

Program of Study in Developmental Psychology

Department of Psychology

University of Missouri -- Columbia

September 2015

The primary goal of the developmental faculty is to train developmental scientists for research and teaching at the university level. At the heart of this training is a research apprenticeship in the lab of your primary advisor. During this time, you will develop expertise in the research methodology, literature, and critical questions in your area of expertise and by the time of the dissertation you will be prepared to conduct independent and substantive research in your area of expertise. The apprenticeship is augmented with required course work in statistics, core areas of psychology, and, of course, developmental psychology. The course work is to provide the content background and technical expertise needed to conduct high-quality developmental research, and, unlike undergraduate studies, should not be considered an end in and of itself.

Course Work

In addition to thesis research, the awarding of the MA degree requires 30 hours of course work in psychology, some of which will include research hours (Psychology 8050) accrued during the completion of the thesis. In addition to passing a comprehensive examination and completing the dissertation research, the awarding of the Ph.D. degree requires at least 83 hours of course work, much of which will be research hours, that is, Psychology 8050 and Psychology 8090 (taken while conducting the thesis/dissertation project). In addition to research hours, the Department requires at least 12 hours of course work in core areas of psychology (4 courses), 9 hours in statistics (3 courses), and 24 hours in developmental psychology, some of which will overlap with the core/distribution requirements. Students who are interested in a research career are encouraged to complete the requirements for the minor in Psychological Statistics and Methods, which requires 9 additional hours of statistics in the Psychology Department (3 courses) and 6 hours in the Statistics Department (2 courses).

Research Ethics

As scientists in training, it is important to understand the ethical issues that must be considered when conducting, reporting, and conceiving scientific research. To achieve these goals, all students will be required to enroll in a one-semester research ethics course at the beginning of their first year (Psychology 8910).

In conducting a research project, care must be taken to ensure the physical and psychological safety of research participants. All projects must be reviewed and approved by the University's Institutional Review Board before engaging in the research activities. It is also important, especially in conducting research with children, to monitor the well-being of

participants while they are engaged in the project and terminate any activities that appear to create undue distress or might result in other harmful outcomes.

Accuracy in the analysis and reporting of scientific research is also of utmost importance. Science is essentially an honor system that is based on the trust of your colleagues. Misrepresenting or misreporting the results of your research is a violation of this trust and can not only damage your reputation as a scientist, it can result in other scientists wasting valuable time and resources in attempts to replicate or follow up on misreported findings. Finally, the ideas and the empirical testing and verification of these ideas are the currency of one's reputation as a scientist. In the conception and reporting of your research, it is important to acknowledge the work of other scientists that have contributed to the area and it is important not to represent the contributions of other scientists as your own.

Graduate Courses and Requirements

	<u>Semester Completed</u>	<u>Grade</u>
<i>Ethics and Professional Issues</i> (Psy 8910)	_____	_____
<i>Class A Core/Distribution Curriculum</i> (9 hours)*		
Abnormal (Psy 8510, 8520, or 8530)	_____	_____
Biological (Psy 8210)	_____	_____
Cognitive (Psy 8110)	_____	_____
Developmental (Psy 8410, 8420, 8430, 8440)	_____	_____
Motivation/Personality (Psy 8610, 8620)	_____	_____
Social (Psy 8310)	_____	_____

*3 of 6 courses must be completed

Note: Developmental Students are required to take a Developmental Core/Distribution course, and either a Cognitive Core/Distribution course or a Core/Distribution course in Motivation/Personality or Social, depending on whether the student's emphasis is on cognitive development or social development. Note that other courses may count as core/distribution courses if an area decides to offer them.

Statistics Requirements (9 hours)

	<u>Semester Completed</u>	<u>Grade</u>
Advanced Psychological Statistics I (Psy 8710)	_____	_____
Advanced Psychological Statistics II (Psy 8720)	_____	_____
Third Psych. Statistics Course (Psy 9330, 9710, 9715, 9720, 9725, 9730, 9735)	_____	_____

Note: Other courses may be counted for the third statistics courses but must have prior departmental approval in order to count.

Additional Requirements for Minor in Psychological Statistics (Optional)

Advanced Techniques in Psychological Statistics (Psy 9710)	_____	_____
Latent Variable Data Analysis (Psy 9720)	_____	_____
Sixth Psychological Statistics Course	_____	_____
First Out-Of-Department Course*	_____	_____
Second Out-Of-Department Course*	_____	_____

*Recommend 2 of these 3 courses, Nonparametric Statistical Methods (Stat 7210), Sampling Techniques (Stat 7310), or Experimental Design (Stat 7540).

*Class B Area of Concentration (Developmental) Requirements (24 hours)**

	<u>Semester Completed</u>	<u>Grade</u>
<i>Required Courses (9 Hours)</i>		
Psychology of Development (Psy 8410)	_____	_____
Cognitive Development (Psy 8420)	_____	_____
Social and Emotional Development (Psy 8440)	_____	_____

*Note that any of these three courses (Psy 8410, 8420, 8440) can also be used to satisfy one of the core/distribution requirements)

Psychology 8090/9090 (thesis/dissertation)	_____	_____
Psychology 8090/9090 (thesis/dissertation)	_____	_____
Psychology 8090/9090 (thesis/dissertation)	_____	_____
Psychology 8090/9090 (thesis/dissertation)	_____	_____
Psychology 8090/9090 (thesis/dissertation)	_____	_____
Psychology 8090/9090 (thesis/dissertation)	_____	_____

Comprehensive Examination

As noted in the Departmental Graduate Student Handbook, to achieve candidacy for the doctoral degree, a comprehensive examination must be passed. The exam cannot be taken before two years of residency and should be passed before work on the dissertation is begun. The typical candidate will complete all work related to the comprehensive exam or papers by the end of the fourth year.

Students can choose either the exam option or the paper option for the comprehensive exam.

For the exam option, students will take four two-hour exams (for 8 exam hours total). Typically, students will take two of these exams (4 exam hours total) on one day and the other two exams (4 exam hours total) on the following day. In preparation for the exam, students will study four reading lists (one reading list for each exam). Each reading list will consist of approximately 15-20 empirical papers (or an equivalent amount of reading, e.g., if a book or sections of books are assigned). The reading lists will be developed by the student's committee, which typically will include four faculty members. If the student chooses four topics that map onto each of the faculty member's area of expertise, then each faculty member will generate a reading list for the student. If the student chooses four topics that are more closely related to their own and their advisor's area of study, then the advisor will generate the reading lists. Note, though, that the goal of the exam is to expand students' knowledge beyond readings with which they are already familiar. The advisor and/or committee members may choose to enlist the student's involvement in generating the lists. The student and committee will meet to discuss and approve the reading lists once they are generated. The student will then have up to six months to study the readings before taking the exams. At the exam, students will have two hours to write answers to questions about each reading list (typically one to five questions will be given per list). The student may use notes/articles during the exam. After the exam, a meeting with the committee will be scheduled for the student to defend the written answers. Depending on the quality of the written and oral answers, students may be asked to re-take and/or re-defend one or more of the four exams.

For the paper option, students will produce a total of 60 pages of text (excluding references). Students can choose to write: one 60-page paper, one 40-page paper and one 20-page paper, two 30-page papers, or three 20-page papers. The topic of the paper(s) can focus on the students' primary area of interest (e.g., in preparation for the dissertation project) or on other areas of study within developmental psychology. Students must produce outlines for the papers and propose them at a meeting of their faculty committee. After this meeting, students have up to six months to complete the papers and meet with the committee for a defense. Students may be asked to re-write the papers or portions of the papers. After approval of the outlines, papers are to be written independently by the student (e.g., the faculty mentor should not comment on drafts).

Note that the options above are available to students who received the grade pattern of three "A"s or two "A"s and one "B" for the core developmental sequence (Psychology of Development, Cognitive Development, Social Development). For students who received any other grade pattern, they must take the exam option with reading lists and test questions developed by the Developmental Faculty. The exam will cover basic topics in the areas of cognitive development, social development, and developmental theory. Students with three "A"s or with two "A"s and one "B" in the three core developmental classes also may choose this option if they wish.