UNL

Department of Psychology

Graduate Student Handbook

Fall 2024 Edition*

Updated 09-05-2024

*Previously the Graduate Student Handbook was updated every 3 or so years. Going forward, aspects of the handbook will become more of a "living" document where things will be updated more routinely as required. Any informational changes (e.g. new policies or forms at the graduate college, adding information that is available to you in other contexts but that we think would also be good to also include in the handbook, updates to names of people in department leadership positions, etc.) will be updated in the handbook immediately though a "new" version will not be circulated with each change. The grad handbook links on the graduate student resources page (https://psychology.unl.edu/resources-current-graduate-students) will list the date at which the handbook was last updated along with a summary of changes since the last update. We will also highlight the new changes in yellow (we have just removed the highlighting for the changes last made in Spring 2024). Major handbook updates (requiring input and approval from Grad EC) will happen less frequently and the most up-to-date information that is not in the handbook will also be found on the resources page.

Disclaimer: This Guidebook is intended to provide useful information for Department of Psychology graduate students. Although efforts are made to keep the Guidebook accurate and up to date, the information contained herein is subject to change and may be superseded by Department, Program, or University policies.

For comments or further information, please contact Jamie Longwell at: Jamie.longwell@unl.edu

Updates:

The most recent updates to the handbook are summarized below and highlighted in yellow in the document. Each time we update to new changes we will remove the previous highlights. Highlighting should not be taken as an indication that those sections are more important/relevant, it is just to denote new additions.

September 2024

-Added guidance on when to sign up for 999 credit rather than 996 credit. Please note that individual programs may have additional guidance on this but we are adding general guidance to try to prevent people from exceeding registration limits which can impact the Memorandum of Courses, Program of Studies, and in some cases student loans/aid for those who pursue those mechanisms.

-Added a quick note on deadlines for signing the contracts for funding positions (TA/RA/Community Placements, etc.)

-Added information and language relating to our Graduate Executive Committee which is taken from our Department Bylaws

-Deleted section on grievance committee and updated section to reflect our current department bylaws, including updating our internal conflict management procedures. Also inserted the information on Graduate Executive Committee, updated the grade appeals language and provide outlets for additional resources outside of the department when issues arise

April 2024

-added information regarding the Institute of Ethnic Studies graduate specialization opportunity to the Coursework and Other Requirements section. Full information on this opportunity is not in the Psychology handbook because it is offered and maintained outside of our department, but web links to the opportunity can be found in the online electronic version of the handbook in the Coursework and Other Requirements section and on the Resources for Current Graduate Students webpage in the Additional Graduate Training Opportunities section.

January 2024

-added paragraph to title page to explain how the Graduate Handbook will now become a living document that will be updated more regularly, similar note on first page of handbook (pages 1 and 3)

-updated description of the Options for the MERP project and clarified that some form of defense is required independent of which option you choose (page 8)

-updated information on graduate courses to note that some 800-level Psychology have now been approved for the Memorandum of Courses for the MA and/or Program of Studies for the doctoral degree. Full listing of those courses with approved offering/instructor pairings and information on how to request consideration of additional 800-level courses can be found on the Resources for Current Graduate Students webpage (pages 12-13)

-added a note about tuition waivers and the maximum amount of credit these cover (page 13)

-added a note about continuous registration in the rare case that the dissertation is completed while you are no longer a full-time student (page 14). **There are other considerations around this not outlined in the handbook and it is critical that you talk to both the Department Graduate Chair and the Office of Graduate Studies to fully understand all relevant variables in these situations.**

-Updated the information on annual review with a new naming convention for CVs and some other notes. This has also been moved up into the Evaluation, Annual Review, and Leaves of Absence section as it was previously in the "Other" section (page 17)

Welcome to Graduate School!

Graduate study begins in a manner that seems similar to undergraduate school. You take courses and strive to do well. But even at the beginning, the differences are apparent. You are invited to work closely with one or more faculty with whom you will develop close working relationships. You will have greater responsibility for self-initiated research and most of you will teach your own classes. Students in Clinical and or Law-Psychology will participate in practica under the guidance of experienced faculty supervisors. In this respect, your experience as a student is changing from classroom-based learning to becoming an independent scholar. As a graduate student, you will participate in the many and varied activities of our department – brown bag luncheons, colloquia, symposia, and social get-togethers. The relationships that you will develop with faculty and fellow students will be among the most memorable features of these years. We are excited that you are here and look forward to the talents that you bring to our learning and working together!

This handbook is a reference tool intended to help you make your way through graduate study. Although the handbook is designed to assist you, be aware that program requirements, deadlines, and procedures may change at any time. The goal is to provide you with an overview of what follows in graduate study so you can proceed onward with knowledge and confidence. You should always stay up to date on current policies and procedures from the various sources listed below. The official copy of this handbook has traditionally been updated every few years but going forward we are going to try to treat as a living document where we update important informational changes immediately (with dates of when changes were made). We will still publish official versions of the handbook every few years (and may include larger changes in there but those require input of the faculty and Graduate Executive Committee so cannot be done as quickly) but we hope the new model gives you the most up-to-date info possible.
When we are made aware of any changes at the program or college level, we will post them immediately on the Resources for Current Graduate Students webpage (https://psychology.unl.edu/resources-current-graduate-students). Between the handbook, resources page, and various other webpages linked throughout this document, you should be able to find all the up-to-date information you need. If you cannot locate something at any point, feel free to reach out to the Graduate Chair (Mike Dodd) or the Graduate Program Assistant (Jamie Longwell) directly with questions.

Sources of Information

There are many sources of good information and advice available to you. The Department of Psychology and the Office of Graduate Studies websites usually have the most up-to-date information and all of the various forms you will need. You will go most often to the department website for contact information for faculty, graduate students, and staff in the department or for specific departmental forms such as travel-related paperwork. The Graduate Studies website has all of the official forms to submit your program of studies, set up your supervisory committee, and graduation paperwork. The Graduate Studies Catalog provides considerable information

concerning graduate program requirements at UNL and is the final authority on all formal aspects of graduate study.

Perhaps the best sources of information and advice, however, are the people around you. Faculty members are happy to answer questions and provide guidance on anything you need to know, whether concerning course selection or presenting a paper. Fellow students are also excellent informants, especially about how things "really get done" in graduate school. Just as you will experience the pleasure of offering helpful guidance to junior students in the department when you are an advanced graduate student a few years from now, your fellow students are happy and willing to help you in any way they can.

Useful Websites

Department of Psychology: http://www.psychology.unl.edu

Office of Graduate Studies: http://www.unl.edu/gradstud

Graduate Catalog: http://go.unl.edu/gradcatalog

Resources for Current Students: https://psychology.unl.edu/resources-current-graduate-students

Graduate Education at the UNL Department of Psychology

History of the Department

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) has a deep and significant place in the history of psychology in the United States. If psychology dates its founding to Wilhelm Wundt's laboratory at the University of Leipzig in 1879, and the founding of psychology in the U.S. to William James's laboratory at Harvard several years later, psychology arrived at the UNL not long afterward. Harry K. Wolfe, a Nebraska native, obtained his undergraduate degree at the UNL and then traveled to Leipzig to become one of Wundt's first two doctoral students. At the close of his program, Wolfe returned to the UNL as a faculty member in the Department of Philosophy where, in 1889, he founded the first psychology laboratory in the U.S. devoted primarily to undergraduate instruction. As a consequence, the Department of Psychology at UNL was one of the first in the nation to celebrate its centennial, and the twin themes of research and undergraduate education continue to define our department's mission in the field.

UNL was thus an early center for psychological research because of Wolfe's work, and several presidents of the American Psychological Association (APA) received their undergraduate education at UNL. The department is nationally prominent also because of the Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, the oldest and one of the most visible annual symposia in psychology. Peruse the website and you will find that our Nebraska Symposium speakers have been many of

the most prominent scholars in psychology since the mid-20th century and continuing today. The Clinical Psychology program is one of the oldest APA-accredited programs in the country and the Law-Psychology Program is one of the first joint degree programs of its kind in the world. As you can tell, your new department has a tradition of firsts!

Current Programs in the Department

The UNL Department of Psychology has graduate programs in five areas: clinical, developmental, social and cognitive, law-psychology, and neuroscience and behavior. All students in law-psychology are jointly affiliated with one of the other programs, most often social and cognitive or clinical. All are research-intensive graduate programs with clinical students supplementing their training with preparation for clinical work, and law-psychology students obtaining advanced degrees in law as well as psychology. The department endorses a ***Mentoring Partnership Model*** of graduate training that involves graduate students in a variety of professional activities under the close supervision of faculty members.

As research becomes more interdisciplinary, faculty and graduate students increasingly find themselves working with faculty or using theories, methodologies and populations that cut across the traditional program divisions in psychology. Many faculty affiliate with more than one of the programs and/or are resident faculty at the [Center for Brain, Biology, and Behavior](#) (CB3). As a *hub* discipline, psychologists often collaborate with scholars from other disciplines including biology, political science, sociology, etc. We believe the opportunity for graduate students to develop their research within this interdisciplinary context is one of the strengths of our department.

Each graduate program area has a director or coordinator and a website. This is the most up-to-date information on each program.

Clinical (https://psychology.unl.edu/clinical-psychology-training-program/)
Program Director: Dave Hansen (will be Dennis McChargue beginning January 2023)

Developmental (https://psychology.unl.edu/devpro)
Program Coordinator: Lisa Crockett

Law-Psychology (https://psychology.unl.edu/law-psychology/)
Program Director: Dave Hansen

Neuroscience and Behavior (https://psychology.unl.edu/neuroscience-and-behavior)
Program Coordinator: Jeff Stevens

Social and Cognitive (https://psychology.unl.edu/social-and-cognitive/)
Program Coordinator: Mike Dodd

Independent of which area you are in, you are also going to want to get to know the Graduate Program Assistant, Jamie Longwell, as she will provide guidance and assistance on a number of things throughout your tenure here.

Planning Your Way Through Graduate School

Students and programs vary considerably on how long it takes to meet each milestone outlined below (e.g. MERP, forming your supervisory committee, etc.). Any specific years mentioned throughout this manual are to provide a general sequence of events. Look for program specific guidelines or speak with your advisor or program head to make sure that you are on track for your particular situation.

Getting Started on Research

Coursework acquaints you with the scientific literature and research methods of the field and enables you to develop other professional skills. But independent research is where your knowledge and skills are applied to advancing understanding of your area of interest. Your involvement in research will start your first week on campus.

Step 1: Developing a Working Relationship with Your Advisor

When you arrive on campus, you will enter a lab and begin to develop a working relationship with your advisor/mentor. Your advisor provides guidance for your research program. Many factors enter into a successful relationship with your advisor: the faculty member's research interests and background, style of mentoring students, availability, and their compatibility with the student are important considerations. Most students stay with the same advisor throughout their graduate program. However, a few students transition from one mentor to another as their interests and goals develop. Moreover, there is no expectation that you have only one faculty member with whom you work closely in research, and students commonly work with more than one faculty. The early mentoring relationship is an important first step in embarking on research during your first semester. Plan to meet regularly with your advisor, show up prepared, and take notes on what you need to accomplish next.

Step 2: Your First Research Project (known as the MERP) and thinking about your Memorandum of Courses

Though students in the Psychology program are accepted directly into the Ph.D. program (e.g., we do not offer a terminal Master's degree), students do earn their M.A. degree along the way (if you entered the program with a Master's degree, you will determine with your advisor whether you will still do a MERP or whether this will be waived). Your mentor helps to guide the

development of your first-year research project, called the MERP (Master's Equivalency Research Project). This is similar to a Master's thesis but most of our students do not do a formal thesis with the associated formality and paperwork (this will be very relevant in a moment when we discuss the memorandum of courses). You will sign up for PSYC 996 as the course credit for your MERP (please note that 996 is also the code you use for non-thesis research prior to Ph.D. candidacy and is not solely for the MERP) . The purpose of the MERP is simply to get you started in research. Thus, various kinds of projects can be considered. For some students, the MERP is their own, self-initiated research study on topics of special interest. For others, the MERP consists of undertaking a portion of a faculty member's ongoing research study, assuming responsibility for developing measures or designing analyses for a particular part of the research. The MERP can also be a secondary analysis of a research dataset that has been previously collected. Talk to your advisor about which type of MERP makes the most sense for you. Undertaking your own data collection can be challenging, but it provides the rewards of completing a study from beginning to end. It is easier to get started in collaborative research on a faculty member's ongoing project or conduct secondary data analysis and save the rest of the experience for a later project. Your advisor can guide you on the best path for you.

Once you have decided on a project in consultation with your advisor, talk with your advisor about how much of a formal proposal you should do. Some programs require a written proposal consisting of the Introduction, Method, and Plan for Analyses. Whether you do a formal written proposal or not, keep in mind that the MERP must be approved by your advisor and additional faculty member(s) as described below. Unlike the Ph.D. supervisory committee, which tends to be established in advance of a thesis project, it is not uncommon for faculty to be asked to review the MERP rather late in the lifespan of the project. If, however, you have identified the faculty who will also review your MERP ahead of time, it is good to keep them in the loop of what you are doing. Once your idea is approved, the next steps are to obtain any additional needed approvals (e.g., IRB or IACUC), conduct the research, and prepare a manuscript. For Developmental, Neuroscience and Behavior, and Social and Cognitive, the final MERP must be approved by your advisor and two other faculty members. Clinical students only require approval of the advisor and one additional faculty member for their MERP, given an additional program requirement (i.e., Clinical Comprehensive Exam) that satisfies the Master's requirements at the Graduate College level. Some programs also require an oral defense of the MERP, often as the oral exam for the Master's degree. In most programs, the format for the final manuscript is a journal article, appropriate for the journals in your research area. Depending on the outcome of the research, students are expected to present their MERP at a conference and submit a manuscript for publication. Although strongly encouraged, publication is not a prerequisite for meeting the MERP requirement. Please make sure you consult with your advisor, program coordinator, and/or your program handbook/training manual for the specific requirements in your program.

Students who arrive on campus with a thesis from a previous Master's degree may get the MERP requirement waived. The advisor and one additional graduate faculty member need to read the prior thesis and determine whether it meets our requirements. Inform the program director or coordinator if you meet the MERP requirement in this way. It is still important to immediately

get involved in research but you may have fewer formal hoops, such as a written proposal, to complete.

Memorandum of Courses

There is considerable variability in the type of project individuals engage in for the MERP and, unsurprisingly, this also means considerable variability in time to complete the MERP. Despite this, it is a good idea to complete your Memorandum of Courses form for the Masters relatively early, often in the spring of your first year of graduate study. The memorandum will help you to plan out which courses you are taking (particularly important in programs like Clinical which have far more course requirements for accreditation purposes), and it is important to have considered your MERP when submitting this form. Even if you complete the Memorandum at a point later than this, there are a few important things to keep in mind:

A) The Memorandum of Courses form for the Master's degree requires you to select between two options, A & B. Generally speaking, all Psychology students should select Option B. The verbiage for the options can be confusing as Option A suggests the project will be a thesis and B suggests that no thesis is required. Though some students may do a MERP that is more "thesis-like" (this is determined jointly with your advisor), Option A requires you to formally submit a thesis to graduate studies. There are various expenses and forms associated with that option (as well as formatting requirements). Option B does not require the thesis to be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies but does still require a formal defense (this is useful practice for the later PhD defense). So even in cases where you may think the project you are doing sounds more like Option A, it is always desirable to choose Option B. You will receive your Master's degree no matter which option is chosen. If you do choose Option A there are additional forms and requirements that can be found on the Graduate Studies [Steps to Completion](#) page.

B) Though there is variability in terms of how long it takes individuals to complete the MERP, it is a good idea to file your Memorandum of Courses relatively early for a few reasons. First, putting together the Memorandum will help you to map out your anticipated course of study (understanding that things might change if a course is not offered at a time that you can take it, but it is good to have a general sense of what you're hoping to do). Second, the Memorandum is technically supposed to be completed prior to completion of over one-half of required coursework. It is possible to submit later though this usually requires additional context/justification from your advisor. Please note that you cannot file a Memorandum and graduate in the same semester. Third, there is a limit on the number of courses that you can apply to your Memorandum at the Masters level (more on this in the next point below), and a certain number of credit hours need to be unique to the Ph.D. Though not all of you will be ready to file your Memorandum in the spring of your first year (and that's okay!), it is still something you should keep in mind to complete sooner rather than later.

C) In cases where your MERP has taken some time to complete, it may be the case that you have already completed far more credit hours than is allowed for the Master's Degree.

Even if this is the case, you should list no less than 30 hours (minimum required for the M.A. under the current options) and no more than 36 credit hours on the Memorandum of Courses for your Master's. As you progress to the Ph.D. level, there are a minimum number of credit hours that must be exclusive to the Ph.D. Some of the other courses/credit you have taken can subsequently be listed on the Program of Studies for the dissertation. You will be disadvantaging yourself considerably if you list anything more than 36 hours on the Memorandum for your MERP, even if you have already completed more than 36 credit hours, as it will leave you with additional hours to make up that are unique to doctoral study. When putting together the Program of Studies for your Ph.D., you can list courses that you took prior to the completion of the MERP, even if it was not listed on the Memorandum of Courses for your Masters.

D) Requests to change an approved Memorandum of Courses must be submitted by the student's major advisor via email to the Master's Programs Coordinator in Graduate Studies. DO NOT submit a new Memorandum of Courses.

Step 3: Get Involved in Other Research

The MERP inaugurates a graduate student's research career. As students are working on their MERP, they are typically getting involved in other research as well, either in the same lab or perhaps with another research team. By the time a student begins the dissertation, they should have experience with all phases of the research process (e.g., designing a new study, gathering original data, analyzing data, writing a report, and submitting it for publication). The conclusion of the MERP provides you with the opportunity to decide whether you want to continue with the research directions inaugurated with this project or move in other directions, perhaps with the assistance of a different faculty advisor. In short, it is all up to you how to proceed. But keeping involved in research is key, because in doing so your skills as a scientist grow and become refined.

Opportunities for Teaching

Many of you are planning careers that will include classroom teaching, either as a primary activity at a 4-year college, a component of a faculty position at a research university, or giving workshops or training in applied settings. There are numerous opportunities to prepare for teaching including coursework, teaching assistantships, and course instructor positions. PSYC 974 – Teaching Methods in Psychology is a department requirement that you will all take as part of your program of studies, typically your first fall on campus. The seminar is designed as an introduction and overview of issues concerning teaching philosophy, methods, and practical challenges.

Teaching Assistantships

TA duties vary widely depending on the course to which you are assigned. Some TAs include teaching labs or recitations. Others are mostly behind the scenes work such as grading and administrative work. All teaching assistantships offer opportunities to learn about the nuts and

bolts of teaching and working directly with undergraduate students. If your duties are mostly behind the scenes, many faculty members may ask you to provide a guest lecture or two in the class to get some classroom experience (and if this is not part of your duties but something you would be interested in obtaining experience with, you can ask the individual you are TAing for if they would be amenable to let you give a guest lecture). Understanding clearly what is expected of you as a TA from the faculty member who is teaching the course is essential. A conversation early in the semester is always wise for clarifying roles and responsibilities. As a TA, you will be expected to use Canvas, the course management system. There are excellent online tutorials and in-person trainings if needed. In addition, if you are one of several TAs associated with a single course (such as Introduction to Psychology [PSYC 181] or Research Methods and Analysis [PSYC 350]), you will find other teaching assistants to be helpful sources of information and support, especially if they have taught the course previously. Finally, keep in mind that the departmental office staff (including the work-study assistants) can be helpful sources of information about everything from how to copy handouts to what to do with course rosters and class evaluations. For example, scanning services was recently shuttered at the university, which has changed the manner in which certain exams can be administered in class, but office staff will be most up-to-date on current alternatives and other resources.

Instructing Your Own Course

Summers are an excellent time to get additional teaching experience as the co-instructor of a course, typically with another graduate student. This provides summer funding for those on 10-month assistantships. Watch for an e-mail in late winter/early spring asking for those who wish to be considered for summer teaching position. Instructing your own course is a great way to build your teaching experiences beyond teaching assistantships, and there are also a number of excellent resources available to you in this regard (e.g. The Center For Transformative Teaching). Advanced students may also have opportunities to teach their own course for pay during the academic year, depending on departmental needs and funding.

An Important Note on Pay When Teaching and TAing in the Summer

Instructional money is paid out by the college/university and there is a specific policy that they pay you based on the days worked in each month, meaning they will not pay you in advance for a course that has not started yet. If you teach or TA in the first 5-week session, you will receive most of your money in June (when the bulk of teaching/TAing will occur) and the smaller remaining amount in July (when the rest of the teaching/TAing occurs). If you teach in the second 5-week session, you will not receive any money in June and will instead receive most of your money in July (when the bulk of teaching/TAing will occur) and the smaller remaining amount in August (where the rest of the teaching/TAing occurs). Even though the same amount of money is earned independent of whether the course occurs in the first or second 5-week session, not receiving any payment in June can be challenging. When you receive an offer with a teaching or TA assignment, it will indicate whether you are scheduled for the first or second 5-week session. If you have a concern or issue with teaching in the second 5-week session, please raise this with the Associate Chair in charge of course scheduling (this will be who reaches out to you to directly

to inform you of your scheduled assistantship). Though not always possible, we will do our best to accommodate everyone to the best of our ability. Please note that the department has no way of circumventing the university pay structure/timeline.

Advanced Teaching Practicum

The department also offers an Advanced Teaching Practicum course (PSYC990). This course consists of an individually arranged contract between an advanced student and a faculty supervisor for the student to teach a course of their choosing. Because the course does not incur any costs for the department, you are free to choose the topic, number of credits (1-3), and the time of day, assuming classroom availability. You just need to plan far enough in advance, so the course is available when undergraduates register for classes. Check in 6-9 months ahead of time with the associate chair in charge of course scheduling if you are planning to take Advanced Teaching Practicum. Many students teach a small 400-level course in their area of interest. Others want the experience of teaching a particular course on their CV to round out their teaching portfolio in preparation for job application and may teach an additional section of a regular course. The faculty member supervisor helps plan and oversee the course, then provides a grade to the graduate chair at the end of the semester. The advantages of the teaching practicum are a) being able to have a record/transcript of the experience, b) the ability to teach whatever course you want, and c) the ability to offer it independent of enrollment (e.g., some undergrad classes need to hit a specific enrollment number to be offered and the course cannot proceed without that enrollment; that is not the case for the Advanced Teaching Practicum so long as at least one student is enrolled).

Coursework and Other Requirements

Coursework

Especially in your first couple of years on campus, formal coursework will be an important focus on your graduate education. All graduate students are required to take certain core courses including those described in the following table. This list was approved in Fall 2018 by the faculty. Please note that the Stats/Methods training requirements have changed as of Fall 2022. Students entering the program will now take PSYC 931 and 932. Previously the requirement was PSYC 941 and 942, and students who entered the program prior to Fall 2022 will have already taken those courses (and 941/942 still count as the Stats/Methods requirement for students who have already taken them). While these are the coursework requirements for the Ph.D., there are no specific coursework requirements for your Master's Memorandum of Courses. You simply need to have completed all required coursework in order to graduate with your Ph.D.

Department-Wide Requirements for Graduate Students in Psychology				
Requirement	Required Hours	Specific Required Course*	Recommended	Notes
Stats/Methods	6 hours	PSYC 931 and PSYC 932		
Basic Psychology Coursework	6 hours	3 hours from a proseminar (any course numbered PSYC 901-PSYC 910)	The second 3 hours can be from another proseminar or any graduate psychology course outside of the student's primary area.	
Human Diversity/ Multicultural^	1 hour	Any class from that is primarily focused on human diversity	Include, but are not limited to, PSYC 914, PSYC 976, PSYC 979, EDPS 868, EDPS 987, SOCI 905, SOCI 906, SOCI 907	Most classes are 3 hours so most students will take 3 hours of human diversity.
Ethics	1 hour	See program requirements for specific course recommendations		
Teaching	1 hour	PSYC 974		May be taken concurrently to the teaching assignment. May be waived for teaching only with permission of Associate Chair and program coordinator.

Note. Specific programs have additional requirements. Courses simultaneously meet both department and program requirements.

*Students with prior training may ask to substitute a different course to meet a requirement. This determination is made by the faculty member who typically teaches the course. They usually ask for a syllabus, including information about the textbook/readings, to insure equivalency.

^ The course need not be in the Department of Psychology but should generally cover topics such as implicit bias, stereotyping, how societal power structures differentially impact groups of people, etc

In addition to these courses, each program has their own additional requirements that are published on their respective web sites and/or program handbooks. Over the summer before you come to UNL, you will receive information about courses for which you should register, some general requirements and some program specific recommendations. This is a good topic to discuss in your first meeting with your advisor as well. In fact, each semester you and your advisor should be discussing what courses you should take. Typically in spring semester of the first year, you will file a Memorandum of Courses for the Master's degree that lists planned courses for your initial program of study (more info on this above in the MERP section). These "courses" include research credits, readings courses, and classroom courses. In about the second year (or later depending on your program), you will form a Supervisory Committee who will guide you in developing a doctoral Program of Study. Within the Department of Psychology, the general rule is only courses numbered 900 or above can count for towards your degree, however, Graduate Executive Committee has begun the process of approving select 800-level Psychology courses that can also count on your Program of Studies. The complete list of 800-level courses within

department that can count on your Program of Studies can be found at: https://psychology.unl.edu/resources-current-graduate-students#POS800 and we also outline the process for students who would like us to request/consider other 800-level courses within our department (please note that courses are approved only when a specific instructor is offering that course as outlined). When you take a course in another department, courses 800 and above count towards your degree. Please note that the Graduate Executive Committee maintains a tentative Graduate Teaching Plan document to provide some sense of when courses are likely to be offered. This document can be found on the Resources for Current Graduate Students webpage though please note that no 800-level courses appear on this plan given that we have no standalone 800-level courses (all 800-level courses are 400/800 meaning undergraduates also take these courses). The document will be updated every January during the Graduate Executive Committee meetings and will be posted on the resources page shortly thereafter. Faculty also have access to this calendar and may edit it at other points during the year but their edits are not always reflected on what is posted on the resources page. If you are looking for the most up-to-date version of the tentative calendar you can either ask your advisor or the Graduate Chair to provide to you.

Grades are less important in graduate school than they were in your undergraduate program. A's and B's are fine. C's are considered not passing and will require retaking the course or other remedial measures. If you are concerned about your grade in a course, talk with the professor early about what is happening and let your advisor know. It is much easier to get back on track or arrange a needed incomplete before the semester is over.

996 Credit vs. 999 Credit

As a general guideline, students are expected to sign up for 996 credit while they are pursuing their MERP and 999 credit when they are pursuing their PhD. Some programs, however, suggest that you do not sign up for 999 until you are actually in candidacy for the PhD (post-comps). Though you should always follow the rules of your specific training program, there are limits on the amount of 996 credit that can be applied to your Memorandum of Courses, and in situations where the MERP is taking a bit longer to complete, it is possible to hit that limit. This can create problems since you are required to be enrolled in 9 credits to maintain full time status pre-candidacy and if you hit the 996 limit you may need to enroll in other unnecessary courses just to maintain full time status. You also need to be wary of the limits on 999 credit, though in general there is a higher allowance for this. Grad EC has established the following general guidelines for 999 enrolment: Student are free to sign up for 999 credit when they have completed their MERP and been approved for a supervisory committee, though in cases where the MERP is taking longer than anticipated, 999 enrolment may be allowed if the MERP is very near completion and the student's advisor approves enrolling in 999 (advisor should communicate this with the graduate chair).

Program Course Requirements

Law-Psychology

An important note on registering for courses and your tuition waiver

If you have a Graduate Assistantship in the department (e.g. TA or RA position), you receive a tuition waiver for the courses you take as you pursue your degree. As noted in your offer letter, the waiver allows for 12 credit hours of tuition in the Fall and 12 credit hours of tuition in the Spring, with up to 6 credits in the summer. Please note that if you enroll for more than 12 credits in the fall or spring, you will incur additional tuition fees for those courses that the department cannot waive or cover, meaning you as a student would have to pay those directly yourself. You should not, therefore, enroll for anything beyond 12 credits. The 12-credit cap is not flexible in any way (e.g. if you only took 9 credits in the fall that does not mean you have additional credits available to you in the spring, the hard cap on the tuition waiver is 12 credits per semester during the academic year, 6 credits in the summer)

An important note on registering for courses/credit if you are no longer a full-time student

Generally speaking, all full-time graduate students in department receive an assistantship and tuition waiver (Clinical students: When you are getting ready to go on internship you will receive specific guidance from the program in the form of a gold card that is issued to students once they have completed other major benchmarks of the program). In a small number of cases, students have all of their data collection and other PhD benchmarks completed (commonly referred to as All-But-Dissertation or ABD) and opt to finish the degree not as a full-time student. This can be for any number of reasons and is generally something decided in consultation with the advisor…examples of these situations include beginning a new job, family/personal reasons, etc. This is only possible if you have already been admitted to candidacy (e.g. finished comprehensive exams for the doctoral degree and submitted the relevant paperwork) and have completed all other research benchmarks. In these cases, you are not considered a full-time student and are not eligible for an assistantship or tuition waiver. Nonetheless, it is imperative that you continue to sign up for at least one credit hour each academic semester (fall and spring, not summer) while you are away and until you receive your PhD. You will need to pay for this single credit so this is not a long-term solution (e.g. you wouldn't want to do this over a multi-year period) but continuous enrollment is required on the way to the PhD. If you enroll for more than one credit while not a full-time student, you may incur considerable additional expense. **Please note that there are additional considerations around these decisions that can impact things like student loans and health insurance availability, so it is important that you talk to your advisor, the Graduate Chair, and the Office of Graduate Studies to ensure that you fully understand all variables relevant to finishing up if no longer full time.**

Graduate Concentrations Available to All Students

Concentration in Quantitative Methods. Known informally as the "quant minor", this is an opportunity to document specific training in statistics and methodology. When students meet with their supervisory committee to develop your program of studies, you can specify whether you wish to do quant minor. This <u>concentration</u> requires 18 hours of statistics and methodology classes and a comprehensive exam. See <u>https://psychology.unl.edu/quant/concentration-quantitative-methods</u> for more information and reach out to Becca Brock with any questions. Note this is not an official university minor and should not be listed as such on the doctoral program of studies.

Diversity Concentration. The diversity concentration is for students who wish to document specific training in diversity – typically race/ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. The concentration requires 15 hours of coursework and presentation. The format and content of the presentation should be consistent with the student's overall educational program (e.g., a research talk for psychologists, a lecture/teaching demonstration for an advanced undergraduate class, a clinical workshop). As with the quant minor, the specific concentration is defined on the program of studies at the supervisory committee meeting. See Tierney Lorenz for more information.

Research Requirements

There are two research requirements. The first is an empirical Master's-level project that could be either primary data collection or analyses of archival data (see additional info on the MERP above). The paper should follow length and format requirements that would be suitable for a journal article in your area. Each student must also complete an empirical dissertation. This process includes a formal written proposal approved by the supervisory committee. The student and the dissertation committee meet to discuss the proposal and agree on the nature and scope of the dissertation. The student generally does an oral defense of their MERP. Even in programs/situations where the defense could be waived, we strongly recommend you do a formal defense as this is excellent practice and experience for the later Ph.D. defense. The scope and nature of the proposal and final dissertation documents are up to the program and supervisory committee as long as they meet Graduate College standards. There is no formal paperwork for the MERP or dissertation proposal. However, Graduate Studies has both <u>Master's</u> and <u>Ph.D.</u> paperwork that needs to be completed several weeks before the final dissertation defense, forms to sign at the oral defense, and instructions for submitting the dissertation. Also note that you cannot file your Memorandum of Courses and graduate in the same semester. Please note that Ph.D. defenses in the department are considered public and open to anyone interested for the talk portion of the defense. This is not a requirement for the MERP.

Comprehensive Exams

Comprehensive Exams occur between the MERP and dissertation proposal. Comprehensive exams may take whatever format and scope are approved by the supervisory committee and meet program requirements. Options include integrative review papers, grant proposals, portfolios, exam questions, or a combination thereof. Although there may be overlap, the comprehensive exam and dissertation introduction should each stand alone. Passing of the comprehensive exam is marked by filing the doctoral candidacy paperwork with Graduate Studies.

Supervisory Committee

Typically, in the middle or end of the second year, students request permission to set up their doctoral supervisory committee. The exact timing depends on the program and the progress and needs of a particular student. When the advisor and student determine they are ready for a supervisory committee, the advisor makes this request to the program coordinator and they will have Graduate Executive Committee discuss and approve these at their next meeting. Program coordinators will generally reach out 2-3 times a year (in advance of Graduate Executive Committee meetings) to ask faculty if any of their students are in need of committees but please note that the request to be approved for a supervisory committee can be made at any time. Students who are approved will receive a letter with instructions on setting up the committee. Students work with their advisor to select a committee and complete the necessary paperwork that is signed by the Graduate Chair. Upon approval of the members of the committee from Graduate Studies, the committee meets, within three weeks if at all possible. For most students, the supervisory committee becomes the dissertation committee, often with some adjustment in membership to meet the needs for the dissertation.

Who can be on a Supervisory Committee?

The Supervisory Committee consists of at least four faculty. The chair and two of the faculty must be graduate faculty in the Department of Psychology. The fourth member must be both graduate faculty and a member of a different department. Some students will have a co-chair who is not in psychology. Some faculty, such as law-psych faculty, may be considered either inside or outside the department. If you are considering a committee member from another NU campus, an adjunct faculty, or anyone who is not a full-time UNL faculty member, check ahead of time to be sure they are eligible to serve. Sometimes adjunct faculty can qualify if they go through an approval process to be graduate associates. If someone not eligible to be a formal member of a dissertation committee is central to the research, they may serve on the committee in an advisory capacity without playing a role in the evaluation or appearing on the paperwork. Programs may have additional requirements about who should be on the committee. For example, the clinical programs requires two clinical faculty.

Agenda for the Supervisory Committee Meeting

The first Supervisory Committee meeting tends to follow a standard agenda.

1. Chair opens the meeting and student briefly describes their progress to date and career goals.
2. Review of the proposed [Doctoral Program of Studies form](#).
3. Discussion of likely format and scope of comprehensive exams.
4. Discussion of dissertation timeline, if known.
5. Omnibus motion to give the chair power to make changes to the program of studies or add/remove committee members, except the chair, without reconvening the committee.

Evaluation and Leaves of Absence

Evaluation

To maintain good standing in the graduate program, you must achieve a B- or better in your coursework, make progress on research, and fulfill assistantship responsibilities. Day to day feedback comes from your advisor, instructors, or assistantship supervisor. At least once per year, program faculty discuss each students' progress and provide a written evaluation for all students. These students can also be discussed at the January and/or May Graduate Executive Committee meeting, and Graduate Executive Committee may also weigh in on the evaluation. Once the supervisory committee is formed, the committee is also responsible for the evaluation which is typically informal rather than a letter.

If there is concern about a student's progress towards their degree, each program follows their own procedures. However, typically the program coordinator or director and the advisor, with input from other program faculty and perhaps the Graduate Chair and/or Graduate Executive Committee, provide feedback to the student and work on a plan to help get the student back on track. This may be informal but if concerns continue, the concerns will be documented in a letter with a remediation plan that includes specific goals and timelines. If progress is insufficient, the next step may be probationary status with benchmarks for returning to good standing in the program. Failure to return to good standing may result in cessation of assistantship funding and/or dismissal from the program. The faculty makes every effort to be fair to each student given their individual circumstances. Timelines and remediation plans are individualized.

Funding and tuition waivers

So long as acceptable progress is made in the program and you maintain good standing, students receive funding in the form of a TA/RA placement, community placement, or some similar form of contract. Please note that the offer of these positions is essentially a job offer and it is critical that you sign your contracts and return them in a timely manner, both to maintain your funding and to receive your tuition waiver. Funding offers will have a deadline attached to them, either in the offer itself or in the email you receive when you are asked to Docusign your contract. It is important that you stay aware of offer deadlines and sign your contract in advance of the deadline. If you have additional questions or concerns, you should feel free to raise those right

Annual review

Given that all paperwork in the department has to go through the Graduate Program Assistant so that it can be set up as a Docusign, we have established a system where we can track your progress through your paperwork so that we always know where you are at in your program of studies (e.g. completed MERP, formed supervisory committee, completed comps, etc.). In addition to that, we will be asking students to submit their CV once a year, generally near the end of the spring semester. Please watch out for the request which will require you to just click a link and upload a CV. Please ensure that you have the following sections represented somewhere on your CV: **Grants/Honors/Scholarships, Publications, Under Review/Revision, Presentations, Research Experience, Teaching Experience, Professional Experience, Professional Affiliations, Research Training and Skills**. The graduate student resources page has an example CV if you would find this useful (psychology.unl.edu/resources-current-graduate-students#CV). When you submit your CV each year, please use the following naming convention on the file: **LastName_FirstName_CV_Year**.

Please note that this new tracking system replaces what we had been doing in department for some time and is still relatively new (beginning 2022-2023). As such, Graduate Executive Committee is still determining whether we would like to collect some additional info beyond the CV (e.g. a few prompts to respond to that could be included on the back page of the CV). Please be sure to carefully read the CV request each year in case we request any additional information.

Each year you are on campus, you will receive an email from the graduate program assistant asking you to complete an annual evaluation form. This report is used by program faculty to track your progress in the program and provides the data for reports required by the college, academic program reviews, and accreditation. Please note that as of 2022, the annual evaluation process is changing. Given that all program paperwork will be filed as a DocuSign through the department, we will be able to track your position in the program via these forms. Then each year you will be prompted to submit a CV and a few additional pieces of information. Please respond to the request for CVs promptly.

Academic Leave of Absence

Occasionally life circumstances disrupt a student's progress towards their degree. There is a formal leave of absence policy and paperwork to request a formal leave. If you find yourself considering a leave, the first step is to talk with your advisor. Often through a combination of reduced workload, adjusted research deadlines, and incompletes in coursework, you can take care of what is needed without a formal leave. However, sometimes a formal leave for a semester or academic year is needed. Work with your advisor and program coordinator or head to take a break in a way that is least disruptive to your long-term success and allows for someone to cover any teaching, assistantship, or research responsibilities you may have. Note that a formal leave

of absence could impact things like health care coverage so it is important to look into all factors when considering a leave.

Professional Relationships

Graduate education must take place in an environment in which free expression, free inquiry, intellectual honesty, and respect for the rights and dignity of others can be expected

-From the UNL Graduate College Policy on Professional Conduct

One of the most rewarding, but occasionally most stressful, parts of graduate school are the relationships you form with your advisor, lab mates, and other faculty and students. These situations can be complex because many of these close relationships also have a power differential. You may work closely with your advisor and share many of the same interests but they also have a supervisory role and will likely be a source of letters of recommendation for years to come. Your lab mates are co-workers but may also become close friends with whom you need to continue to work even if that friendship ends. You will find yourself negotiating things like shared workloads and manuscript authorships with collaborators and mentors. Because of these complexities, there are University and Department Policies listed at the end of this manual to guide these relationships. Being familiar with these policies can help navigate some of the complexities. You may be mindful that these are professional relationships that you want to maintain, but you should also keep in mind that that everyone, including you, must have a working and educational environment in which the rights and dignity of each person is respected.

Like all human relationships, sometimes things get off track or deteriorate badly; sometimes someone engages in inappropriate behavior that should not be tolerated. Formal grievance procedures for the University and Department at the end of the handbook may be the best first course of action. However, often more informal processes can help resolve a less serious situation. Ethical guidelines, such as those of the [American Psychological Association](#) typically recommend talking with the person directly first. If that is not possible, does not feel safe, or does not resolve the issue, other resources are your advisor, the program coordinator or director, the graduate chair, associate chairs, and the chair of the department. The University Policies list programs and resources outside of the department that may be helpful as well. Because of legal requirements and university policy, some individuals may not be able to keep certain information confidential, even if you request it. Before talking with someone such as the department chair or other university official, check with them about whether they have any official requirements to report certain types of complaints. Then you can make an informed decision about what you wish to share.

Other Keys to Success

Seek Opportunities to Broaden Your Learning

It is easy to get caught up in a lab and a narrow area of research. Graduate school is an excellent time to broaden your knowledge, making you a better scientist and scholar. Read widely. Attend departmental brown bags, guest talks, and the Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, even if it does not seem to be in your research area. Spend time perusing journals.

Develop a Habit of Writing That Works for You

Early on in your graduate career, develop a strong writing habit that suits you. Not being able to get MERPs, dissertations, or other research products written is the #1 factor that slows down progress in graduate school. Consult with your advisor and lab mates about how they get writing done. Consider regularly scheduled writing with others, setting deadlines with a peer or your advisor. Psychologist Paul Silvia in How to Write A Lot recommends allotting shorter times in your schedule several days a week to write and defending that time vigorously from other demands. Not every strategy works for everyone but find a strategy that works for you and stick to it. If your current strategy is not working for you, you should consider talking to fellow students, your advisor, or other professors for other suggested approaches.

Become Professionally Connected

Consider joining relevant professional organizations. Student memberships are often inexpensive and may come with a newsletter or useful journal access. Ask your advisor about what listservs you should join. Attend professional meetings, where you can meet the people who produce the research you read, and contribute your own scholarship in a research poster session. Some travel funding to attend professional meetings is described below.

Become Involved in the Governance Processes

A valuable source of experience can be obtained through the Graduate Student Association (GSA). GSA representatives are included in the Department's Executive Committee and participate in faculty meetings, which is important to ensuring that the graduate student voice is heard in decision-making. Consider running as a representative.

Balance

Although being a graduate student will take up most of your time and energy, keeping some balance will help you stay health, active, and probably more productive in the long run. Everyone does this in their own way but most people recommend staying healthy with sufficient sleep, good nutrition and exercise. It is also helpful to have some friends or interests outside of the program. This might mean volunteering for a cause you are passionate about, a working on a hobby, joining a religious or spiritual community, or just making a point to explore Lincoln and Nebraska on the weekends.

Paperwork

Below, you will find links to and directions for completing paperwork at various stages of your degree. Please note that the department now does everything through DocuSign. It is more efficient for everyone involved, and this way the department ensures that we have a copy of all of your paperwork. So anytime you have a form that needs to be signed, please send it to the appropriate department assistant (Jamie Longwell). We will then send out a link for everyone to sign and will submit the completed form to Graduate Studies. Do not collect signatures or set up your own DocuSign, as we will just have to collect digital signatures again.

General University Paperwork

The [Graduate Studies website](#) has an excellent list of the paperwork needed for each milestone of the Master's and doctorate degrees. There are a couple of places that students and their advisors often forget the needed paperwork. In the first half of your Master's degree (if you are getting one), you need to complete a Masters Memorandum of Courses and considerable extra detail on this form is outlined above in "**Step 2: Your First Research Project (known as the MERP) and thinking about your Memorandum of Courses**". Then 3 weeks before your oral defense of your MERP, there is a Final Oral Examination form that must be submitted before the actual defense. The primary purpose of this paperwork is to check that you have the coursework to meet graduation requirements. Submitting it early allows time to make adjustments in the program of studies or get incompletes resolved, so graduation is not delayed. **There is a parallel Program of Studies and Final Oral Examination form for the doctorate.**

Miscellaneous Logistics

Keys and Building Access. To obtain a key to office or lab space or get afterhours access to CB3 or Burnett, see the office staff for your building.

Room Scheduling. There are several shared spaces available for you to conduct research or hold meetings. Most Burnett rooms are scheduled with staff in the main office. The Sarata Room (Burnett 327) is scheduled with the PCC staff person in Burnett 325. CB3 spaces can be reserved by CB3 staff. Email them or stop by to schedule.

Email accounts. Please note that UNL requires UNL email addresses to be used for all UNL-related communications. You are assigned a UNL email account when you start at UNL, so please use that for all teaching, research, clinical, and outreach-related activities. Make sure that the graduate program assistant and other staff have your current e-mail address, and update them if it changes. The Psychology Department communicates almost exclusively via email, so having an up-to-date email address you check regularly is extremely important.

Address and Phone Changes. You should always keep the Psychology Department Graduate Program Assistant informed of any changes of address or phone numbers.

Copy Requests. If you are teaching a Psychology course you may request that materials are copied for your class by office assistants in Burnett 238. It is office policy that requests for course materials be submitted at least 24 hours in advance. This is especially critical during busy times such as the beginning of the semester, midterms and finals, in which a 48-hour notice is a reasonable turnaround time for busy times. However, they will certainly do their best to accommodate every request. See the office staff about paying for copying for research.

Warden Funding. Approximately three times during the year, the Warden committee solicits requests from graduate students to apply for funds that can be used for travel and/or research cost, including copying. Please view the section on Warden for more details.

Travel. If you are planning a trip that involves spending University funds you must complete a Travel Authorization (TA) form on Concur. The TA form should be completed **prior to** the trip. This allows a number to be assigned to you. After you have returned from your trip, you must submit the appropriate documentation to receive your travel fellowship. See section on Warden funding for more details. The staff will be happy to show you how to prepare the forms for both travel and reimbursement. You must purchase travel insurance, rated at $0.25/day, for the duration of your trip. Inquire at the Department main office for specific details.

Course Evaluations. Course evaluation forms used to be the responsibility of the course instructor and forms could be requested in the main office near the end of each term. The University and the College of Arts and Sciences have changed this process recently, however, such that these are now done online through Canvas. Sometime near the end of each semester you will receive an email indicating that evaluations are now available to students in your course. Technically speaking, there is nothing else you need to do as students are notified that evaluations are available to complete. It is a good idea, however, to explicitly request that students fill them out and you may want to dedicate an actual class time to filling out evaluations, letting everyone know that they would need to have their phone or laptop to access the form). The shift to online evaluations has not necessarily meant that more students are filling these out (and sometimes they offer few if any comments), so anything you can do to further encourage your students will be worthwhile. This is a standardized form that cannot be edited. Instructors do not have access to the completed evaluations until final grade rosters are turned in to the main office. At some point after final grade rosters are turned in, you should be able to find the evaluations linked in Canvas. Course evaluations should be kept by both faculty and graduate students (a record of these should appear in your Canvas course for previously completed courses but please note that Canvas courses disappear after a while making it important to also download and keep a copy of your evaluations).

Emergency Procedures. Any time there is an emergency, the alarms will sound in the building. Everyone is expected to evacuate to the appropriate place, even if you are in class, conducting

research, or in the clinic. You will hear a voice with the alarm instructing you of the emergency type.

In the unlikely event of a tornado warning, everyone is expected to move quickly to the designated safe place for that building (notice the tornado posters posted in the buildings). During tornado season, a tornado drill siren will sound at 10:15, normally on the first Wednesday in a month. You do not need to evacuate for the drill.

Classes are rarely canceled during severe weather, including snowstorms. Moreover, given that everyone is now very familiar with Zoom and other online tools, all instructors are expected to have instructional continuity plans for when in-person classes are canceled (an instructor may still opt to hold a class over Zoom, may make a video of a lecture available asynchronously, or may provide additional prompts regarding work to make up for that day). You can no longer assume that the cancellation of an in-person class means that there are no activities for that day. In the unlikely event they are canceled, it will be announced on local television, radio stations, and the UNL website. It is highly recommended that you sign up for the university text alert service http://emergency.unl.edu/unlalert/. If a class you are taking is canceled for any reason, you'll want to watch out for communication from your instructor in case there is anything else additional you are expected to do. If you are a course instructor, note that you are expected to have some form of instructional continuity plan in the case that an in-class session is canceled.

Recycling. Most rooms should have both a trash can and a blue recycling bin. You must empty your own recycling. In Burnett, bins for paper recycling are located near the soda machines on the first floor of Burnett and on the west side of Bessey Hall. Plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and newspapers can be recycled near the soda machines also. HP brand printer cartridges can be recycled in the main office.

Building and Classroom Maintenance Information. If there are spills on the floor or carpet, you have a problem with the room temperature (please **do not** open the windows), light bulbs are burnt out, or anything else, please advise someone in the main office of Burnett or CB3 staff, and the appropriate persons will be contacted.

Warden Research and Travel Fellowships

Graduate students in the Psychology Department have the ability to apply to a wide range of funding sources to support research activities, travel to scholarly meetings, dissertation projects, etc. These sources include local funds administered by the Psychology Department, UNL sources administered through the Graduate College, local, regional and national foundations, and professional societies. The following discussion provides guidelines for seeking funding from several of these sources. You should note that while some of these funding opportunities are publicly announced and will show up in your email, other opportunities (such as grants from local or community foundations) may be less apparent and require some internet searching or networking.

Department Resources for Travel Fellowships and Research Support

The primary Psychology Department source of funding available to graduate students for research related activities is the Warden Funds. Specific programs may have other funds available and this would be outlined in the respective program handbook. Warden Funds and some program specific funds share **common application deadlines** three times per academic year, for which both requests to support travel to conferences and requests for small grants to support a research project may be submitted. These three application deadlines are:

1. September 15th for travel or research activities between October 1st and January 31st.
2. January 30th for the period between February 1st and June 30th.
3. June 1st for the period between July 1st and September 30th.

Note that these three funding periods slightly overlap the boundaries of both calendar and academic years.

Policies for Support of Travel

Applications for travel support from Warden funds are made using the Request for Travel Fellowship application form. Note that this form requires a signature from a Faculty Sponsor, and that applications will not be considered unless this item is completed.

Warden funds will support travel to **one conference per year, defined as the period between October 1st and September 30th.** Support will be given only to students who are **first authors** of accepted presentations or posters. The **maximum amount** of travel funding that can be reimbursed by Warden funds varies from year to year, mainly due to fluctuations in market conditions that affect the UNL Foundation source of those funds. In recent years, typical awards have been about $175 but never higher than $500.

Current university policy counts these travel fellowships (and the research monies described below) as financial aid. In certain situations in which a student has taken a maximum amount of loan money, the Warden money may count against them. If you may be in that situation, talk with the graduate program assistant before applying.

Receiving Your Travel Money

Travel money is given as a travel fellowship. After you return from the trip, submit the copy of your travel award letter with the certification of attendance signed by your faculty advisor. The fellowship will then appear in your next pay check (or perhaps the next month for trips that occur very late in a month). Prior to the trip, you must file a Travel Authorization Form and pay for travel insurance (25 cents per day).

Policies for Support of Research

Applications for research support by either Warden or program funds require submission of a [Research Application form](#) (that requires a faculty sponsor signature) and attachment of a 1-2 page description of the project, including an explanation and justification of each budget item. Budget items that will NOT be considered for funding include payment for data entry or computer programming services or compensation for undergraduate research participants if they could be drawn from the SONA subject pool. Note that equipment purchased by any university funding source becomes the property of the Psychology Department (in the case of program funding, the program) once the research project is completed.

Warden funds support for general research is limited to $500 per student during the academic year. While the application deadlines are the same as for travel support, money that is awarded may be spent any time during the modified academic year that the award is made (i.e., carried across the fall and spring periods) as long as it is spent by September 30th. Due to unpredictable fluctuations in the availability of Warden funds among the three annual funding periods, and the fluctuations in numbers of travel requests across different periods, **a request for research support cannot be submitted for Warden funding at the same deadline period in which a student has requested travel support.** However, a student who received travel support in the fall period (Sept. 30th – January 30th), may submit a research support request in either spring or summer periods. Given that need for research money may not coincide with the established Warden deadlines, requests between the deadlines will be considered with an explanation for why the deadline could not be met.

Note that **Warden** funds for research must be spent within **one calendar year** of the start of the funding period in which the award was granted. Before making any purchases with Warden money, **check with the graduate program assistant to insure you are abiding by all university purchasing rules.**

Research Compliance

Before receiving funding for projects that involve human participants or animal subjects, students must have appropriate certification of compliance. Copies of IRB or IACUC approval notices for research projects may be attached to the Warden application form if approval is complete at the time the application is submitted (the ideal case) or they need to be shown to the graduate program assistant when approval is obtained, in order to have the funds released.

Other Sources of Support for Research and Scholarly Activity

University Fellowship Support

Each year, the UNL Graduate College offers a variety of competitive fellowships to which currently enrolled graduate students may apply. Recently, both the policies concerning eligibility, application procedures, and support levels for these programs have varied considerably from

year to year. Some of these programs may have limits on the number of awards that can be given to an individual department. **Please note the policy concerning department screening of limited application fellowships** outlined below. Typically, deadlines for competitive fellowship applications to the Graduate College are in the early part of the spring semester. You should consult the Graduate Studies website at frequent intervals for the latest information on fellowship opportunities, application procedures, and deadlines.

Funding from Professional Societies

A variety of funding support for both research activities and travel to scholarly meetings is available from various professional organizations. For example, the Science Directorate of the American Psychological Association offers competition for several different fellowship and dissertation support awards, and several graduate students in our program have received such awards over the past few years. In addition to describing support programs of its own, the APA funding website also lists a wide variety of funding sources from *other* organizations that may be useful to psychology graduate students. Thus, it may be useful for students to make frequent visits to this site. Note that several of the APA funding programs place limits on how many applications can come from a single department, so please note the policy statement on **limited application fellowships** listed below.

If you are a member of a more highly focused professional organization related to specific areas of psychology, it may pay to visit their websites frequently. Even if those smaller societies do not, of themselves, sponsor or fund financial support for graduate student research, they may well have links to programs that do or to useful information about funding strategies in general. A number of specialized societies who sponsor conferences have programs that support graduate student travel to those conferences, reduced registration fees, etc., sometimes in exchange for assistance with helping out with the conference operation (e.g. registrations, preparing poster facilities, moving AV equipment, etc.). Taking advantage of such opportunities can sometimes help you take better advantage of a limited funding from departmental or other resources.

Association for Psychological Science (APS) Grants and Awards

American Psychological Association (APA) Scholarships

Private Foundations

Local or regional foundations (e.g., Woods Charitable Fund) as well as larger national or international foundations (e.g. James S. McDonnell Foundation) occasionally have research related funding opportunities from which some of our previous and current students have benefited. Often, such organizations may be narrower in scope than those supported by government research agencies, but sometimes their interests may overlap with those of a particular research topic in which a student is engaged (this may be particularly true for students doing research with certain populations in our community such as particular ethnic groups, children, individuals with substance abuse issues, etc). If you are successful in obtaining support from such an organization, please follow the advice given at the beginning of this section of the handbook, and communicate your success with other students and the fellowship committee!

Sigma Xi Grants-In-Aid Of Research (you and your advisor do not need to be members to apply for this, but you will have a better chance of getting a grant if you are members)

Federal Government Research Agencies

This is perhaps the most obvious source for large scale funding of graduate student research, and our department strongly encourages students who have a well-developed research plan to consider applying for a National Research Service Award from an NIH agency, an NSF fellowship, or some similar program from another large government agency. Your advisor can provide you with mentoring about this process and it is helpful to talk with other students who have received such awards. Agencies websites might give you an overview of available programs, and you might also find useful information on UNL's Research Services website. In recent years, a number of students received NRSA or NSF funding to support their work. However, even if you do not get funding, as you develop the application you will learn about the process of large scale research funding, and you may find the process extremely useful in developing your dissertation plans.

NSF Graduate Fellowships

NIH Research Training and Fellowship

Note on Limited Application Fellowships

If you apply for any local or national funding source that places limits on the number of applications from a given department, you **and** your advisor must notify the Graduate Committee Chair of your intention to apply **at least three weeks prior to the application deadline.** If the graduate committee chair determines that there are more applications than are allowed from this department for that program, copies of these proposals will be forwarded to the Psychology Department Fellowship Committee (consisting of the program heads and grad chair) for evaluation and decision about which one or ones go forward. Check with the graduate chair about a specific deadline for materials to the committee, typically about a week before the application deadline.

Policies (many of these are drawn from the Department Bylaws which can also be a useful resource document)

You should be aware of the Department and Universities Policies described below. Your program may have additional policies as well.

Departmental Policies

Dual Relationship Policy. The Department of Psychology Bylaws outline the Dual Relationship Policy regarding relationships between instructional personnel and students. This section of the bylaws appears below.

DUAL RELATIONSHIP POLICY

I. Definitions

As used in this document, the term "faculty/instructor" means all those who teach and/or otherwise supervise students in the Department. This includes graduate students with teaching responsibilities, undergraduate TA's, and other instructional personnel. The term "amorous relationships" may include sexual or romantic relationships, and is intended to indicate conduct which goes beyond what a person of ordinary sensibilities would believe to be a collegial or professional relationship. The term "familial relationship" includes any parent, offspring, spouse/partner, or sibling relationship.

II. Rationale

Faculty/instructors exercise power over staff, students, and other faculty, whether in giving them praise/criticism, evaluating them, making recommendations for their further studies, their present or future employment, or conferring any other benefits on them. The Department feels that amorous or familial relationships between faculty/instructors and students or faculty/instructors and staff with whom they work are wrong because such situations increase the chances that one of the members of the relationship will abuse their power and exploit the other. In the case of amorous relationships, voluntary consent by the student or staff member may be suspect, given the fundamentally asymmetric nature of the relationship. Moreover, other students, faculty and/or staff may be affected by such relationships because it places the faculty/instructor in a position to favor or advance one individual's interest at the expense of others. Similar considerations are relevant when one faculty member has power over another.

III. Policy

The Department will consider it a breach of professional ethics for a faculty/instructor to initiate or consent to an amorous relationship, or to have a familial relationship, with a student or staff member who is being supervised or evaluated by the faculty/instructor. Similarly, it will be considered a breach of professional ethics for a faculty member to be involved in any

Departmental decisions that affect another faculty or staff member, either positively or negatively, with whom that individual has an amorous or familial relationship. In all these cases, it is the ethical obligation and professional responsibility of the faculty/instructor to withdraw from participation in activities or decisions that may reward or penalize the other person involved.

Graduate Executive Committee

The Graduate Executive Committee consists of the Chair of the Graduate Committee, Area Program Directors (Clinical, Developmental, Law-Psychology, Neuroscience & Behavior, and Social & Cognitive), and two at-large faculty members. The at-large members are appointed by the Department Executive Committee. The at-large members are appointed for staggered two-year terms.

The purpose of the two at-large members is to facilitate a diversity of faculty input. The Department Executive Committee will consider but not be restricted to representation from the Department's Diversity Committee and Executive Committee when making appointments for the at-large members. It is possible that the Executive Committee and Diversity Committee will be well represented by the Chair of the Graduate Committee and/or Area Program Directors, and in such cases other factors will be considered in selecting at-large members (e.g., faculty rank, bringing new members to the committee).

The function of the Graduate Executive Committee is to handle student evaluations as well as discuss and address recruitment/retention issues, curriculum issues, research issues, graduate assessment issues, grade appeals, and other graduate training issues. Grade disputes should first be addressed directly with the instructor or through facilitated conversation with the Department Chair or Associate Chair. If a dispute cannot be resolved through these channels, then the Graduate Executive Committee may hear a grade appeal. The committee follows the processes outlined by Graduate Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Graduate College (see the last page of this handbook for additional grade appeal procedures). For other kinds of conflicts or grievances, students should refer to the internal conflict management guidelines below and the detailed list of formal University channels which can be used if internal procedures fail. The committee will typically meet at least three times a year (once at the beginning of each term and once at the end of the spring term). Before the annual process to evaluate graduate students, the Graduate Committee Chair will request that graduate students provide relevant information via a web link and Area coordinators will gather input from their respective faculty. With that information, the Area Program Directors will provide annual evaluation letters to students, with additional consultation from Graduate Executive Committee as necessary. The Graduate Executive Committee will consult with the Department's Graduate Faculty on an as needed basis.

Conflict and Grievance Resolution

Internal Conflict Management

Graduate Student Conflict Management Procedure Manual

Statement of Shared Values

Conflict and grievances are an inevitable aspect of interpersonal relationships in an academic department. Graduate students face unique challenges in certain conflict situations, especially when there are disparate levels of power such as between a graduate student and faculty member. In order to build a healthy and productive academic atmosphere in the Department of Psychology, we approach collaboration and dispute management with the following shared values:

Respect for the rights, dignity, and autonomy of all members of the Department.

Fairness to all parties involved in a dispute.

Commitment to problem-solving to find the best possible solution for all.

Transparency in communication and procedures as much as possible while still respecting the rights of all involved, including the **right to privacy**.

Continuing education in equitable and inclusive practices and communication skills to convey respect and prevent and/or resolve conflict.

Commitment to academic freedom including full freedom in research and publication, as well as freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject.

A climate free from retaliation in any form as is consistent with our values of respect, transparency, fairness, and commitment to problem solving.

In sum, the Department is committed to building a culture that directly address conflict and grievances in a manner that builds a more collaborative, healthy working environment.

The Scope of Conflicts & Grievances that May Arise

The Department recognizes that the scope and nature of the conflicts and grievances that may arise are highly varied. Consequently, there is no one "right" way to resolve the issue. The primary purpose of this document is to outline the available internal processes for resolving conflict and reporting grievances. These processes are designed to reflect the Department's shared values and offer graduate students and faculty several options for managing conflict and grievances in productive and appropriate ways. The procedures are not intended to replace any University policies or procedures (e.g., reporting to Title VII or Title IX) or filing a police report in the event of a potential crime. University reporting procedures can be found at the end of this document.

Conflict Resolution Procedures

Conflict resolution procedures are meant to address the typical conflicts that arise in the daily life of an academic department. Common types of disputes could include disagreements about authorship, grading, access to resources within a research team, work load for a research or teaching assistantship or as a member of a research team, faculty availability for meetings, delays in returns of graded materials or manuscripts, etc. Often, these conflicts can arise from poor communication, misunderstandings, differing values, differing interests, limited resources, personality clashes, etc.

Consistent with the Department's shared values, the conflict resolution procedures provide an opportunity for parties to communicate, as well as work toward a shared understanding of what has occurred and/or a mutually agreed upon plan of action. These conflict resolution procedures can provide an opportunity for the conflict parties to:
- Engage in a pro-active approach that addresses issues and conflict before they fester and grow.
- Clearly articulate the issues or problems, with recognition that there may be differing perceptions of the problem(s).
- Address the issues face-to-face in a setting that is most conducive to productively managing the problem.
- Communicate how they want the conflict resolved and provide an opportunity to reach agreement on how to move forward.
- Re-establish trust.

If a graduate student finds themselves trying to manage a conflict situation with anyone in the Department, there are a number of steps they can take and people they can seek out for guidance and help. The following subsections details the possibilities. The possible steps and procedures are listed in the order they are commonly used. However, ***there is no "right path" for resolving conflict. Parties are encouraged to think about which options best fits the situation, their needs, etc.***

Conflict Management Steps and Procedures

Consultation for advice and support. Often it is helpful and appropriate to seek advice and support from faculty and leadership. This step is available at any point and may be especially valuable if the person bringing forward the issue is struggling to decide what to do, feels uncomfortable approaching the other person(s), or was not successful with initial attempts to directly discuss the issue with the other person(s). Discussing the situation could provide an opportunity to:
- Talk through the issue and related concerns with a neutral party.
- Discuss and weigh options for how to address the issue (the faculty member may seek additional information about options on behalf of the graduate student if desired by the graduate student).
- Create a strategy for how best to take action on one of those options.

Direct discussion with the other person(s). Often, an early step in addressing an issue or conflict is to directly discuss the issue with the person(s) involved. Open and direct dialogue conveys respect for the other person and respect for their right to know how they may have harmed someone as well as the opportunity to resolve the dispute. Although email may be useful for scheduling a time to meet, the Department highly encourages face-to-face conversations either in-person or via Zoom. This allows the parties to engage in the type of direct communication and dialogue that promotes conflict resolution. Listening and expressing oneself are important in these conversations.

Facilitated conversation. Sometimes, the parties involved in a conflict have a difficult time reaching resolution on their own and it may be useful to have an outside person help to facilitate a productive conversation. Facilitated conversations are a voluntary process in which a neutral, third-party guides a future-focused conversation, generally with the goal of reaching mutual understand and agreement on how to move forward. These conversations are typically informal and the facilitator's primary role is to promote productive conversations by engaging in active listening, asking clarifying questions, and helping the parties come up with creative solutions. Often, these conversations will end in a verbal or written commitment between the parties to make specific changes to resolve the issue and ensure the conflict does not resurface.

Third Party Support Person. The Department recognizes that disparate levels of power exist in many academic working relationships. Although direct communication is generally recommended, there are situations in which an individual may feel uncomfortable directly confronting the person(s) they are having issues with. To protect the parties involved or promote the best resolution outcome, it may be reasonable for faculty (e.g., advisors) or other department leadership to act as a third party representative of the person bringing forward the issue. In their capacity as a third party support person, this individual might speak directly to the other person(s) about the issue, bring the issue to the attention of someone in an appropriate leadership positions (e.g., graduate chair), or attempt to address the issue in a broader context (so as to not single out any one individual). In these situations, the third party support person will act on behalf of the individual bringing forward the issue and must have their permission to do so. In addition, the third party support person should discuss with the individual bringing the

issue forward their desires for confidentiality and anonymity, including the extent to which confidentiality and anonymity is possible in a given situation.

Who to Seek Out for Conflict Management Assistance

The Department is committed to providing a collaborative climate in which conflict is address in an open and timely manner. Any faculty member may be able to assist with the conflict management steps and procedures discussed in the previous section. However, some faculty may be better situated to help specific students because of pre-existing relationships, knowledge of research area content, etc.

> ***Suggested Order of Department Contacts.*** The following is an ordered list of who a
graduate student can go to for conflict management assistance:
> - Advisors or other trusted faculty members
> - Any area head, though most often students' seek out their own program area head (https://psychology.unl.edu/graduate-programs)
> - The graduate chair (Mike Dodd, mdodd2@unl.edu)
> - The chair (David DiLillo, ddillilo2@unl.edu) of the department

Importantly, the person bringing forward the issue can skip any of these steps if they are either not comfortable with the person or the issue involves them. If a student wishes to speak to someone other than the chair of the department, they may seek out either of the associate chairs of the department (Maital Neta, maitalneta@unl.edu, Sarah Gervais, sgervais2@unl.edu).

> ***External Ombudsperson.*** The Department recognizes that because of the nature of an
academic unit, there may be situations in which the person bringing forward the issue may wish to consult someone outside of the department. An ombudsperson is a neutral party who provides confidential, informal, independent and impartial assistance with managing conflict. The ombudsperson is available to listen, discuss options, and support the person bringing forward the issue. Dr. Eva Bachman (ebachman1@unl.edu) is the Director of Graduate Student Support and serves as an ombudsperson for graduate students at UNL.

Confidentiality Expectations

An individual bringing forward an issue to a faculty member or the ombudsperson can generally expect a degree of confidentiality. However, there are times when the anonymity of the party bringing forth a concern cannot be maintained (e.g., if the specifics of a conflict issue allow one party to deduce the identity of the other). Exceptions to confidentiality also arise if someone is in imminent danger. It is considered best practice to openly discuss confidentiality concerns and expectations before engaging in a conversation about a conflict issue.

Potential Outcomes

The goal of most conflict management processes is to generate a verbal or written commitment between the parties to make specific changes to resolve the issue and ensure the conflict does

not resurface. Importantly, this is an agreement between everyone involved and all individuals must actively participate in forming the agreement. Each agreement will likely be unique because the needs of the parties, nature of the issue, etc. is likely unique. However, here are a few examples of potential outcomes:

- In an authorship dispute a plan could detail improved procedures to assist the research team in better communicating authorship order and associated responsibilities.
- Workload or resource disputes may involve more clear communication about expectations and/or redistribution of workloads or resources.
- Feedback about insensitive or inappropriate language may yield an opportunity for the student to express why the language was problematic and a faculty member agreement to make changes or provide needed context if the material under question is within the scope of course material. A faculty member may provide an acknowledgement or make an apology to the class. (Repeated instances may require more formal processes as students should not have to repeatedly engage in this process with the same faculty member).

Commitments between the parties should take into consideration the needs and interests of the parties involved. Often, the most successful agreements offer creative solutions to problems that strengthen communication, trust, and a strong working relationship. Keep in mind, it is common for both parties to make commitments to change the situation for the better.

Conflict Management Training Opportunities

Although conflict is pervasive, the skills necessary to resolve the conflict are not always intuitive. Thus, the Department is committed to continued training and discussion relevant to managing conflict. The training opportunities will be open to all members of the department and program heads, the graduate chair, department chair, and the ombudsperson will be expected to actively participate in these opportunities. Training opportunities could include:

- Trainings & discussions on how to have difficult conversations that include conflict management skill development including active listening, problem solving, etc.
- Continued training on University policies and procedures such as Title IX**.**

University Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policies

The Institutional Equity and Compliance Office (IEC) can investigate allegations of discrimination and harassment that are prohibited under civil rights laws (e.g., Title IX, Title VII, Title VI, and the ADA). The university non-discrimination statement is available here: https://www.unl.edu/equity/notice-nondiscrimination. It prohibits discrimination based upon "race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its programs, activities, or employment" but the policy and procedures are less comprehensive than the university sexual misconduct/harassment policy.

The sexual misconduct/harassment policy is available here: https://www.unl.edu/equity/university-sexual-misconduct-policy. This policy includes requirements for addressing sexual misconduct/harassment under both Title IX and Title VII. As stated in the policy, under Title IX, sexual harassment is currently defined as (a) An employee of the University conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the University on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; (b) Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the University's education program or activity; or (c) Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking as defined by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). As stated in the policy, under Title VII (applies to employees only), sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment, sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the individual's employment and create an abusive working environment. Under current University policy, employees at the University are "expected to promptly report conduct that may violate the University's Sexual Misconduct Policy to the University."

Under the current policy, there are some instances where interpersonal behaviors align with the behavioral definitions of harassment/misconduct (e.g., unwanted touching, inappropriate or offensive comments) but are deemed unactionable by the IEC. For example, the IEC will judge whether unwelcome conduct was "severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive" (following current Title IX regulations) or "severe or pervasive" (following Title VII), and if they decide that it was not, IEC will not take action to resolve the problem using their procedures. Additionally, the scope of the policy for complaints related to Title IX currently only covers incidents that occurred in "locations, events, or circumstances over which the University exercises substantial control over both the Respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurs, and also includes any building owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by a postsecondary institution" (which means that behaviors that are unrelated to campus events/programs or happened in a non-university building may not be actionable under IEC policies and procedures).

If a faculty member or student has questions about sexual harassment/misconduct and/or has questions about reporting options and resources, there are confidential resources on campus and in the community that specialize in these issues who can help:
- Voices of Hope: https://www.voicesofhopelincoln.org/ (office line: 402-476-2110 and 24-hour crisis line 402-475-7273)
- UNL Center for Advocacy, Response & Education: https://care.unl.edu/ (402-472-3553)

University Grade Appeals and Grievances

Students wishing to use formal University channels for reporting discrimination or misconduct, appealing grades, or engaging with formal grievances processes may want to consult with advisors, area coordinators, the grad chair, or the department associate chairs or chair for support and information. Students may also consult with the graduate student ombudsperson if they wish to talk with someone outside the Department (see above).

Graduate Grade Appeals Process: Appeal of grades in graduate-level courses shall be made through the graduate student grade appeal procedures for the campus through which the grade was awarded. https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/policies/grades/

- Students who believe their evaluation in a course has been prejudiced or capricious must first attempt to resolve the matter with the Course Instructor within 30 days of the posting of the grade report by the Office of the University Registrar.
- If unsuccessful, the student may then file a written appeal to the Graduate Committee Chair for consideration by the Department Graduate Executive Committee. This appeal must be filed within 60 days of the posting of the grade report by the Office of the University Registrar. A written determination of the appeal shall be presented to the student and instructor.
- If the matter is unduly delayed or not resolved, the student may present the original appeal documentation to the Dean for Graduate Studies who shall request a review by a subcommittee of the Graduate Council. A final appeal may be made to the full Graduate Council, if it agrees to hear the case. Since awarding grades in courses occurs at the individual campus level, the decision of the Graduate Council shall be final and is not subject to further appeal beyond the campus.
- If the instructor's grade is overturned, the instructor of record has the right of appeal, in writing, at the same successive levels of review.

University Grievance Processes: Graduate students who are on an assistantship (e.g., teaching, research) can file grievances against faculty or administrators with the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee. https://www.unl.edu/facultysenate/procedures-academic-rights-and-responsibilities-special-hearing-committees

Reporting Scientific Misconduct: Graduate students may file scientific misconduct reports with the Office of Research and Economic Development. https://research.unl.edu/researchcompliance/about-research-misconduct/