ensure that you continue to receive the appropriate guidance and support.

Placement of Graduates from EMU's Experimental Master's Program

Graduates have gone on to doctoral programs in neuroscience/biomedical sciences, applied behavioranalysis, and clinical psychology, including the doctoral program in clinical psychology in our department.

Graduate School Handbook

The [EMU Graduate School Handbook](#) has many policies beyond those covered in the program handbook. Updates to the Graduate School Handbook are implemented immediately unless otherwise noted in that document.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Program Overview

Experimental Psychology spans a wide spectrum, encompassing diverse subjects, from fundamental sciences like physiology and neuroscience to clinical research methodologies. To effectively navigate this expansive field, our program adopts a mentorship model, ensuring that each student benefits from personalized and in-depth guidance from their graduate advisor.

In pursuit of your degree, you will be required to complete a total of 30 credit hours. Within this framework, six of these hours are designated for thesis credits, allowing you to delve into a research project that aligns with your academic and career aspirations.

Required Courses

Core courses (12hrs)

PSY 600 Psychological Statistics I (3hrs)

PSY 605 Research Design (3hrs)

PSY 692 Thesis (6hrs)

Electives (12-18 credits)

Students take a minimum of 12 elective credits. With approval, a maximum of 6 credits can be taken from other departments or transferred from other institutions.

Thesis Credits (minimum of 6)

To obtain a Master's degree in Experimental Psychology, students are required to successfully complete and defend their Master's Thesis. This entails a minimum of 6 thesis credits. Once initiated, students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment in thesis credits until they have successfully completed their Thesis Defense (refer to the Mandatory Thesis Section below for additional details).

Mandatory Thesis

In the Experimental Psychology program, the successful completion of a thesis is mandatory. A thesis serves as a pivotal component in preparing our students for careers in experimental psychology, equipping them with essential skills applicable in industry and other practical settings. This accomplishment stands as a tangible testament to your dedication to the field, showcasing your commitment to prospective employers and doctoral programs.

It is anticipated that the thesis will be a collaborative effort, with active involvement from the student, the Chair of the student's thesis committee, and the committee members. Undertaking

experimentation demands significant time and effort. Students who initiate the thesis process promptly are better positioned to complete their degree within the standard five semesters.

Outlined below are the procedures to facilitate a smooth and successful thesis completion:

Generating Thesis Ideas

Initiate discussions with faculty members who specialize in areas aligning with your research interests. Inquire about potential research opportunities within their expertise. To generate thesis questions, maintain a journal to record potential ideas as you read journal articles, engage in discussions, critique studies, observe behavioral issues, and brainstorm applicable research methods. In some cases, you may have the option to receive independent study credit for developing your thesis proposal up to a certain stage. Continuously engage with faculty to discuss your research ideas until it becomes evident whether a thesis question can be agreed upon. If a consensus is reached on a thesis question, approach the faculty member to ascertain if they are willing to serve as your thesis advisor. Seek their recommendations for potential members of your thesis committee.

Thesis Proposal Development

Collaborate with your advisor to draft your thesis proposal, encompassing an introduction, method section (including subjects, apparatus, procedure, research design, measurement, and data recording techniques), references, and appendices (housing data recording sheets, rapid assessment instruments, draft informed consent, and the Human Subjects Review Application). Share each draft of your proposal with your thesis advisor for feedback and revision. Typically, multiple revisions are needed based on ongoing input from the advisor until a draft meets their acceptance criteria. The final judgment of the proposal's adequacy, ethics, and feasibility lies with the thesis advisor.

Early in the process, consult with your thesis advisor regarding the faculty members you'd like to include in your committee. Three committee members must be faculty within the EMU Psychology Department, and you may add a fourth member from outside the department or university if it aligns with your project. All thesis proposals must include an appendix outlining summer semester thesis workload expectations for the student. Thesis projects can vary in their summer requirements; some can be paused during the summer, while others demand continuous progress.

If the project does not necessitate summer work, the appendix should state:

"This project does not require continuous summer progress, and there is no need for continuous enrollment in thesis credits during the summer semesters. Please note that EMU graduate school only accepts graduate credits completed within six years of graduation; older courses require repetition."

If the project does require summer work, the appendix should state:

"This project necessitates continuous summer progress and demands ongoing enrollment in additional thesis credits during the summer(s). [Add details about summer workload expectations and required thesis credit enrollment (1, 2, or 3 credits) as per the project's needs.] Failure to enroll in thesis credits will result in the project being transferred to the mentor, leading to thesis termination. Enrolled thesis credits will be converted to Independent Study credits, and grades will reflect the quantity and quality of work completed, as evaluated by the thesis mentor."

Once your advisor approves your working draft, coordinate with them to identify two additional individuals to serve on your thesis committee. Confirm their willingness to participate, as it is at their discretion. The committee approval form must be completed and signed by the program coordinator and department chair before the proposal defense.

The Proposal Defense Meeting

Schedule a proposal meeting at least two weeks (10 business days) after the proposal is ready for distribution. In this meeting, you, along with your committee (advisor and two other members), will discuss your proposal. Generally, the meeting includes an introduction by your advisor, a 30-minute presentation of your proposal (with visuals), and 45 minutes for questions, discussion, and suggestions for proposal enhancement.

Two outcomes are possible:

- a. The proposal is deemed satisfactory, allowing you to proceed.
- b. The proposal is unsatisfactory, indicating a need for revisions. In such cases, the committee provides a detailed description of deficiencies and actions required for improvement. Some deficiencies may be minor and can be addressed through text revisions without another oral proposal defense. For substantial revisions, the committee may request a full review of an updated proposal document and another oral defense. Another oral defense is required if at least one committee member requests it. (Note: The thesis committee has the final say on proposal adequacy, ethics, and feasibility.)

All revisions mandated by the committee must be completed to their satisfaction before committee members sign the proposal approval. The signed form is then sent to the Master's Program Coordinator or Department Head for their signature, after which the department forwards the approval to the graduate school.

Human Subjects, Animal Care and Use

Your advisor will assist you in submitting the thesis proposal and application, which you have prepared together, through the EMU Institutional Review Board or the Institutional Animal Care and Usage Committee (IACUC) website.

Conducting Your Study

Data collection and analysis can commence only after your thesis proposal has received approval

from your thesis committee and the IRB.

Academic Credit for Thesis

Registration for PSY 692 (Thesis) is permissible only after obtaining approval of your thesis proposal from your thesis committee. In some cases, registering for independent study credits until you are certain your thesis will be completed is advisable. If the thesis remains unfinished, any thesis credits will remain incomplete. To record the thesis on your transcript, you must register for a minimum of 6 thesis credits.

Oral Defense

You will receive credit for PSY 692 once your thesis committee deems your manuscript acceptable and you have successfully defended your thesis orally. The oral defense is considered successful when both the Thesis Oral Defense Approval and Thesis Document Approval forms are signed by the committee. While oral thesis defense meetings are open to faculty and students, the adequacy of the defense is determined solely by the thesis committee. Advance notice of the oral thesis defense must be posted in the department two weeks beforehand (notify the department senior secretary), and copies of the completed thesis should be made available to interested parties prior to the defense.

The oral defense includes:

- A review of key articles from the literature
- Explanation of the study's purpose
- Overview of methods
- Presentation of key results
- Discussion of results, including strengths and limitations

Additionally, there will be a question and answer session and time for the committee to deliberate on the quality of the materials. Thesis defense meetings are scheduled for two hours to allow sufficient time for the defense process.

Approval of your thesis is indicated by committee members' signatures on the Oral Defense of the Master's Thesis Approval Form, which can have two outcomes:

- a. The defense is deemed satisfactory, allowing you to proceed with the final approval of the thesis document.
- b. The defense is unsatisfactory, necessitating a detailed description of deficiencies and required actions for improvement by the committee. Minor deficiencies may be addressed through text revisions without another oral defense, while substantial revisions may prompt the committee to request a full review of the document and another oral defense if at least one committee member requests it.

All committee-mandated revisions must be completed to their satisfaction before signing the Oral Defense of the Master's Thesis Approval Form. The signed form is then sent to the Master's Program Coordinator or Department Head for their signature, after which the department forwards the approval to the graduate school. The thesis chair will keep detailed notes on any changes requested by the committee before the thesis document can be approved by the committee.

Thesis Document Approval

The thesis process is not complete until the Master's Thesis Document Approval Form is signed by the committee, program coordinator, department head, and the graduate school. Committee members do not sign the Master's Thesis Document Approval Form until the document meets their satisfaction. The signed form is then sent to the Master's Program Coordinator and Department Head for their signatures before the department forwards it to the graduate school. Be aware that the graduate school will not sign off on the document until it meets all of their requirements, including formatting and other details, which may be time-consuming. Review these requirements early in the thesis writing process to avoid last-minute revisions. Failure to meet these requirements can delay your graduation.

Miscellaneous

In the event of a major change in the thesis or its abandonment, inform the Experimental Program.

COURSES & REGISTRATION

Graduate students must register online for main campus and off-campus courses using their my.emich.edu accounts. Registration will be blocked if students have past due accounts with the University. Instructions for registration are provided at:

<http://www.emich.edu/registrar/registration/index.php>

Tuition is assessed for all credit hours for which a student is registered. Tuition rates per credit hour are subject to review at each June Board of Regents meeting and may increase. The most current information regarding tuition and fees can be found online at:

<https://www.emich.edu/sbs/basics/calculator.php>

Transfer Credits

Graduate credit may be accepted from other accredited institutions to be used on a graduate degree program at EMU. Acceptable transfer credit(s) will be determined by the department, subject to the approval of the department head/school director and the Office of Records and Registration.

Transfer credit must meet the following requirements:

- The course content must be applicable to the Experimental Program.
- Receive a grade of B or higher (grades of “pass,” “satisfactory,” or “credit” cannot be transferred unless noted on the transcript key as equivalent to a B or better grade).
- The credit cannot be out-of-date per the degree time limitation (all credits must be earned within six years of a student’s graduation date).
- The course must be approved by the Experimental Program Coordinator and approved by Office of Records and Registration.
- Course credit must be documented as graduate credit on an official graduate transcript from an accredited institution.
- The student must be in good standing at their previous university for transfer credits to be considered.

The required request forms can be found at:

http://www.emich.edu/graduate/policies/trans_credit.php

Academic Load

The overwhelming majority of students in the program attend full time and graduate within 2 years.

Example Full-Time Course Sequence

Year/Courses	Credits
Fall Year 1	
<i>PSY 600 Psychological Statistics</i>	3
<i>PSY Elective</i>	3
<i>PSY Elective</i>	3
Winter Year 1	
<i>PSY 605 Research Design</i>	3
<i>PSY Elective</i>	3
<i>PSY Elective</i>	3
Summer Year 1	
<i>Start Thesis data collection</i>	
Fall Year 2	
<i>Thesis</i>	3
<i>PSY Elective</i>	3
Winter Year 2	
<i>Thesis</i>	3
<i>PSY Elective</i>	3

Overrides & Wait Lists

Students are encouraged to register at the opening of registration to secure their best schedule. All classes are capped to ensure small class size and best learning. Overrides are not routinely given and in some cases are not practical given the classroom space used. Students are encouraged to select the “waitlist” option for desired courses while still registering for an alternative section when their first choice is not available. The program coordinator will work with you to direct you to the schedule of thesequence of courses you will need to meet program requirements.

Auditing Courses

Required courses for the program cannot be audited. Electives may be audited provided the student submits a Request to Audit a Course form by the university deadline. An audited course does not count toward your degree.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE & CONDUCT

Evaluation of Students

Students will be evaluated at a minimum at the conclusion of each semester by their **primary mentor** having regular contact with the student (e.g., courses, research, or other settings) using the following domains and ratings.

	No Concerns	Concerns	Significant Concerns	Not Observed
Written Expression				
Oral Expression				
Factual & Conceptual Knowledge				
Procedural Knowledge & Self-Evaluation Ability				
Critical/Abstract Thinking Skills & Reasoning,				
Professionalism, Interpersonal Skills, & Ethics				

Faculty raters will also have the opportunity to provide qualitative comments for each of the evaluated domains. If across all evaluators a particular domain has not been observed for a specific evaluation period, a student will be notified that this domain should be treated as involving some “concerns” as the faculty have not had the opportunity to observe the student in relation to this domain and these domains should be observable in one or more settings each semester.

Students are notified of their evaluation within 1 week of the program meeting in which the evaluation is discussed (program faculty meetings are the first Thursdays of the month during the regular academic year). Program faculty may meet ad hoc, and virtually, to address emergent student evaluation needs. In all cases, a quorum of 4 faculty is sufficient for the evaluation summary to move forward.

The outcome of each evaluation will be one of the following:

1. Satisfactory progress
2. Generally satisfactory progress with some concerns: this outcome will not require a remediation plan or dismissal if the student adequately addresses the concerns.
3. Less than satisfactory progress: this outcome may be accompanied by a remediation plan or dismissal

Note: Students can have a passing grade/GPA and still be dismissed from the program on the basis of this evaluation process. Courses have educational objectives that are separate from this evaluation process yet they serve as the basis for observing student performance and determining

whether student performance in these evaluation domains meet program expectations.

Dismissal & Disciplinary Action

Academic Deficiencies Resulting in Disciplinary Action or Dismissal

A grade of “B” or better is required for any courses to count toward graduation for the program. A student will not be allowed to repeat a course more than once. If a student fails to pass a course with a “B” or better on the second attempt, they will be immediately dismissed from the program. If a student fails to pass a third course on their first attempt (even if they passed two other courses on their second attempt) the student will be immediately dismissed from the program.

Non-Academic Behavior Resulting in Disciplinary Action or Dismissal

The University and the Psychology Department expect conduct of all students that is consistent with the law, all relevant University policies and rules, including the [Code of Community Responsibility](#), the American Psychological Association [Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct](#), and the Behavior Analyst Certification Board [Professional and Ethical Compliance Code](#). Importantly, these ethical codes also cover a range of actions relevant to working on research projects at EMU. Single episode violations or patterns of recurring behavior could result in termination as determined by the program faculty and/or by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Academic Misconduct (plagiarism, falsifying data)

It is imperative to uphold the highest standards of honesty and integrity as a graduate student. In situations where uncertainty arises, seek clarification and allow yourself adequate time to address concerns before assignments come due. Any acts of dishonesty will be promptly reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (OSCCS), the Experimental Program Coordinator, and the Director of the Graduate School. For more info on academic dishonesty see the [EMU Student Conduct Code](#).

Any form of academic dishonesty may result in an “E” in the course and a referral for disciplinary action. This will be strictly enforced.

NOTE: All forms of plagiarism are not acceptable. This section clarifies the program's stance on two specific types of plagiarism students may not be familiar with: patchworking and daisy-chaining.

Patchworking is defined as taking sentences from a number of sources, patching them together with minor alterations in wording and providing a summary citation (rather than direct quote). This process becomes a “patchwork” when such minor alterations and summary quotes are used in series without any original synthesis or contribution by the student author. Daisy-chaining is the direct quotation version of patchworking where sentence after sentence represents a direct quote from references with little contribution or synthesis by the student. Both patchworking and daisy-chaining will be treated as plagiarism in this program. As graduate students you are expected to be at a higher level of development in your academic writing than undergraduates. Thus, while

patchworking may be considered a “grey area” of plagiarism for undergraduate writing, it is unacceptable at the graduate level. Patchworking and daisy-chaining represent failures to engage with and comprehend material at the graduate level and may be treated as academic misconduct. It is the student’s responsibility to complete written assignments early enough to obtain feedback from the [University Writing Center](#) or other feedback mechanisms made available by an instructor.

Grade Grievance Policy

EMU’s [Grade Grievance Procedure](#) provides each student with the opportunity to appeal formally a final grade in a course because they believe that the grade has been awarded capriciously or unfairly. Capricious or unfair-grading may include, but is not limited to, the assignment of a course grade to a student:

- On some basis other than relevant performance in the course;
- By resorting to standards different from those which were applied to other students in that course;
- By an unreasonable and/or unannounced substantial departure from the instructor’s previously articulated standards.

Your written grievance must describe specifically what the perceived capricious or unfair action(s) are. You will need evidence/documentation to support this allegation. The instructor of the course with the grieved final grade must receive a copy of the written grievance petition as part of the Step 1 including the appended student supporting documentation at the time the Step 1 petition is submitted.

Importantly, the grade grievance procedure is not for situations in which a student does not like the final grade, just wants a few more points, or if they do not like the instructor’s grading standards that were applied fairly to all students in the class. If a student earns 399.4 points in a course and needs an even 400 for a B, the 0.6 points are not grieve-able no matter how much that tiny shortfall frustrates the student.

The student handbook specifically notes in the introductory section (Section A) of its Grade Review & Grievance Procedures: “This process does not allow for disputes about the grading of individual exams or assignments during the semester. Where such disputes arise the student should contact the instructor immediately.”

The grade grievance procedure has specific timelines and steps that must be followed for the relevant procedures to be followed. Students in the program may not request a closed hearing of their grievance in Step 2 of the process. The hearings need to be open so the Experimental Program Coordinator and BACB VCS Coordinator can be present and be aware of any concerns that may impact program accreditation.

If you have difficulty determining whether you have adequate grounds for a grade grievance, please consult the EMU [Office of the Ombuds](#). They are there to be a resource for students contemplating decisions like this and this office can give you guidance regarding whether you have adequate

grounds for filing a grievance at the next step.

Appeal Process

A student whose progress has been found to be Unsatisfactory and who has been either recommended for probation/remediation or dismissal by the program faculty may appeal. See the Graduate Catalog for complete EMU [Academic Probation & Dismissal Policies](#).

Graduate School Requirements

Be sure to reference the EMU [Graduate School Academic Policies and Processes](#) for the current requirements. Graduate school requirements are implemented immediately unless otherwise noted in the policy manual.

Time to Degree

The Experimental Program is designed to be completed in five full-time semesters of study with the Thesis project serving as the variable that determines whether additional time is required. The EMU graduate school will only accept graduate credits that have been completed within six years of the date of graduation. Courses older than this will need to be repeated.

Incompletes

Please see the EMU [Graduate School Academic Policies and Processes](#). In most cases it is more appropriate for a student to withdrawal (see below) from a course than request an incomplete when they have missed a substantial amount of the course due to illness, legal complications, family crisis, or mandatory changes in a work schedule after a semester started. Even when students meet university criteria for an incomplete request, instructors are not required to provide the option of “incomplete” to

students. Thus, even if a student meets university criteria for an incomplete request, this request is granted at the instructor's discretion based on their judgment of what is appropriate for their course.

Withdrawal

Please see the EMU [Graduate School Academic Policies and Processes](#). As noted above, there are [Late Withdrawal Procedures](#) a student can file an appeal for when they have missed a substantial amount of the course due to illness, legal complications, family crisis, or mandatory changes in a work schedule after a semester started.

Stop-Out Policy

Students in good standing with a minimum grade point average of "B" or 3.0 have the option to request a leave of absence or a "stop-out" from the program. It is essential to emphasize that there are no exceptions to the graduate school's policy, which stipulates that all courses contributing to the degree must be finished within six years from the date of graduation. A "stop-out" or leave of absence does not extend this time limit for students.

Students who apply for a "stop-out" must provide the program coordinator with updated contact information to ensure they can be reached during their absence. Students must update the Experimental Program Coordinator of their enrollment status in advance of every subsequent semester (i.e., every four months).

Note: If stopping out in the middle of a semester, students must follow university policies related to withdrawing and contact both their current instructors and the Experimental Program Coordinator.

Academic Probation

Students will be placed on academic probation if, at the conclusion of any semester, their cumulative EMU grade point average in graduate credit courses falls below 3.0. It's important to note that students must complete a minimum of six graduate credit hours at EMU before becoming subject to academic probation. The Graduate School communicates students' probationary status in writing each semester.

Once placed on probation, enrollment is allowed only on a semester-by-semester basis until the probation is lifted. While the Graduate School permits students to remain on probation for up to three enrollment periods (or three semesters) before returning to good standing, the Experimental Program establishes a more rigorous requirement. To regain good standing within the Experimental Program, students must achieve a 3.0 GPA within two concurrent enrollment periods, spanning two semesters.

For students on probation who do not attain good standing by the end of the second enrollment period, they will face dismissal from the Experimental Program. Notification of dismissal will be

conveyed in writing.

Continuous Enrollment

Students completing a master's thesis are required to maintain continuous enrollment every semester of the normal academic year (Winter, Fall) until the requirements of the thesis are completed. Qualifying courses for continuous enrollment may involve either a minimum of one thesis credit hour (PSY 692) or a graduate level content course from the EMU Psychology Department. All thesis proposals (see above) must include an appendix that specifies summer semester thesis workload expectations for the student. If this appendix specifies that summer workload expectations for the thesis require continuous enrollment via additional thesis credits, failure to enroll in thesis credits will result in the project being turned over to the mentor and the thesis being terminated. See the Mandatory Thesis sub-section 7 of this handbook for further details.

Program Requirements beyond Graduate School Requirements

In situations where the Experimental Psychology Program policy is more stringent than the EMU Graduate School policy, the program policy supersedes the Graduate School policy.

GA/TA OPPORTUNITIES

Graduate assistantships provide financial support (tuition scholarships and stipend) and experiential learning experiences. Consequently, these assistantships are highly competitive. They are typically available for up to two years (four enrollment periods), subject to the recommendation of an academic department and approval of the Graduate School. Full-time assistantships provide the following benefits:

- Up to 18 credit hours of tuition per fiscal year (Tuition benefits are prorated for part-time assistantships and for G.A.s beginning their appointments after the start of the semester).
- Library privileges and a 10% discount on purchases at the University bookstore.
- Stipend (about \$9000 per year).
- Valuable teaching and research experience.

While there are a limited number of graduate assistantships in the psychology department, additional EMU graduate assistantship opportunities can be found at:

http://www.emich.edu/graduate/financial_assistance/assistantships.php

These additional positions can be searched for at:

<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/emichedu>