Graduate Student Handbook

M.A. Program in Psychology
Psychological Science Track

UCCS Psychology Department

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **COLORADO SPRINGS**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the M.A. Program in Psychology - Psychological Science Track at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS). This handbook is designed to provide you with information about the program requirements, policies, and procedures. It supplements the information available on Graduate School website: http://www.uccs.edu/~gradschl) and the UCCS Student Code of Conduct (http://www.uccs.edu/dos/student-conduct/student-code-of-conduct.html). In order to be fully informed of all important requirements, you should peruse the website and read the documents in their entirety. It is your responsibility to be informed of all relevant requirements and procedures. You are required to sign the written statement (at the end of this document) acknowledging that you have received, read, and agree to the policies and procedures detailed in this handbook. Please return this statement to the Director of the Psychological Science Program as soon as possible. A more formal orientation session is conducted for all entering students upon arrival on campus.

A. **UCCS Graduate School Mission:** The mission of the Graduate School is to promote excellence in graduate education and to facilitate and enhance the educational experience and opportunities for graduate students. The Graduate School has the responsibility for oversight and coordination of graduate programs, and to ensure compatibility among programs and compliance with Graduate School policies. It is decentralized with main contacts residing within the department of Psychology (see below). Contacts for Graduate School information are Edie Greene (Program Director), Andrea Williams (Department Administrator), and David Dubois (Department Program Assistant).

B. **Philosophy of the Psychological Science Track of the Psychology M.A. Program:** The psychological science track of the Master of Arts in Psychology provides the student with a solid foundation in psychological research. The program includes coursework in experimental design, research methodology, statistics, and core content areas. The student will also develop an area of concentration that will serve as a basis for elective coursework and the Master's thesis. These areas of concentration include but are not limited to cognition, neuroscience, development, geropsychology, social psychology, program evaluation, health psychology, psychology and the law, personality theory, and psychometric theory.

The program is designed to prepare students for doctoral degrees in psychology or related fields. Consistent with this goal, a majority of our Master's students have been subsequently accepted into Ph.D. programs.

Department Contacts:

Mary Coussons-Read (Department Chair)	mcousson@uccs.edu	255-3107
Edie Greene (Program Director)	egreene@uccs.edu	255-4147
David DuBois (Department Program Asst.)	ddubois@uccs.edu	255-4500
Andrea Williams (Department Administrator)	awilliam@uccs.edu	255-4158

II. REQUIREMENTS

A. Coursework Overview

The program of study has three components:
(a) coursework in research and the scientific method
(b) coursework in the knowledge base of psychology
(c) an empirical research thesis.

Work with your research mentor to develop a course plan that best meets your individual graduate training needs. However, students are also strongly encouraged to meet with Andrea Williams, Administrator for the Psychology Department, regarding their schedules before/when they first arrive, and at the beginning of each fall semester.
Students meet with Andrea for planning purposes to make sure they are taking the correct courses and to create an academic course plan for their time at UCCS.

B. Detailed Course Requirements

1. MA Psychological Science students must take the following courses

- PSY 5810 Research Statistics and Methodology I
- PSY 5820 Research Statistics and Methodology II
- PSY 5830 Applied Multivariate Techniques I
- PSY 6030 Research Practicum
- PSY 7000 Master's Thesis (6 credits)
- PSY 6430 Contemporary Issues in Psychology (4 semesters)

2. MA Psychological Science students must take at least two of the following core content courses:

- PSY 5210 Psychology of Aging I*
- PSY 5220 Psychology of Aging II*
- PSY 6100 Developmental Psychology
- PSY 6110 Cognition
- PSY 6120 Neuroscience
- PSY 6130 Social Psychology
- PSY 6140 Personality
- PSY 6150 Psychology and Law
- PSY 6160 Trauma Psychology
  *Note: Students may count either PSY 5210 or 5220 as a core content course but not both.

3. Two additional courses are required. They may be taken from the Core Content Courses listed above or from the following courses:

- PSY 5840 Methods and Design for Analyzing Change
- PSY 6410 Aging Seminar (Special Topics)

The particular courses chosen will vary from student to student depending on the student's area of concentration. Talk with your mentor to pick the most appropriate courses, and talk with Andrea Williams to find out when those courses may be offered.

C. **Research Thesis**

A research-based thesis is required of all Master's students. The psychology faculty are actively engaged in research; Master's students are required to establish a mentorship relationship with a faculty member and to develop a thesis from an ongoing research project. The research and scientific method coursework is designed to help the student formulate a research proposal, analyze the data collected, and write up the results for scholarly publication. In addition to those courses, students take 6 credit hours of PSY 7000 - Thesis. Students are encouraged to present their work at regional and national meetings and to write up their research for publication.

D. **Sample Course Sequence for Psychological Science Students**

The Psychological Science track requires a minimum of 36 credit hours. The required courses can be completed by a full-time student in 2 years if the following course sequence is followed:

YEAR 1

Fall: Research Statistics and Methodology I, Contemporary Issues in Psychology, and a Core Content Course

Spring: Research Statistics and Methodology II, a Core Content Course, Contemporary Issues in Psychology, and Research Practicum or an optional Core Content Course.

YEAR 2

Fall: Applied Multivariate Techniques I, Contemporary Issues in Psychology, and Research Practicum or a Core Content Course

Spring: Methods and Design for Analyzing Change or Research Practicum, Masters Thesis, Contemporary Issues in Psychology, and a Core Content Course

This shows 43 credits, so student should adjust where it works best while fulfilling the general requirements.

E. Transfer Credits

Transfer credits from other graduate institutions will be reviewed and approved by the program Director. The accepted list of transfer credits and courses will be documented and placed in the student's file. Students will be asked to provide relevant course descriptions, syllabi, and assignments to help the Director determine equivalency of the classes. Usually, this process is completed after the student earns an offer of admission to the program but before the student officially enrolls in the program. A Transfer of Credit form must be completed and approved by the Graduate School before graduation.

III. STUDENT MENTORING, TERMINATION, AND GRIEVANCES

A. Mentoring

Each student typically selects a faculty mentor, based on mutual research interests, mentoring style, availability, etc. Your mentor will be a highly important person for you, one who we hope will give you a great research experience, advise you throughout graduate school, and help you to some extent throughout your career. Thus, selecting a mentor is a very important task for you, and one that should be done with a great deal of thoughtfulness.

One of the best ways to get information about a mentor and a lab is to speak to current students in the lab. Even if you have already selected a mentor, you are strongly encouraged to speak to current lab members to get their perspective on the lab and how it runs so that you will be have good information to make the relationship a success. It is also very important to ask your potential mentors to lay out for you the expectations they have of students in the lab so that you can determine if their expectations and work styles match yours. It is important to determine if you "fit" well with your mentor and to select someone with whom you feel confident you can develop a positive working relationship.

The faculty mentor maintains responsibility for consulting with his/her advisees on all academic and research matters. Most students maintain the same mentor throughout their time in the program. However, in some cases interests change or work styles are not compatible. Students and faculty are encouraged to work together professionally when a change in mentors is desired. Students desiring to change mentors should discuss this with their present mentor in a timely manner and at least before a final decision is made. As they are considering a change in mentors, it is understood that students may wish to consult peers, other faculty, and/or the Director of the Psychological Science program, but they should not proceed to work with a new mentor before notifying their present mentor and making an official change with the Director.

B. Grades and Quality of Graduate Work

Article V, Section B of the Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual (http://www.uccs.edu/graduateschool/current-students/policies-and-procedures.html) describes the minimum requirements for grades and quality of graduate coursework. In addition, the Psychology Department has set the following standards and policies regarding grades:

In order to graduate, a student must earn grades of "A," "B," or "P" (Pass) for all courses listed in the required curriculum.

Students receive "IP" (in progress) grades for thesis or dissertation research conducted but not completed during a semester. The letter grade assigned in the final

semester of thesis or dissertation research should indicate the student's overall performance on the project.

Student performance in any courses other than thesis, dissertation, and practicum courses will be assigned a letter grade ("A," "B," "C," "D," or "F").

The grade of "I" (incomplete) is given when the instructor believes that the course work is unavoidably incomplete or that a supplementary examination is justifiable. UCCS Change of Grade Forms are used to remove grades of "I". These forms must be signed by the instructor of the course and submitted to the LAS Dean's Office.

Students cannot graduate with an "I" on their record. A grade of "I" must be removed by the end of the next semester (exclusive of summer sessions) unless the student has a signed contract with the instructor specifying a different deadline. The contract specifying a different deadline also should specify what is required for removal of the "I." Failure to remove the "I" by the deadline (either the end of the next semester or other) will result in the student being placed on probation.

Grades of "C" or Below: A grade of "C" or lower in any course taken by a graduate student is unsatisfactory. A total of two grades of "C" or lower results in the student being automatically placed on probation. If a third grade of "C" or lower is received, the student may be dropped from the program. A student remains on probation until the Psychological Science Faculty Committee is satisfied that appropriate remediation has occurred. Courses with a grade of C or lower do not count toward graduation, so such a grade in any course in the student's plan of study must be remediated. Appropriate remediation procedures are as follows:

For all courses, the program Director and the course instructor define remediation requirements, which could involve retaking the course. The student must submit an acceptable remediation proposal, including time lines for completion, to the Psychological Science Faculty Committee for consideration. The accepted proposal becomes a part of the student's plan of study and is considered in assessing progress through the program.

C. Student Termination

If the Psychological Science Faculty Committee determines that a student's performance in one or more criterion areas is deficient, they may elect either to dismiss the student from the program or to place the student on probation. If the deficiency is judged to be sufficiently severe, the student may be immediately dismissed from the program. If the performance deficiency is judged to be remediable, a plan will be developed with the student to remediate his/her performance deficiencies. This remediation plan will describe the nature of the student's problems, the expected behavior patterns or goals of the plan, possible methods for accomplishing these goals, and a date for re-evaluating the student. The student will be considered to be on probation during this remedial period. The success of the remediation plan will be evaluated by the Committee by the specified date. On the basis of this evaluation the Committee may: (a) decide that the specific problem is no longer a significant one and continue the student in the program; (b) develop a further remedial plan and date for reevaluation and continue

the student on probation; (c) suggest that the student pursue other career objectives; or (d) when the student has failed to meet the remedial goals and there is no expectation she or he will be able to meet them in the immediate future, she or he may be formally dismissed from the program.

The student has the right to appeal any decision made by the Psychological Science Faculty Committee. The intent to appeal must be provided in writing to the Director of the Psychological Science program within 7 days of being notified of a decision by the Psychological Science Faculty Committee. An appeal will first go to the Director. If the Director is not impartial, the next level of appeal will go to the Department Chair, and then to the Dean of LAS. These policies are reiterated below in the section on Grievances.

D. Grievance and Appeal Procedures

A student who has a grievance or appeal, such as unfair treatment or unethical behavior by one or more faculty members, should first make efforts to resolve the conflict informally. The grievant should first:

- Discuss his or her concerns directly with the parties causing the grievance.
- Consult with the program Director about the incident for suggestions about how to proceed. If the Director is not impartial, the student may address the concern with the faculty advisor or mentor, any other faculty member, or the Department Chair. After the Department Chair, the next level of appeal is to the Dean of LAS.

The Graduate School at UCCS also has a procedure for student appeals. The Graduate School will generally not hear appeals unless the student has exhausted procedures in the department, school and college. Information on the Graduate School process for appeals can be found here: http://www.uccs.edu/graduateschool/graduate-school-rules.html#v_i_1

UCCS also has an ombuds program available to students to assist in problem resolution. An ombuds works outside the formal problem-resolution and grievance procedures of the University. The role of an ombuds is to listen, receive, and provide information from parties, provide informal facilitation between parties when requested, and such other functions normally seen as within the purview of a University ombudsperson. An ombuds does not make, change, or set aside policy or previous administrative decisions, nor does an ombuds serve t0 determine the rights of others to unilaterally resolve conflicts. Information on this program can be found here: http://www.uccs.edu/~ombuds/

**IV. SEXUAL HARASSMENT, STUDENT REPRESENTATION
AND ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER POLICIES**

A.   Sexual Harassment Policy

UCCS is committed to fostering a collegial academic community whose mission requires positive learning, working, and living environment that values and protects individual dignity and the integrity of human relationships. As a place of work and study, UCCS must be free of inappropriate and disrespectful conduct and communication of a sexual nature, of sexual harassment and related retaliation and of all forms of sexual intimidation and exploitation. UCCS will not condone sexual harassment or related retaliation of or by any member of the university community. Individuals who violate the University Sexual Harassment Policy will be disciplined or subjected to corrective action, up to and including termination or expulsion.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual attention. It can involve intimidation, threats, coercion or promises. Harassment may occur between any combination of members of the campus community: student, faculty member, staff member and administrator. It generally occurs when one person, the harasser, holds a position of real or perceived authority over the other individual.

The Sexual Harassment Officer receives reports of possible sexual harassment. When it is determined that there may be a violation of the Sexual Harassment Policy, an investigation of the allegation may be conducted. (The Sexual Harassment Officer will brief the complainant and respondent on the steps of any investigation and report.) If you think you are being sexually harassed, the Sexual Harassment Officer and Committee members are only a phone call away at 255-4324.

University sexual harassment policy can be found here:
http://www.uccs.edu/Documents/vcaf/policies/2014/300-017DisHar.pdf

B.   Student Representation

Students have the opportunity to serve on various faculty-based committees in the department. This provides students with the opportunity to serve as liaisons between faculty and students and experience in working on committees. These opportunities will become available through faculty invitation. Interested students should consult with their faculty mentor or the program Director to facilitate their participation.

C.   Psychology Graduate Student Organization

The Psychology Graduate Student Organization (PGSO) is an organization that promotes student interests; provides a forum for students to voice their needs/concerns; and organizes educational, professional, and social activities for students. The PGSO is run by and represents both M.A. and Ph.D. psychology students. The GSO is a great way to get involved and to get to know your fellow students.

D.   Faculty Evaluations

Students have the opportunity to provide feedback to each of their course instructors with end-of-semester course evaluations (called Faculty Course Questionnaires) that are administered in each class.

E.   Communication

Once you are registered at UCCS, an email account will automatically be created for you. For help in finding out your email account name, setting up a new password, and managing your UCCS email account, consult the Information Technology Help Desk (http://www.uccs.edu/it/get-help.html). Students are required to access their account regularly as this is both the department's and the university's official form of communication. Students are also required to keep the Psychology office updated as to current phone and address information.

F.   Policy on Outside Employment

The psychology graduate program is intended and designed to be full-time. Successful completion of the program in a timely manner requires a full-time effort. Regular employment responsibilities outside the scope of the program (i.e., activities that are not teaching assistantships or research assistantships) are likely to interfere with the students' development of knowledge and skills. Therefore, outside employment is strongly discouraged. Students should speak with their mentor or the program Director prior to accepting such employment.

G.   Professional Organizations

We strongly encourage students to become members of relevant professional associations such as the Association for Psychological Science (APS), the American Psychological Association (APA), and relevant divisions of APA. Membership in professional organizations helps students increase their identification and development as scientists and professionals in psychology. Student membership fees are usually modest and include publications that are essential for your training program. Speak with your mentor about the most appropriate organizations and societies for your interests.

V. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Although funding is not guaranteed, an effort is made to provide each student with as much financial support as possible. This aid is in the form of fellowships, grants, work-study awards, teaching and research assistantships, and loans.

A. Financial Aid: Students interested in applying for financial aid should submit the Free Application for Federal Student aid (FAFSA) at the time of application to the program and no later than the deadline provided each year by the UCCS Financial Aid office. The Financial Aid office will send students an award letter (possibly via email). At this time you will sign a waiver for Andrea Williams (Psychology Department Administrator) to access to your financial aid information in the Financial Aid office. Once you receive an award offer letter from the Financial Aid office, please contact Andrea Williams at awilliam@uccs.edu or (719) 255-4158. It will be helpful to let the Psychology department be involved after your award is made by the Financial Aid office. Students may also contact the Office of Financial Aid at UCCS located in Cragmor Hall, 2nd Floor, (719) 255-3460. Their website is http://www.uccs.edu/~finaid/. More information about financial aid is included in the Appendix.

B. Fellowships: The campus-wide Graduate School offers Fellowships for graduate students. The awards are merit-based and the nomination process is initiated by the program Director in the psychology department. These awards are officially offered through the Financial Aid office. Psychology graduate students have been successful in the past in receiving these awards.

C. Work Study: Work study awards are offered by the Financial Aid office as a part of your financial aid package and allow you to work in the department and be paid with federal funds. These funds help you and the department to maximize your total funding.

D. Travel: There are several options for funds to travel to conferences. These are a) the Gerontology Center (for aging focused research only), b) the Psychology Department, and c) the UCCS Graduate Student Association (http://sll.uccs.edu/org/gsa/Resources)
If you are approved for funding through any departmental funds, you must follow departmental travel purchasing rules. Begin by meeting with David DuBois and completing a Travel Authorization form.

E. Colorado Residency Requirements: An in-state student is one who has been a legal resident of Colorado for one year or more immediately preceding the beginning of the term for which the in-state classification is sought. If you are over 22 years of age or are emancipated at the beginning of the 12 month waiting period you can establish residency. Residency is established immediately when one has a permanent place of habitation in Colorado and the intention of making Colorado one's true, fixed, and permanent home and place of habitation. You have to prove your habitation and intent by taking the following actions:

- change of driver's license to Colorado
- change of auto registration to Colorado
- Colorado voter registration
- permanent employment in Colorado
- MOST IMPORTANT, payment of state income taxes, as a resident, by one whose income is sufficient to be taxed.

In order to document that you have a permanent residence in Colorado, a lease or purchase agreement or receipt of lease payments is required.

In order to qualify for in-state tuition for a given term, the 12 month waiting period (a full 365 days which does not begin until the legal domicile is established) must have expired by the first day of classes. If one's 12 month waiting period expires at any time after the first day of classes, in-state tuition cannot be granted for that term.

You must complete a petition submitted to the office of Admissions and Records to change from non-resident to resident classification. The petition and complete documentation must be submitted on or before the 6th day of classes in summer or the 12th day of classes in fall or spring in order to be considered for that term. Petitions submitted after this deadline cannot be considered until the next or subsequent term. It is a good idea to begin the petition process before the semester you plan to receive in-state classification. For more information and relevant forms see the website at:
http://www.uccs.edu/~registrar/

VI. . Other Resources

A. **Virtual Private Network (VPN):** A VPN creates a secure, encrypted internet connection with the university from an off-campus computer. This allows access to campus resources from an off-campus location. Information on setting up a VPN can be found on the Information Technology (IT) website:
http://www.uccs.edu/itservices/services/network-and-internet/vpn.html

Features of the VPN:
i. Transfer files to and from your on-campus IT account or a professor's account
ii. Update Symantec Antivirus from off campus
iii. Although we do not recommend using insecure FTP, if it's necessary to FTP to an on-campus resource, you must connect to the VPN server first to create a secure path
iv. You must also connect to the VPN server first to use Telnet to access an on-campus resource; e.g. SPSS on lynx.uccs.edu
v. Utilize some College or Department-specific resources

B. **Kraemer Family Library:** The UCCS campus library (http://www.uccs.edu/~library/) maintains an extensive collection of psychology journals and books as well as a large number of online databases. Interlibrary loan and Prospector, which searches Colorado libraries, are available for items not found in the UCCS library. Through any computer on campus, students may conduct literature searches (e.g., using PsycINFO) through the library's periodical databases. It is also possible to access the periodical databases from off campus using the Virtual Private Network (VPN) described above.

Addenda
University, Graduate School, Department and Program requirements evolve and change and are incorporated into periodic revisions of this handbook. It is possible that important changes will occur before a complete revision of this handbook. The Department will make every reasonable effort to inform you of such changes, and you must be attentive to relevant mailings and postings.

VII Appendix: Financial Aid Opportunities for Graduate Students

UCCS offers a variety of federal, state, and private financial aid programs to assist graduate students who need financial assistance. The relevant information, describing need-based aid, non need-based aid, work study, and scholarships, is available on the website of the Office of Financial Aid: http://www.uccs.edu/finaid/elig/grad.html

File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March 1st each year. If you do not file by priority date, you may not be considered for all the aid (including work study) for which you are eligible. You may complete this at http://www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Student Employment

Job listings are available to students through the Student Employment Assistance Network, or SEAN. You can access listings from the UCCS Student Employment website: http://www.uccs.edu/~stuemp/

For any questions regarding Financial Aid or Student Employment, you may also contact the Financial Aid office.
- ☐ Phone: (719) 255-3460
- ☐ Toll-free: 1-800-990-8227
- E-mail: Financial Aid: finaidse@uccs.edu
    Student Employment: stuemp@uccs.edu
    Scholarships: scholarships@uccs.edu

SIGNATURE PAGE

M.A. Program in Psychological Science Department of Psychology

I hereby declare that I have received, read, and agree to the policies and procedures detailed in this Graduate Student Handbook.

Please return the signed form to the Director of the Psychological Science program (Edie Greene, Ph.D.) at your earliest convenience.

_____

Student Name (Print)

_____

Student Signature   Date