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## **Program Mission**

The Behavioral and Brain Sciences (BBS) program emphasizes training in the natural and social science specialties in psychology including: biopsychology, cognitive, developmental, comparative, the scholarship of teaching and learning, psycholinguistics, language, personality, social psychology and affiliated areas in the behavioral and brain sciences. The program employs the individualized mentorship model to provide research experience for students seeking preparation for applying to Ph.D. programs, or pursuing college teaching, and other professional career paths. 1

## **Introduction**

This manual has been compiled to answer questions concerning the BBS program for new graduate students. The basic format of the program and requirements that need to be met to complete a Master of Science degree in psychology are detailed. It is hoped that this manual will help to eliminate confusion and that, in addition to the current *Graduate Bulletin*; it will be a valuable tool for you in planning your graduate course of studies.

This manual is subject to change as departmental and graduate school policies change and should not be considered a binding contract, but rather a helpful guide. Any changes or additions to this manual or to the policies discussed in it will be made with the best interests of the students and the program in mind. Changes will be communicated to you as soon as possible.

## **Ethical Principles**

The Psychology Department supports the adherence to ethical principles in the conduct of any professional activity, including research with human and animal participants and the provision of psychological services. As a student working toward a Master of Science degree in psychology, you will be asked to abide by these principles as well. Three booklets available from the American Psychological Association include statements concerning ethics. These are *Ethical Standards of Psychologists*, *Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants*, and *Standards for Providers of Psychological Services*. During orientation students will be asked to sign the Ethics Agreement which can be found in Appendix A.

## **Faculty Mentor/Advising**

Students enrolled in the BBS program will be assigned to a faculty mentor upon acceptance to the program. Your faculty mentor will guide you in choosing appropriate courses to meet your objectives, research activities, and in selection of a thesis topic or selection of non-thesis track electives. They will also help with advising and career issues and concerns. A plan for a course of study should be drafted and submitted in writing to the program graduate coordinator for approval prior to the end of the student's first semester in the master's program. The Program of Study Form can be found in Appendix D. Courses will be selected in consultation with the faculty mentor and will usually include general courses in experimental

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## **Electives**

PSY 532 and PSY 550 are not BBS program courses may be taken for elective credit with the permission of the instructor. No c

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## Problems

If there are any curriculum-related problems (i.e., availability of courses, course waivers, or approval of transfer credits) that arise during the course of your studies, you should first consult with your faculty mentor. If you cannot resolve the problem to your satisfaction at that level, you may then go through the following channels: (1) Graduate Coordinator, (2) Graduate Committee, (3) Department Chairperson, (4) Director of Graduate Studies for the College of Arts and Sciences, and (5) Dean of the Graduate School. If possible, problems should be dealt with at the departmental level. In no case should you go outside of the department with your concerns without first trying to resolve the problem within the department.

A graduate student who has an academic appeal (i.e., grade appeal) should follow the academic conduct policy in the bulletin (<https://bulletin.southalabama.edu/>) and The Lowdown, the USA student handbook (<https://www.southalabama.edu/lowdown/>).

## Research Involvement

The BBS student is expected to be involved in research from his/her first semester in the program. All students (thesis and non-thesis track) are expected to complete a first-year research project by the end of the second semester (or summer term at the latest). If the student chooses the thesis track, then the culmination of their master's program is the completion and oral defense of a master's thesis. A minimum of 6 semester hours of PSY 599 is required to satisfy the thesis option track requirements. A maximum of 9 hours credit in PSY 594 and a maximum of 9 hours credit in PSY 599.

Non-thesis track students have no research commitment beyond the first year project but are not discouraged from being involved in research within faculty lab.

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for thesis research, this must be approved by the department chair prior to final approval of your prospectus. Normally, any expenses incurred, including photocopying expenses and test

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**APPENDIX A**

**ETHICS AGREEMENT**

I agree to conduct myself in an ethical manner as set forth in *Ethical Standards of Psychologists*, *Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants* and *Standards for Providers of Psychological Services*

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**APPENDIX B**

**ADMISSIONS AGREEMENT**

You have been offered admission to the Behavioral and Brain Sciences Track in the Master's Program of the Department of Psychology at the University of South Alabama. You must meet the degree requirements of this track as outlined below.

Degree Requirements for All Students

1. Completion of at least 36 Semester hours of approved graduate courses with a minimum grade of B including completion of core courses.
2. Successful completion of a comprehensive examination in Psychology.

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Name of Applicant

Behavioral and Brain Sciences

- \_\_\_ My signature below indicates that I have read and understand this agreement. I do plan to enroll in the Behavioral and Brain Sciences Track of the Psychology Master's Program at the University of South Alabama in the Fall Semester 2022 under the conditions outlined above.
- \_\_\_ I do not plan to enroll in the Psychology Master's Program at the University of South Alabama.

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Signature

Date

## APPENDIX C

### CRITERIA FOR MASTER'S THESES

The Department of Psychology supports the general principle, established by SACS standards and the Council of Graduate Schools, and required by A.C.H.E., that a thesis or dissertation should use scholarly methods to achieve original results. In applying these standards to the discipline of psychology, the Department of Psychology at the University of South Alabama has established the following specific criteria.

1. **Quality:** Theses submitted as a requirement toward the Master of Science degree in psychology must meet the following standards of quality:

A. **Originality:** Theses should be original in at least one of the following:

1. Topic selection.
2. Approach/Methodology.
3. Analysis and Interpretation.
4. Subject Population.

Note: Normally, literal replications will not be accepted, however replication of research may be acceptable if clear justification can be offered.

B. **Methodological Soundness:** Theses should be methodologically sound, using research design and statistical analyses appropriate to the problem.

C. **Logical Soundness:** Theses should be logically sound. This is especially important in theoretical discussions, problem statements, and discussions of results, but should be apparent throughout the thesis.

D. **Literature Survey:** Theses should include an adequate survey of the relevant literature and a critical examination of that literature.

E. **Discussion of Results:** Theses should include an adequate discussion of the results of the research to include, where appropriate, possible applications of the results, theoretical inferences that can be drawn 9.6d disc

- D. Historical/Archival Research.
- E. Applied Research.

4. **Product:** Normally the product of thesis research will be a manuscript from which could be developed a paper suitable for publication in a refereed journal. The manuscript should be prepared according to guidelines found in the most recent editions of the following two publications:
  - A. Guide for Preparing Theses and Dissertations, the Graduate School, University of South Alabama.
  - B. Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.
5. **Ethics:** All thesis research should be conducted according to ethical principles as established by the American Psychological Association.
6. **Procedures:** Students must follow established Psychology Department procedures concerning the approval of thesis proposals, conduct of research, and the final oral defense of the thesis.

**APPENDIX D**

**PROGRAM OF STUDY (to be submitted by the end of your first semester)**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

**Core Courses**

PSY 500	Proseminar in Psychology	4 hours
PSY 501	Research Design and Statistics I	3 hours
PSY 502	Research Design and Statistics II	3 hours

**Behavioral and Brain Sciences Track Courses**

PSY 586	Cognitive Neuroscience	3 hours
PSY 575	Comparative Psychology	3 hours
PSY 524	Lifespan Development	3 hours
PSY 590	Special Topic	3 hours
PSY 599	Thesis	6-9 hours

**Proposed Electives**

<b>Course</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Hours</b>

**Approved:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Graduate Coordinator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## APPENDIX E

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