

# Student Handbook

Master of Science Program in Educational Psychology

at Georgia State University

Department of Educational Psychology and Special  
Education

This document has been prepared as an overview for the convenience of the student. It is not intended, nor should it be used, as a substitute for the careful reading of the Graduate Bulletin and other official documents of the College of Education. It is the student's responsibility to know about, and keep up with, requirements for his or her program. The official document for your program is the College of Education Graduate Bulletin for the academic year in which you were admitted.

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## Introduction

Study in educational psychology involves the application of the principles of psychology to the systematic study of education. A major in educational psychology allows a student to emphasize such content areas as learning, instruction, life-span development, applied behavior analysis, cognition, and socialization. The Educational Psychology program prepares students to pursue a variety of career paths, including research, evaluation, and the applied practice of a number of disciplines. Those students who are currently certified or licensed in such fields as teaching, nursing, speech pathology, and physical therapy can further develop their expertise in these fields by studying the psychological principles of development and learning.

### **Entrance Requirements and Admission to the Program**

Applications accepted for summer and fall must be received by February 1. Applications accepted for spring must be received by October 1.

Requirements for applicants include: Applicants must have earned a grade point average of not less than 2.75 calculated on all undergraduate work attempted in which letter grades were awarded. Test scores from the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) must be from an examination taken within the last five years prior to the term of admission to the program. Each applicant must present a minimum combined Verbal and Quantitative score of 900 to be considered for admission (minimum 400 each Verbal and Quantitative). In addition, a goals statement must also be submitted of 300 to 500 words. Additional requirements include at least two letters of recommendation, undergraduate transcripts, and a resume. Please see the current GSU Graduate Catalog for a complete list of requirements.

### **Concurrent Master/s Ph.D. Admission**

At the time of admission, students with a bachelor's degree who know they will continue in the EPY Doctoral Program may enroll concurrently in the M.S. and Ph.D. programs. The applicant for concurrent Master's/Ph.D. admissions must have an undergraduate grade point average of 3.3 and meet all other admission requirements for the Doctoral Program in Educational Psychology. Students who wish to apply for concurrent admission are only accepted at the time that doctoral admissions are accepted, which is March 1 of every year.

Concurrently enrolled master's students must choose the thesis option rather than the project option. Upon completion of the master's program the concurrent student is automatically enrolled in the EPY Ph.D. program.

### **Advisory Committees**

On admission, students will be assigned a temporary advisor. Typically the temporary advisor becomes chair of the committee, but many students choose a different faculty member in EPY to become permanent chair. In either case the person chosen to chair the committee should have interests that are congruent with the student's interests. Study for the M. S. major in Educational Psychology is guided by a committee of three faculty members. After completing nine semester hours of work, the student must select two faculty members to be on his or her advisory committee. These two faculty members must approve the

student's approved planned program of study. A third faculty member must be added before the student begins work on the master's thesis or master's project. Two of the three committee members (including the chair) must be from the Educational Psychology program.

### **Continuous Enrollment Requirement**

Graduate students must register for at least a total of six hours of coursework during any period of three consecutive terms (fall, spring, and summer) until completion of degree. In order to graduate students must be actively enrolled in coursework in the program of study during the term they finish degree requirements for graduation. For the most up-to-date continuous enrollment policy, go to current students at: <http://education.gsu.edu/oa/>.

## **Program of Study**

There is a minimum requirement of 36 hours of graduate credit. All credit hours are to be taken with the consent of the advisory committee.

### **A. Professional Studies (15 HOURS)**

Educational Research (6 hours)	EPRS 7900 Methods of Research in Education, and additional course with the EPRS prefix.
Social Foundations of Education (3 hours)	Select one course with the EPSF prefix

#### ***For student's completing a master's thesis:***

EPY 7990 Master's Thesis (Requirement is 6 hours)

#### ***For student's completing a master's project:***

EPY 7990 Master's Thesis (Requirement is 3 hours)

Select one additional course from the Educational Psychology Program (3 hours)

### **B. MAJOR (Required 15 Hours)**

The student selects a minimum of 15 hours of course work in the field of Educational Psychology. At least 12 hours must be with the EPY prefix, with the remaining course work highly related to educational psychology.

### **C. Electives (Required 6 hours)**

The student selects six semester hours of program related course work with consent with his or her advisor. The purpose of the elective hours is to enable a student to create a program of study to fit his or her individual intellectual interests.

A copy of the planned program to be completed by the student and advisory committee is available in the EPSE departmental office.

### **Comprehensive Examination**

Students in Educational Psychology fulfill the College's Comprehensive Examination requirement by both (1) completing a thesis or project and (2) completing an oral examination.

The master's thesis is either a basic or applied research project conducted by the student under the supervision of the chair of his or her advisory committee. The project generally consists of a comprehensive review of the literature on a selected topic. A written prospectus describing in detail the proposed thesis or project must be submitted to and approved by the chair of the committee before being submitted to the full committee. Following approval by the committee chair, the prospectus must be approved by all three members of the student's advisory committee in a meeting with the student before the work is begun.

For those pursuing the thesis option, at the prospectus defense students are required to fully disclose to their committee and to get the committee's approval for their plans for data collection, including the timeline, the method, the people involved in data collection, and the potential use of previously collected data related to the thesis. Only after passing the proposal defense and receiving approval from the GSU IRB may students begin to pursue participants.

As the thesis or project nears completion, the chair of the committee must approve the written document before it is submitted to the entire committee. This process often involves multiple drafts so it is wise to plan for this accordingly.

On completion of the thesis or project, each student must complete an oral examination of approximately two hours. The examination will be administered by the student's advisory committee, and it will focus on the thesis or project work.

### **Human Subjects Review**

All research involving human subjects requires review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). IRB forms and instructions are available at <http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwosp/Compliance2002/web-irb/index.htm>.

### **Non-Degree and Transfer Credit**

Sometimes prior to admission to Master of Science Program in Educational Psychology, a student may be admitted as a non-degree student. To be considered for non-degree status, a student must have an undergraduate GPA of 2.5 or higher, submit a relevant goals statement, and transcript. A maximum of nine semester hours may be applied to the M.S. program as a non-degree student. Check the College of Education Catalog at <http://education.gsu.edu/main/COECatalogs.htm> for details about non-degree status.

Students must take a minimum of 27 semester hours of course work at Georgia State University. This means that a maximum of nine hours of transfer credit may be applied to a 36 hour M. S. program. Occasionally, a student may be in a position to request that both non-degree credit taken at GSU, and transfer credit from another institution be applied to the Master of Science planned program in Educational Psychology. However, all non-degree

and transfer credit that a student wishes to apply to the M.S. program in Educational Psychology must be approved by the student's advisory committee in advance. The College of Education's Petition to Transfer Graduate Credit is available from the College of Education's Office of Academic Assistance available on line at <http://education.gsu.edu/oa/>.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation of a student's performance is continuous and involves considerations of a student's performance in all academic settings. Only courses in which the student earns a grade of "B" or higher will be counted toward degree fulfillment. Failure to make progress in a timely manner or inappropriate or unprofessional conduct may result in the student's withdrawal from a course or the program. If such removal from a course is necessary, the student will receive the grade of "F" for the course and may be judged ineligible to re-enroll in the course.

### **Degree Completion**

The minimum acceptable grade for all course work is B. Students must earn an overall grade point average of 3.00 calculated on all graduate course work attempted. No course work may be more than six calendar years old at the time of graduation.

The student must submit an application for graduation with the Office of the Registrar at least two semesters prior to the expected date of graduation. Students should plan on graduation during fall or spring semester because many faculty are not under contract in the summer.