

DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY
Focus Area: Social and Cognitive Processes
Department of Psychology–University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Arkansas

The Doctoral Program in Experimental Psychology offers graduate training leading to the Ph.D. degree. The goals of our training program are: (1) to provide training in the scientific method and the basic research skills needed for the graduate to engage in research in experimental psychology; (2) to provide training within a particular content area, so that by the time of graduation, a student will have begun developing an independent program of research in a particular content area; and (3) to provide training and experience relevant to the goals and career aspirations of the student. For those interested in continuing in the academic area, this experience would typically include teaching experience as well as research training.

We believe that to be a competent researcher or practitioner in any area of psychology, one must first have a solid background in the broad content matter of psychology. We also believe that the best way to become a competent researcher or practitioner is to have hands-on experience. The academic courses, research experiences, and teaching or practical experiences offered by our program are designed to develop both academic and research competence.

Program Delineation

The first two years of the Experimental Training Program have been structured to provide students with the opportunity to develop as scholars and researchers. All students take a sequence of required courses that have been selected to provide a firm foundation of knowledge in the basic subject areas of psychology. Students also participate in the research process from the beginning of their graduate career. To this end, each student has a faculty advisor/mentor whose area of research is of interest to the student. This faculty member guides the integration of the student into the research process during the first two years by means of a two-semester Research Practicum sequence, participation in ongoing research, and work on the Master’s thesis. A model program for the first two years is shown below.

YEAR 1	
Fall	Spring
Inferential Statistics	Advanced Descriptive Statistics
Advanced Physiological Psychology	Advanced Social Psychology
Theories of Learning	Advanced Developmental Psychology
Research Practicum	Research Practicum

YEAR 2	
Fall	Spring
Perception	Cognition
Seminar	Seminar
Masters Thesis	Masters Thesis

Typically a student will begin work on his or her thesis proposal during the summer following the first year of study, and a thesis committee can be formed early in the fall semester of the second year. The committee usually consists of a student’s major advisor and at least two additional members from within the department. Additional committee members from outside the department may be appointed if they have particular expertise to contribute. If the student progresses on schedule, the student’s second year will culminate with the awarding of a Master’s degree and a Master’s hood at the May graduation ceremony.

After satisfactory completion of the required courses and the Master’s thesis, an advisory committee is formed, usually consisting of three members of the Psychology faculty. This committee tailors the remainder of the

program to meet the student's professional goals and scholarly and research orientation. The third year of the program gives the student the opportunity to develop depth within some particular area of research in psychology. This concentration is usually obtained through a selection of courses and seminars on advanced topics, and by conducting research.

Following successful completion of the third year work and the doctoral candidacy examination, the student may begin work on a dissertation. Again, if the student progresses on schedule, the dissertation and subsequent oral defense will be completed during the fourth year, at which time the Doctor of Philosophy degree and hood may be awarded.

The above summarizes the more formal aspects of the Experimental Psychology training program. Acquisition of knowledge through text and lectures, and synthesis through discussion, papers, and research experience, are not the only avenues of learning open to the student. In addition, more informal reading and discussion groups, research discussion groups, invited speakers and colloquia, professional conventions, and departmental social events will take place regularly throughout the student's training. Students are expected to take advantage of these less formal learning opportunities, as they are integral to professional development. Moreover, the close personal working relationships between students and faculty, as well as between beginning and advanced graduate students, serve as important means by which students and faculty grow personally and professionally.

Financial Support

Departmentally-administered teaching and research assistantships are available to students in the Experimental Psychology program. These assistantships currently pay stipends of approximately \$9000 for the nine-month academic year plus remission of tuition and most fees. Supplemental fellowships of at least \$10,000 are available to qualified applicants on a competitive basis. In addition, some summer support is currently available in the form of summer research or teaching assistantships to qualified students. We also provide support for research and travel to conferences.

In the past, the department has given highest priority to supporting all qualified returning students who have requested aid. In recent years, however, we have been able to support all incoming students and all qualified returning students for four academic years.

Total Graduate Program

The Doctoral Program in Experimental Psychology is an integral part of the total graduate program within the Department of Psychology. The department webpage (<http://www.uark.edu/depts/psyc/>) contains additional information regarding the Psychology Graduate Program in general, the Experimental Program in particular, and detailed information about our application procedures. Faculty research areas and the focus area in Social and Cognitive Processes are also described on the department webpage. These sources of information should give you a clear picture of our training program and philosophy, and allow you to judge whether the training we offer is congruent with your needs, aspirations, and goals.

Additional information is available from

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