PSYCHOLOGY, PH.D.

Psychology offers six areas of concentration (known as area groups): biological, clinical, cognitive and cognitive neuroscience, developmental, perception, and social and personality. Although there is a good deal of collaboration and interaction across groups, each area of concentration has its own requirements for graduate study and students are typically admitted into one of these areas of concentration.

Although most incoming graduate students’ interests fall within these six areas of concentration, some do not. That some students’ interests cut across disciplinary area groups and/or interface with other programs on campus is to be expected in a top-notch department because the boundaries of psychology itself are in flux. An innovative feature of the program is the Individualized Graduate Major designed for those graduate students who do not find a niche in the current area group structure and, instead, wish to cross area group lines and/or incorporate substantial training from other programs in their psychology graduate work. It is important to emphasize that the Individualized Graduate Major leads to a psychology Ph.D. and is not appropriate for students whose graduate study does not emphasize psychological science. Such students are advised to pursue a Ph.D. in another program or a committee degree.

Faculty members and graduate students have many affiliations with other departments, institutes, and training programs: Institute on Aging, Waisman Center on Mental Retardation and Human Development, Wisconsin Regional Primate Research Center, Health Emotions Center, Neuroscience Training Program, Keck Neuroimaging Center, Hearing Training Program, Women’s Studies Research Center, Institute for Research on Poverty, NSF National Consortium on Violence Research, Mass Communications Research Center, and Survey Research Laboratory. There are strong ties to the departments of Anatomy, Anthropology, Communicative Disorders, Educational Psychology, Entomology, Forest and Wildlife Ecology, Medical Microbiology and Immunology, Industrial Engineering, Ophthalmology, Psychiatry, Sociology, and Zoology.

BIOLOGY OF BRAIN AND BEHAVIOR

The biological psychology area encompasses the subdisciplines of behavioral neuroscience and animal behavior. Students sponsored by faculty in this area are trained in theory and methods required for understanding the biological bases of behavior. The doctoral track in behavioral neuroscience provides research training in specific methods and techniques needed to assess brain and peripheral physiological mechanisms. Topic areas investigated by program faculty include psychoneuroimmunology, hormone-behavior relationships, neurobiology of stress and arousal, sensory processes, and the neural organization of the cerebral cortex. Age-related changes during development, and the impact of stress on health and behavior are also important foci. Students learn modern surgical, neuroanatomical, neurophysiological, neuroimaging (PET, MRI), immunohistochemical, pharmacological, and behavioral techniques. Training in hormone and immune assays, or cellular recording, are also provided when required for the student’s research. Conceptual issues, such as experimental design, and the relevance to human clinical and social conditions are emphasized.

Students in the program can also pursue training in theories and methodologies involved in the study of animal behavior. Coursework and research provide a unique interdisciplinary experience with a strong emphasis on evolutionary/ecological principles and proximate mechanisms, including communication and the role of hormones and social relationships underlying the expression of behavior. The program goal is to train outstanding students with a special interest in integrating knowledge across traditional discipline lines.

Many facilities are available for graduate training, including the department’s Harlow Primate Laboratory, internationally known for its studies of primate development and learning, and the Calitrichid Behavior Laboratory, renowned for research on communication, reproduction, and conservation. In addition, students benefit from the Wisconsin Regional Primate Research Center with its large rhesus monkey and marmoset colonies. Within the Brogden Psychology Building, research programs utilize many other small animal species. Well-equipped facilities are available, including surgical suites, histology, electrophysiology, endocrine, and immunology laboratories.

The program continues to grow and incorporate new perspectives. Students and faculty interact and collaborate with the departments of Anthropology, Comparative Biosciences, Forest and Wildlife Ecology, and Zoology, as well as the Neurosciences Training Program, Institute on Aging, and Center for Excellence in Women’s Health Research. The university provides a diverse and stimulating academic environment for training in biological psychology.

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

The training model for the UW–Madison doctoral program in clinical psychology is that of a scientist–practitioner. Based on the program’s endorsement of a scientist–practitioner model, the educational plan focuses on two major and interrelated goals that integrate science and practice:

1. to produce graduates who have the requisite knowledge, skills, and experience to create and disseminate new knowledge about the processes and mechanisms underlying psychopathology; and
2. to produce graduates who have the requisite knowledge and skills for entry into the practice of professional clinical psychology and who understand and appreciate the importance of an empirical basis to clinical practice.

The program uses a mentor model for research training: applicants are admitted to the program based in part on how closely their research interests are aligned with that of current faculty. The close working relationship between the faculty mentor and the graduate student is one of the mechanisms that serves to integrate theory and research with the applied training. Coursework and practicum experiences comprise the other mechanisms that foster the integration of science and practice.

The interests of and methods utilized by faculty vary widely but all share the common goal of pursuing innovative, cutting edge analyses of major forms of psychopathology. The program also offers excellent clinical training and in the course of their tenure in the program, graduate students in clinical psychology develop expertise in both assessment and treatment of psychopathology. However the student who is not deeply committed to research and scholarship will, in all likelihood, not be satisfied with the Wisconsin Clinical Program.

During their stay, clinical graduate students complete courses in assessment, clinical research methods, and a sequence of clinical core courses covering the etiology and treatment of psychopathology, in addition to statistics/methodology courses and coursework in nonclinical areas both in and outside of the department. The required curriculum may take more than five years to complete. The clinical program is situated...
in a world-class department that includes area groups in biology of brain and behavior, cognitive and cognitive neuroscience, developmental, perception, and social and personality. In addition, an Emotion Training Program within the department cuts across all other area groups and is supported by an NIMH training grant. Many clinical students and faculty are involved in various aspects of the Emotion Training Program. Clinical students have access to an extensive range of opportunities through collaborations with other units on campus including the Waisman Center, an interdisciplinary research institute for developmental research; the Institute on Aging; the Waisman Laboratory for Brain Imaging and Behavior; the Department of Psychiatry; and other departments in the Medical School, College of Letters & Science, and the School of Education.

A major goal of the program is to integrate students' clinical and research activities. Students begin their clinical practicum in the Psychology Department Research and Training Clinic (http://psych.wisc.edu/clinical-research-and-training.htm) during their third year in the program and typically continue such practicum training throughout the remainder of their graduate careers. An important component of clinical training is the "Small Group Practicum" in which various clinical professors supervise practicum activities on topics related to their own areas of interest. In the summer following the third academic year, the student is appointed to a clerkship in one of the several agencies that cooperate with the department in providing practicum training. Finally, all clinical students obtain at least one full year of full-time clinical experience in an approved internship facility. Whereas many students obtain internships at various of the better-known training centers around the country, other students complete their internships at one of the excellent local sites. Virtually all clinical graduate students have received financial support while in residence in the graduate program.

COGNITIVE AND COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCE (CCN)

The study of cognition and perception has undergone explosive growth during the past decade with exciting developments in psychology and related fields and with new techniques for studying mind and brain. The cognitive and perceptual sciences (CPS) area group provides a unique and stimulating graduate school experience for students interested in an interdisciplinary approach to cognition and perception. Faculty members combine expertise in cognition and perception with a broad arsenal of methods including experimental, developmental, computational, and biological approaches. This breadth in methodologies is paralleled by breadth across disciplines of communicative disorders, educational psychology, and neuroscience. Areas of exceptional strength in cognition include language development, speech perception, neural representation of language and memory, gesture, higher-level comprehension, music cognition, problem solving, and embodied cognition. Research in hearing and vision includes perceptual development, perception of complex sounds, perception of 3-D layout and auditory space, attention, and neural processing of auditory and visual objects and events. Laboratory facilities are comprehensive and fully state of the art, enhanced by unique opportunities for training in neuroimaging at the Keck Laboratory for Functional Brain Imaging and in developmental methods at the Waisman Center. The program is committed to maintaining a collegial environment in which students collaborate with faculty in developing their research programs. Graduates with a Ph.D. from the program maintain careers as university or college professors, or as researchers at public or corporate laboratories.

DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Research in the developmental area group focuses on the interrelationships of biological, environmental, and behavioral processes throughout the life span, and on the mechanisms and processes of change. The program emphasizes interdisciplinary studies, and allows graduate students flexibility in designing a program of study consonant with their goals and interests. One central part of the developmental program is a weekly lunch meeting, in which students and faculty present ongoing research and discuss current topics in the field. Students in the program focus on cognitive, emotional, language, perceptual, personality, social development, or relations between these areas. Within these content domains, students and faculty conduct research on both typical and atypical development, and work with individuals representing a wide range of ages, including infants, preschool and school-age children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly. Specific faculty research interests include the development of mathematical reasoning and problem solving, development of visual perception and attention, developmental behavioral genetics, gender role development, developmental psychopathology, resiliency in adulthood and aging, and language acquisition.

Participants in research studies are drawn from an unusually wide variety of sources, including local preschools and day care centers; public, and private schools in the Madison area; the Dane County Division of Children, Youth, and Families; the Wisconsin Longitudinal Survey; University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics; and the Institute on Aging. Many developmental faculty are affiliated with the Waisman Center on Human Development, which provides a database of typically developing infants and children with developmental disabilities.

SOCIAL AND PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY

The program is designed to train students for research on the cutting edge of the fields of social and personality psychology. The curriculum consists of a series of courses and seminars designed to provide students with a thorough introduction to the fields of social and personality psychology. This coursework is complemented by courses that provide the methodological and statistical skills necessary for several kinds of research. The primary emphasis is on experimental laboratory research, but training is also provided in field research, longitudinal studies, observational methods, and archival research. There are also opportunities to pursue theoretical issues in various applied areas (e.g., education, health psychology). The goal is to train students for productive academic careers in university settings. Students are provided with the opportunity to work collaboratively with one or more faculty members on a variety of research topics including: acculturation, achievement behavior, attitudes, competition, culture and cognition, emotion, goals and self-regulation, interest and intrinsic motivation, social cognition, social perception, social neuroscience, and stereotypes, prejudice and intergroup relations. Students are also encouraged to develop their own independent lines of research.

Additional resources are available to students from outside the psychology department. The social psychology program in the sociology department shares faculty members and courses with the program in psychology and offers seminars that supplement those taught in psychology. In addition, resources are provided by the Mass Communications Research Center, the Institute for Research on Poverty, and the Survey Research Laboratory.
FUNDING

Many students also receive NSF or NIH predoctoral fellowships and other awards during their course of study within the program. To support professional development, small grants fund student research and travel to present work at national conferences. The department hosts two training grants from NIH, one focused on Emotion and one focused on Language, that each support several predoctoral students.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

DOCTORAL DEGREES

Ph.D.

MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

60 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

40 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE COURSEWORK (50%) REQUIREMENT

At least half of degree coursework (30 credits out of 60 total credits) must be in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: GRADUATE WORK FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Applying prior coursework toward the graduate degree is allowed only in exceptional circumstances. In total, only 6 credits maximum may be applied from prior coursework, including any prior coursework from graduate work from other institutions, from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree or from the UW–Madison University Special career. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to the program may not be used to satisfy doctoral degree requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNDERGRADUATE

Applying prior coursework toward the graduate degree is allowed only in exceptional circumstances. In total, only 6 credits maximum may be applied from prior coursework, including any prior coursework from graduate work from other institutions, from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree or from the UW–Madison University Special career. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to the program may not be used to satisfy doctoral degree requirements.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

12 credits

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED

Must take PSYCH 610 Statistical Analysis of Psychological Experiments, PSYCH 710 Design and Analysis of Psychological Experiments, and complete required First-Year Project.

DOCTORAL MINOR/BREADTH REQUIREMENTS

Doctoral students must complete a doctoral minor.

OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT

3.00

OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS

The Graduate School requires an average grade of B or better in all coursework (300 or above, not including research credits) taken as a graduate student unless conditions for probationary status require higher grades. Grades of Incomplete are considered to be unsatisfactory if they are not removed during the next enrolled semester.

PROBATION POLICY

The Graduate School regularly reviews the record of any student who earned grades of BC, C, D, F, or Incomplete in a graduate course (300 or above), or grade of U in research credits. This review could result in academic probation with a hold on future enrollment or in being suspended from the Graduate School.

ADVISOR

Every graduate student is required to have an advisor. An advisor is a faculty member, or sometimes a committee, from the major department responsible for providing advice regarding graduate studies. An advisor generally serves as the thesis advisor. In many cases, an advisor is assigned to incoming students. Students can be suspended from the Graduate School if they do not have an advisor.

To ensure that students are making satisfactory progress toward a degree, the Graduate School expects them to meet with their advisor on a regular basis.

A committee often accomplishes advising for the students in the early stages of their studies.

ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Doctoral students are required to take a comprehensive preliminary/oral examination after they have cleared their record of all Incomplete and Progress grades (other than research and thesis). Deposit of the doctoral dissertation in the Graduate School is required.
TIME CONSTRAINTS

Doctoral degree students who have been absent for ten or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

A candidate for a doctoral degree who fails to take the final oral examination and deposit the dissertation within five years after passing the preliminary examination may require to take another preliminary examination and to be admitted to candidacy a second time.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

Contact the program for information on any language requirements.

ADMISSIONS

An applicant is admitted into the program by an individual faculty member or by an area group (i.e., a group of faculty members associated with a major area of concentration) and not by the department as a whole, nor by an admissions committee. Because these programs tend to be small, they may not admit students in a particular year. Applicants interested in a particular program or working with a particular faculty member should reference graduate program (http://psych.wisc.edu/graduate-program.htm) on the psychology website or contact individual faculty members to determine if admissions are likely for that year.

Each faculty member and area group give preference to applicants who have a high potential for success in graduate school and who also share research interests with the prospective faculty sponsor. Applicants should consider carefully the description of faculty research interests, read several of their publications, and consult with faculty and advisors at the undergraduate institution before applying to the program. Whereas most applicants have majored in psychology, the department gives full consideration to applicants with undergraduate majors in other relevant areas.

Given its commitment to students, the Department of Psychology takes seriously its responsibility when admitting an applicant. Every piece of information is considered carefully. Students are selected on the basis of record of academic achievement, Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores, references, evidence of motivation and ability to do research, and also the fit between faculty and student research interests.

Information regarding applications deadlines is on the program website (http://psych.wisc.edu/graduate-admission-and-requirements.htm). Applicants should have a completed application by the deadline to ensure full consideration. Most students admitted into the program are supported by either a research or project assistantship, teaching assistantship, or fellowship.

ADMISSION SELECTION CRITERIA

Although individual faculty members and area groups decide who will be admitted, the psychology department sets certain minimum standards that must be met by those admitted to the graduate program. These are an undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale as well as verbal and quantitative scores on the GRE that sum to at least 310.

Consideration for admission is highly competitive. The department receives approximately 400 applications each year and less than 10 percent are admitted to the program. Applicants who fall below the minimum standards set by the department may still be admitted where there is clear justification (e.g., international students or minority group students whose GRE scores may not be an indicator of potential for graduate work, or students who are below the minimum requirement in one respect but well above it in other respects).

Undergraduate research experience is highly valued in applicants to the program and greatly enhances their chances of admission. Such research experience provides an opportunity to discover whether research is of interest and provides evidence of motivation and ability to do research.

Three references are required and are read very carefully. Good letters in favor of the applicant are essential and should be provided by faculty who know the applicant fairly well. The references should provide information that will evaluate potential for graduate work beyond that revealed by GPA and GRE scores. For example, a reference from a professor who writes about a student’s unique skills, research abilities, and motivation is more influential than a reference that says the student received an “A” and was “very pleasant.” Thus, references from faculty the applicant has worked with on a research project or senior thesis carry more weight in making a decision to admit.

In addition to references, grades, and Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores, the faculty also consider carefully the personal statement. Applicants should describe in the personal statement any prior research experience and their role in that research.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

• Students will be prepared to make meaningful contributions to research and teaching in psychology.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

• Students will develop a broad understanding of the field of psychology.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING GOALS

• Students will develop a deep understanding of the theory and empirical observations related to their area of expertise.
• Students will develop a proficiency in statistical analyses relevant to psychological research.
• Students will develop expertise in experimental design.
• Students will develop literature research and critical thinking skills necessary for psychological research and undergraduate and graduate teaching.
• Students will acquire expertise in the oral and written communication of experimental findings.
• Clinical students will receive broad training in the theory and practice of clinical psychology.

PEOPLE

Faculty: Professors Goldsmith (chair), Abramson, Alibali, A. Auger, Berridge, Brauer, Coe, Curtin, Davidson, Devine, Gernsbacher, Gooding, Harackiewicz, Hyde, Jenison, MacDonald, Marler, Niedenthal, Pollak, Postle, Rogers, Rosengren, Ryff, Saffran, Seidenberg; Associate Professors Bennett, Miyamoto, Shutts; Assistant Professors Green, Li,
Lupyan, Rokers, Saalmann, Simmering. Affiliated Faculty: Bakshi, Bolt, Dilworth-Bart, Edwards, Ellis-Weismer, Gammie, Hermann, Johnson, Kalin, Kalish, Koenigs, Litovsky, Lutfi, MacLean, Nathan, Nitschke, Piper, Populin, Riters, Sanchez, Schneider