

Student Handbook

Master of Science Program in Educational Psychology

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 and Human Development. It is the student's responsibility to know about requirements and any revisions for his or her program. The official document for your program is the College of Education and Human Development Graduate Bulletin for the academic year in which you were admitted.

Department of Learning Sciences

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Introduction

Educational Psychology is the application of psychological principles to the systematic study of education. This degree emphasizes the areas of learning, instruction, life-span development, cognition, and socialization. Our program prepares students to pursue careers including research, evaluation, and applied practice. Students already pursuing careers as educators, therapists, and health professionals can further develop their expertise by studying the psychology of development and learning.

Advisory Committees

A committee of three faculty members guides study for the M.S. in Educational Psychology. Upon admission, students will be assigned an adviser. The adviser usually becomes chair of the committee, but some students choose a different faculty member in Educational Psychology for this position. The chair of the committee should have similar academic interests as the student. After completing nine semester hours of work, the student will select another faculty member to be on the committee. These two faculty members must approve the student's planned program of study. A third faculty member will be added before the student begins work on the master's thesis, master's project, or master's examination. Two of the three committee members (including the chair) must hold an appointment in the Educational Psychology program.

Continuous Enrollment Requirement

Graduate students must maintain enrollment totaling 6 hours (or more) over all consecutive three semester periods (including summers). To graduate, students must be actively enrolled in coursework in the program of study during the term they finish degree requirements for graduation.

Program of Study

There is a minimum requirement of 36 hours of graduate credit. All classes require the consent of the advisory committee. All students must have a signed program of study by the end of their first year that will be placed in their file. Students who do not will receive a non-compliance letter, which will also be placed in their file.

A. Professional Studies (15 HOURS)

Educational Research (6 hours):

- EPRS 7900 Methods of Research in Education
- Any course with the EPRS prefix or EPY 8850.

Social Foundations of Education (3 hours):

- Select one course with the EPSF prefix.

For students completing a master's thesis:

- EPY 7990 Master's Capstone (Requirement is 6 hours)

For students completing a master's project OR master's examination:

- EPY 7990 Master's Capstone (Requirement is 3 hours)
- One course from the Educational Psychology Program (3 hours)

B. MAJOR (Required 15 Hours)

The student selects at least 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. During their first semester in the program, students must enroll in EPY 8961 (Professional Development Seminar in Educational Psychology - 3 hours). Advanced students preparing to start their project or thesis are encouraged to take EPY 8010 (Professional Studies in Educational Psychology – 3 hours). Prerequisites for this course include two graduate methodological courses or consent of instructor.

C. Electives (Required 6 hours)

The student selects six semester hours of program-related course work with consent of his or her adviser. The purpose of the elective hours is to enable a student to personalize his or her program of study.

Comprehensive Examination

Students in Educational Psychology fulfill the college's Comprehensive Examination requirement by completing a master's (1) thesis, (2) project, or (3) examination.

1. 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. At the prospectus defense students are required to propose to their committee detailed 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 prospectus defense and receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Georgia State University (GSU) may students begin to pursue research participants.
2. The master's project consists of a comprehensive written review of literature on a selected topic. A written prospectus describing in detail the proposed project must be

submitted to and approved by all three members of the students' advisory committee before the work is begun.

For those pursuing the thesis or project options, 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.

3. The master's examination consists of a 4-hour, in-house written examination on a question or questions to be determined by the committee in collaboration with the student and advisor (see below for more information*).

On completion of the thesis, project, or written examination, 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, project, or written examination.

***Master's Examination Option**

Details concerning the examination are as follows:

- a. The exam will include one comprehensive question on a topic of interest to the student. It will be a reflective exam, asking the student to pull together what has been learned.
- b. The student and adviser will identify a body of literature on a topic of interest to the student. The student will develop an annotated bibliography (about 15 -20 references) that reflects the body of literature of their interest. Once the adviser has given approval, the student will present to their committee this annotated bibliography.
- c. At the committee meeting, as part of their presentation, the student will propose 3 possible exam questions. The committee without the student present will decide on a question informed by the student's presentation (annotated bib. and 3 questions) to the committee.
- d. Within 5 business days, students are given their exam question. Up to one month later they come in and type their answer on a computer (up to 4 hours). Failure to sit for the exam after a month of receiving the question is considered a failure.
- e. Orals as described above.
- f. The adviser and each committee member independently review the performance and grade via consensus. The test is graded within 3 weeks of taking the exam as pass/fail.

If a student fails the exam, they have to meet with the committee the following academic semester (fall or spring semester, only) to receive a new question. Only one failure is permissible and if a student fails twice, s/he is terminated from the program.

Human Subjects Review

All research involving human subjects requires appropriate certification of the student (CITI) and review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Certification requirements are available at <http://ursa.research.gsu.edu/training/human-subjects-education-and-training/>. IRB forms and instructions are available at <http://ursa.research.gsu.edu/human-subjects/>.

Non-Degree and Transfer Credit

Sometimes, prior to admission to the 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 and submit a relevant goals statement and transcript. A maximum of nine semester hours completed as a non-degree student may be applied to the M.S. program.

Students must take a minimum of 27 semester hours of course work at GSU. 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 earned at GSU and transfer credit from another institution, be applied to the M.S. 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. Information on how to petition to transfer graduate credit is available from the Office of Academic Assistance of the College of Education and Human Development.

Evaluation

Evaluation is continuous and involves consideration 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 members are not under contract in the summer.