

Revision October 17, 2008 ; Approved by C&N Faculty

Cognition and Neuroscience Training Area Rules and Guidelines for Graduate Study

These rules and guidelines supplement those that apply to all areas of the Department of Psychological Sciences of the University of Missouri. Students should refer to the Graduate Student Handbook for general department- and campus-wide policies and requirements.

1. Each graduate student should work closely with a faculty advisor from the Cognition & Neuroscience Training Committee (CNTC) to develop a research program. In some cases, two or more faculty may co-advise a student, with one faculty member taking the role of the primary advisor. A co-advisor may be a faculty member outside of the CNTC. Students should consult with their faculty advisor regularly on their research activities, academic goals, degree plan and course selection.

A student is free to switch from one advisor to another if the faculty member is interested in taking the student. There should be no repercussions for asking to switch from one advisor to another.

2. Students are required to enroll in the research seminar Psychological Sciences 9120 (*Studies in Physiological Psychology*) every semester, unless the student has taken a leave of absence. It is possible to obtain a waiver by majority CNTC faculty vote under special circumstances.

3. Students are required to complete with a passing grade Psychological Sciences 9110 (*Studies in Experimental Psychology*), a graduate seminar with topics that vary from one semester to the next, at least three times before the completion of comprehensive exams. Students must enroll for 3 hours. At the instructor's discretion, first-year students may complete a reduced requirement for passing the course and enroll for 1 hour.

4. Students are strongly encouraged to publish their research in peer-reviewed academic journals and to present their research at regional, national and/or international professional meetings.

5. Each student is expected to give one oral research presentation every year after the first year. The presentation must last at least 20 minutes. If the student has no research to report, it is still possible to present research plans or a relevant literature review. This oral research presentation can also be given at a regional, national or international professional conference. The presentation can also be given during Psychological Sciences 9120.

6. Students are encouraged to seek research funding, for example by applying for federal predoctoral grants. Such an application will be taken into account in yearly evaluations,

and will be evaluated positively as a step in professional development even if the grant is unsuccessful.

7. Students who wish to go on to an academic career are encouraged to apply for the Teaching of Psychology mentorship program.

8. It is generally expected that Masters' thesis will be completed and defended by the end of the third academic year, although extensions can be granted by the CNTC. It is desirable if the thesis can be completed in the second year. The CNTC retains the right to dismiss a student from the program for not completing the requirements for the thesis by the end of the third year.

9. The nature and scope of comprehensive examinations is up to the committee along with the student. A typical model includes at least one day of closed book written questions that is followed with an oral examination by the examination committee members. Other procedures may be adopted by individual examination committees.

10. It is generally expected that Ph.D. dissertations will be completed and defended by the end of the fifth or sixth year. This does not imply that funding is guaranteed for the entire time necessary to complete the degree; it may or may not be provided or guaranteed. Continuing for longer than six years is possible but is generally not encouraged and requires the permission of the training area faculty. The CNTC retains the right to dismiss a student from the program for not completing the requirements for the dissertation by the end of the sixth year.

11. Student progress is evaluated yearly by the CNTC faculty on the basis of the web-based assessment required by the MU Graduate School. In the second half of the spring semester students should provide their primary advisor with the written self-evaluation required by the Graduate School, a summary of course grades (e.g., unofficial transcript), and an updated curriculum vitae indicating scientific publications and presentations. Students should carefully prepare documents and provide all required information along with additional material that could be used for faculty evaluation.

Each student will be evaluated by the entire CNTC faculty based on the information provided by the student and on faculty observations of student performance. Students will be evaluated in the following areas, (1) progress toward completing the degree requirement, (2) efforts in the laboratory, (3) performance in the classroom, (4) demonstration of scientific competence, (4) applicable teaching activities, and (5) fulfillment of obligations (e.g., responsibilities as a teaching assistant). A positive evaluation will be given when the student's efforts and achievements are reasonable for their year in the program. Students who do not meet faculty expectations will be provided with suggestions for improvement and goals that are expected to be met in the upcoming academic year. Consistent failure to meet expectations will lead to dismissal from the program.

A written performance evaluation will be provided to the student through the Graduate School's web-based assessment system. Students will have the opportunity to respond in writing to the faculty evaluation. Subsequently, the completed evaluation must be signed by the student and the primary advisor, and the signed evaluations must be submitted to the Department.