

Frances L. Hiatt School of Psychology:
Department of Psychology
Clark University



**Graduate Education Handbook:
Policies and Procedures**

CLARK
UNIVERSITY



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*This document is subject to revision—
please check back regularly for updates.*

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OVERVIEW OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

The Department of Psychology at Clark University offers graduate students a unique opportunity to explore a variety of theoretical approaches and to conduct research in the intimate atmosphere of a small research university. The department, which is part of Clark's Frances L. Hiatt School of Psychology, offers a Ph.D. in psychology. Students are not accepted for master's studies only.

During an era in which the discipline of psychology is often split into isolated fragments, we are committed to the idea of the unity of psychology. Although various subspecialties and methodological approaches are represented in the department, we respect different approaches and actively seek ways to integrate them.

We strive, theoretically and through empirical research, to understand human development and behavior within a sociocultural context. This focus is in keeping with a distinguished history at Clark, including developmentalists such as G. Stanley Hall, the first president of the University and founder of the American Psychological Association at Clark in 1892, and Heinz Werner, who reestablished Clark in the 1950s as a center of wide-ranging conceptions and innovative research in development. Our department is also characterized by a focus on urgent social issues, integration of research methods, and interdisciplinary approaches.

Clark is a small university where faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates are involved in a joint scholarly and educational enterprise. We encourage graduate students to work collectively and also to work closely with undergraduates as members of research teams that are led by faculty. In fact, many graduate students take on the added responsibility of leading research teams of undergraduates (under the supervision of faculty), thus gaining valuable mentoring experience.

Graduate students are expected to present their work at international and national conferences. They are also expected to become involved in the activities of professional societies such as the American Psychological Association, the Association for Psychological Science, the National Council on Family Relations, the Society for Research on Adolescence, the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, the International Society for Theoretical Psychology, the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, the International Society of Political Psychology, the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development, the Society for Prevention Research, the Society for Research on Child Development, the Jean Piaget Society, and others. We support the intellectual development of our students in ways that make them well-qualified for their future careers, whether in academic teaching and research, clinical practice, or elsewhere. We expect our graduate students to conduct high-quality empirical and theoretical work during their years at Clark and to submit that work for publication.

The Psychology Department at Clark University is committed to sustaining a diverse and inclusive community of faculty, students, and staff with the conviction that such an environment catalyzes learning and cultivates ethical, well-informed, and well-prepared citizens. To this end, we train and expect graduate students to reflect this active engagement with varied perspectives and constituencies in their own research, teaching (e.g. as TAs or independent instructors) and service.

When graduate students' attitudes, beliefs, or values create tensions that negatively impact the training process or their ability to effectively work with members of the public, the program

faculty and supervisors are committed to a developmental training approach that is designed to support the acquisition of professional competence. We support graduate students in finding a belief- or value-congruent path that allows them to work in a professionally competent manner with all. Professional competencies are determined by the profession for the benefit and protection of the public; consequently, students do not have the option to avoid working with particular populations or refuse to develop professional competencies because of conflicts with their attitudes, beliefs, or values.

The purpose of this Graduate Manual is to outline the procedures and policies that accompany enrollment in the Psychology Ph.D. program at Clark University. For more information about the policies and procedures of Clark University, please check the [University Student Handbook](#).

This manual is subject to revision; please check regularly for updates.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

The requirements of the graduate program are designed to provide students with a broad range of active educational experiences in the foundations of psychological theory, research methodology, and topical issues. As such, in addition to traditional coursework, students are expected to participate in research on an ongoing basis from the inception of their time at Clark. These research experiences are both formal and informal, and they include participation in faculty research along with at least two complete independent research projects.

We take mentorship and guidance very seriously in the graduate program, as we believe that strong student-faculty relationships are critical to a student's successful professional development. The three primary ways in which we provide this mentorship to students are through the relationship with the individual faculty advisor, the student's Portfolio Committee (during the first three years of the program), and the Dissertation Committee. Each is described in more detail below.

The general requirements of the graduate program are as follows:

- **Coursework:** Students take approximately four courses each semester for the first two years, ordinarily including History, Theory and Method: Research Design (PSYC 301) and two semesters of Statistical Methods (PSYC 302). For Social students, this includes the Social Forum that students enroll in every semester throughout their time in residence at Clark. In subsequent semesters in residence, students ordinarily take two or three content courses and directed studies. Social and Developmental students also take one semester of Advanced Statistical Methods (SEM or HLM) or Advanced Qualitative Methods. Clinical students are encouraged to take the Advanced Statistical Methods or the Advanced Qualitative Methods as an elective if it fits their schedule. A total of 16 one-semester courses is required for the Ph.D.
- **Portfolio:** Students demonstrate qualification to begin dissertation work by completing a portfolio of elements totaling 6 points during the first three years. Examples of elements include conference posters, papers, journal submissions, and grant proposals. A committee of three faculty members is formed to work with the student in assembling a portfolio at the beginning of the student's first semester.

- **Independent Research Project:** Students must be actively involved in research from the beginning of their graduate training. At the end of their first year, students present their work-in-progress in poster format at an annual Graduate Research Festival held in May. At the end of their second year, they present their work at the Festival as an oral presentation.
- **Ph.D. Dissertation:** Students are granted dissertation status (i.e., they become Doctoral Candidates) by having successfully completed the necessary coursework, the statistical exams, the Independent Research Project, and the portfolio, and having defended a dissertation proposal. The Ph.D. dissertation is the means by which students demonstrate the ability to conduct rigorous and meaningful research.

Summary of Program Requirements and General Timeline*	
End of 1st year	PSYC 301, PSYC 302 Present Independent Research Project (in progress) at Graduate Research Festival
End of 2nd year	Present Independent Research Project (completed) at Graduate Research Festival
3rd - 4th years	Complete Portfolio items Complete coursework (16 course credits) Present, defend, and have dissertation proposal accepted
4th - 6th years	Present, defend, and have dissertation accepted

*In addition to these requirements, each of the individual programs has additional training requirements (e.g., clinical training, core courses). See the individual programs for more information.

FIRST THREE YEARS

Mentorship

Faculty Advisors

The student-faculty advisor relationship is critical to the student's professional development; thus, students are expected to have a primary faculty advisor at all times. Faculty advisors must be members of the Psychology Department: full-time tenured professors, tenure-track professors, or research professors. Faculty advisors take primary responsibility for overseeing the research activities of their students and also provide mentorship in other areas relevant to students' professional development. Students and advisors are responsible for discussing plans regarding advising and mentorship in cases where the advisor has a pending sabbatical or retirement plans. Although not common, students may change advisors if it is in their best interest. However, students must have an advisor during their time in the program; failure to have an advisor may be grounds for dismissal. See [Administrative Aspects](#) for more information about this process.

Portfolio Committee

The purpose of the Portfolio Committee is to provide mentorship in and evaluation of the student's progress through the first three years of the graduate program. As such, together with the student, the Portfolio Committee reviews the student's [coursework](#), progress in the actual [Portfolio](#), the [Independent Research Project](#), and performance in [teaching](#). Portfolio committee members are also available for guidance on professional issues.

The Portfolio Committee is assigned to work with the student at the beginning of the student's first semester. The student's primary research advisor will be the chair of the Portfolio Committee, and the Department Administrator will randomly assign two other faculty members to serve as advisory members of each student's Portfolio Committee. These two members will remain on the committee even if the student switches primary research advisors.

Changes to the Portfolio Committee are not common. See [Administrative Aspects](#) for more information about this process.

Coursework

Students take approximately four courses each semester for the first two years; or spread out their courses over the first three years (in some exceptions that are to be discussed with the advisor and portfolio committee, the last course may even be taken in the fourth year when it is not offered earlier, such as Advanced Stats). Each course is normally worth 1 credit unit. No specific undergraduate courses or other graduate courses are prerequisites for any of the graduate courses. A total of 16 one-semester courses is required for the Ph.D. as prescribed by each program. Graduate students are considered full time when enrolled in at least 3 courses each semester.

While there is variability across the three programs in the courses students are expected to complete, every first-year student is required to register for **History, Theory and Method: Research Design (PSYC 301)**, and two consecutive semesters of **Statistical Methods (PSYC 302)**. Together with their advisors and Portfolio Committees, students will identify appropriate courses that will fulfill the remaining courses each semester.

PSYC 301-History, Theory and Method: Research Design

This class is designed to expose students to the various theoretical and methodological paradigms that have been used historically in psychology to generate knowledge and answer research questions. Students receive this instruction in the context of the development of their own [Independent Research Project](#).

PSYC 302-Statistical Methods

Students demonstrate competence in statistical methods by successfully completing each semester of the statistical methods course (PSYC 302). Although not common, students may petition the department to waive participation in one or both semesters of statistical methods. See [Exceptions](#) for more information. After completion of PSYC 302, students may complete coursework in Advanced Graduate Statistics (PSYC 337) and/or Qualitative/Interpretive Methods (PSYC 306).

Directed Study Courses

Beyond the first year, students ordinarily take several content courses each semester and supplement these courses with Research courses (PSYC 317). First-year students are only permitted to take one Research course per year, and second-year students may take a maximum of one Research course per semester. After the completion of the 16 required courses, students are permitted to take 3 units of Research (PSYC 317) in order to remain active students while working on the dissertation. In general, Research courses are meant to allow students to focus on issues related to their second-year project or dissertation, or to otherwise fill an important gap in their training. In all cases, the student's faculty advisor in collaboration with the Portfolio Committee will guide the student in making decisions about courses.

Evaluation by the Faculty

In order to encourage students to focus their energies on learning the material and making connections between coursework and their own scholarship, all courses are graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Most courses do not have a formal final exam (with the notable exception of Statistical Methods); however, they do have individual requirements that typically include regular and active participation, papers, and in-class presentations.

Incompletes are awarded at the discretion of the instructor for a *period not exceeding one year*. Any student who receives a failing grade in any course will be placed immediately on [Probationary Status](#). Performance not clearly above the Failing threshold in courses will be brought to the department's attention at the yearly Graduate Students Evaluation Meeting held in May.

Exceptions

In some unusual circumstances, prior graduate work in psychology may result in the reduction of some of the course requirements. Typically, students may petition to receive some transfer credit for equivalent graduate coursework successfully completed at prior institutions (the Graduate School allows a maximum of two full units/credits) or have some requirements waived (never more than six units/credits). Students wishing to deviate from the normal program of coursework must write a letter stating their reasons and receive *prior approval* from the student's faculty advisor, the appropriate program chair (e.g., Clinical, Developmental, Social), and the Department Chair. Students having successfully completed previous graduate-level courses in statistics elsewhere may, with the permission of the instructor of the Clark graduate statistics course(s), petition the department to be qualified in statistics on the basis of prior coursework.

Portfolio System

The Portfolio System is a method by which students receive guidance in the development of a balanced set of scholarly achievements. The portfolio helps students learn a broad range of professional scholarly skills that will result in competitive Ph.D.'s, while at the same time helping students build focused programs of research that lead to visible conference presentations and publications in scholarly outlets. While students are ultimately responsible for their final portfolio, the Portfolio System is unique in that it represents a team approach to student professional development. Together with the Portfolio Committee, the student and faculty advisor design a program of scholarship and public presentation of scholarship that is tailored to meet the student's individual professional goals. In addition, the Portfolio System requires that faculty be actively involved in the professional activities of the students by providing mentorship in the submission of conference presentations, journal articles, book chapters, and grant/fellowship applications.

The Portfolio System allows considerable flexibility in the student educational experience; at the same time, it incorporates checks and balances that prevent the development of narrow or diffuse portfolios that would not adequately prepare the student for a competitive job market.

Elements of the Portfolio

The portfolio consists of various elements. Each element is given points according to the extent of the student's involvement in its writing. Elements can include first- or second-authored posters or conference presentations, journal articles (empirical, theoretical, or reviews), book chapters, and grant or fellowship applications. The Independent Research Project (either in the

first year or second year) does not count as a portfolio element until it is submitted for publication or accepted as a conference presentation.

By the end of the third year, the portfolio should contain enough elements to add up to **6 points, with at least one full element being the submission of a first-authored, empirical article to a peer-reviewed journal**. The majority of elements will count as one point with a few notable exceptions (see below).

- *Conference posters and presentations.* Professional visibility is initially obtained (and often maintained) through regular attendance at, and participation in, professional conferences. Thus, active presentation at conferences is encouraged by the department and reflected in the fact that portfolio credit can be obtained. However, conference presentations and posters *must be accepted* in order to count as portfolio elements. Typically, first-authored posters and presentations will count as 1 element, while second- or third-authored poster or conference presentation will count as ½ element. However, several posters on the same piece of research can count as only 1 element, although one poster and one conference presentation can count as 1½ elements.
- *Book chapters, articles in journals, and grant submissions.* A first-authored manuscript submitted as a book chapter or a peer-reviewed journal, as well as a substantive grant or fellowship submission, can count up to 2 elements in a portfolio, depending on the extent of student involvement. In addition, since it is considerably more difficult to get a grant, journal article, or a book chapter accepted, they only need to be submitted for publication in order to count as portfolio elements.

It is important to note that it is the faculty supervisor's responsibility to help the student determine when a manuscript or grant application is ready to be submitted. Generally, an approaching deadline for completion of the portfolio will *not* be a consideration in determining whether a paper is ready for submission. In other words, it is not acceptable for a student to submit a paper or grant application prematurely as a means of completing requirements.

Another important point concerns authorship of papers, which can be a difficult issue to resolve. Given the highly variable and individual nature of these situations and decisions, authorship is something for students and collaborators to decide jointly. These conversations and decisions are generally best made at the point when the element is proposed to the Portfolio Committee, although sometimes in the course of completion of a paper one author may end up contributing more or less than was first expected and authorship may change. First authors who deserve 2 points for their contribution are generally those who contribute the majority of ideas to the paper and have actually written most of the paper, with little assistance from their collaborator. First authors who deserve 1 element are generally those who contribute less work and should probably be second authors but who have generous collaborators! If authors are unable to resolve the issues among themselves, disputes may be brought to the portfolio meeting for discussion and resolution.

Portfolio Committee

As noted earlier, the Portfolio Committee has several functions, one of which is to mentor the student through the Portfolio System. The purpose of the Portfolio Committee is not to make "quality judgments" during the process of the creation of an element (e.g., requiring more drafts, changing content, etc.). That work will occur under the direction of the faculty member with whom the student is collaborating. Rather, the Committee's task is to monitor the student's

progress, to ensure that the portfolio is sufficiently diversified, and to agree on the number of points awarded to each element. The Portfolio Committee will negotiate with the student and faculty supervisor if they disagree concerning how many points the work should count for until agreement is reached.

The student, advisor, and committee members are jointly responsible for ensuring a reasonable degree of breadth in the portfolio. Breadth can be theoretical, methodological, across content areas, and across professional activities, and it may be defined differently in different sub-disciplines. For example, breadth can be demonstrated by publishing in different kinds of outlets, drawing on different theoretical perspectives or integrating a broader range of topics, using different methodologies, working on more than one research project where each project has a different focus or approach, going beyond studying just one particular research topic, or engaging in different types of professional activities. Students should be demonstrating breadth in at least one of these ways. Insufficient breadth in the portfolio may result in certain elements not receiving the normal number of points.

In addition, a student's professional development will also be taken into consideration in the assignment of points. As a result, it is possible that similar scholarship may result in different levels of points (e.g., a student who has many posters and presentations but no publications will likely receive less credit for future posters and presentations). Ultimately, what is appropriate for each student will be determined on an ongoing basis by the student, the advisor, and the Portfolio Committee.

Meetings of the Portfolio Committee

Students are required to have a minimum of one face-to-face meeting with the Portfolio Committee per year, although in some instances the Portfolio Committee (or the student) may convene additional meetings. For students in the first and second year, this meeting must occur at the end of the academic year and will take place in May after the [Graduate Research Festival](#) and prior to the [Graduate Evaluation Meeting](#), also held each May. The student is responsible for coordinating a mutually convenient meeting time with all portfolio committee members.

Portfolio Committee members are meant to serve as a resource to students in supporting their academics and professional development. Students are encouraged to communicate with their Portfolio Committee throughout their first three years of training, as needed. Students in the third year may convene their final meeting of the Portfolio Committee at any time when they believe that they have completed the portfolio, although it can take place no later than the end of their third year.

Each meeting of the Portfolio Committee will have three specific aims:

1. The student, the advisor, and the Committee will discuss the student's progress toward completing the portfolio. This will include discussion of those projects that are being proposed as potential portfolio items, as well as review of those items that are in progress and have been completed. For those elements that have been successfully completed, the Portfolio Committee and student will determine the points that should be awarded to that work. In cases where the project is not yet completed, the student and faculty supervisor will document in writing the progress that has been made in the project and provide an expected completion date.

Students present to the committee a brief description of this information at least *two days prior to the meeting of the Portfolio Committee*. See the [Portfolio Progress Form](#) for an example of the information needed. The proposal should include sufficient detail to enable the committee to evaluate the appropriateness of the element in the overall academic life of the student as well as the potential point value of the element.

2. For students completing their first or second year, the advisor and the committee will also review the student's [Independent Research Project](#).
3. The student, the advisor, and the Committee will review the student's general progress in the program, including performance in coursework and teaching. In addition, the advisor and the Committee will devote time to issues of professional development as warranted.

The meetings of the Portfolio Committee are mandatory. *Students who do not have a portfolio meeting will not be allowed to register for courses in the following semester and will be placed on [Probationary Status](#).*

Evaluation and Documentation

At least two days prior to each portfolio meeting, the student should submit an updated portfolio plan that specifies completed and proposed elements, with proposed points (see [Portfolio Progress Form](#)). The Portfolio Committee will review the plan with the student and sign it after agreement is reached. In addition, the Portfolio Committee will complete and sign (along with the student) the [Overall Graduate Evaluation Form](#). Copies of these documents, including documentation by faculty supervising portfolio elements, should be kept by the student, Portfolio Chair, and Department Administrator.

Students who are not on track to complete their portfolio by the end of the third year must submit a written plan to be approved by the advisor and Committee BEFORE the end of the spring semester of that year. The plan should propose in detail how the remaining elements will be completed. The Portfolio Committee retains the right to require that the student complete the portfolio through the writing of traditional qualifying papers presented to the Portfolio Committee (worth 1 point each). In these cases, students and their committees will agree upon a specific date by which the portfolio will be completed. In no case, however, may this date extend beyond the conclusion of the fall semester of the fourth year. Students who have not completed their portfolio by then will be placed on [Probationary Status](#).

Credit for Work Outside of Clark

Students may receive credit towards the Portfolio for work on projects with investigators and colleagues outside of Clark, *if work begins or continues during the student's time at Clark. Only work completed during the time the student is at Clark may count.* Students will be responsible for demonstrating to the Portfolio Committee that their level of participation merits some portfolio point(s). The portfolio committee will make the final determination regarding specific points awarded for this work. Work that has been previously completed (e.g., presented at professional conferences and/or published in peer-reviewed journals) will not count towards the completion of the Portfolio.

The Independent Research Project

Each student must be actively involved in research from the beginning of their graduate training. Students work on an Independent Research Project in each of the first two years of study under the supervision of one or more faculty members. At the end of each of their first two years, students participate in the Graduate Research Festival. This conference provides an opportunity for first- and second-year students to share their research with faculty and fellow students. The Graduate Research Festival also provides students with an opportunity to take part in a conference-like experience, to hone their skills in oral presentation, and to answer questions about their work in a supportive atmosphere.

First Year Presentation:

At the end of the first year, students present their work in progress in a poster format at the Graduate Research Festival. Students should be prepared to provide a brief (1-2 minute) summary of their project during the Graduate Research Festival poster session. The decision about what to present is made jointly between the student and the faculty advisor. Usually, students begin a project in their first year and complete it in their second year. In these cases, the poster should give evidence of substantial thought and careful planning, but data need not be collected at this point. These posters would likely include an introduction, methods, projected or preliminary results, and a discussion. Posters may be printed through services offered by [ITS](#).

In some cases, however, students choose to present a completed first-year project. This project might represent a pilot study, or it may be a project based on already collected data. For example, a student might analyze a portion of data collected by others in their advisor's research program and present these results. In these cases, there should be completed data analysis included in the poster content.

Second Year Presentation:

At the end of the second year, students present a completed research project in the form of an oral paper presentation at the Graduate Research Festival. Students give a 15-20 minute oral presentation on their project in which they describe the theoretical background, the research methods, data analyses, and conclusions and implications. Students will also spend about 10-15 minutes answering questions from the faculty and student audience. *The project should be completed by the time of the talk. Projects that are not complete (e.g., data collection is still ongoing) at the time of the Graduate Research Festival will receive an incomplete evaluation (see below).*

No written version of this talk is required for the presentation in May, although it is strongly encouraged that students write up their presentation in article format and submit the article for publication. *Neither first- year posters nor second-year talks count as portfolio elements unless they are accepted at a professional conference or have been submitted for journal publication.*

Evaluation and Documentation

The Portfolio Committee will be responsible for evaluating the Independent Research Project in both the first and second years. This evaluation will take place in two ways. First, each member of the Portfolio Committee (including the faculty member who supervised the project) will individually evaluate the student's presentation. Second, after the Graduate Research Festival, the Portfolio Committee will hold a meeting with the student. Here the student will provide additional information to the Committee regarding the theory, research design and methods, and analytical strategies used in the completion of the project. In the event that the student presented

research conducted under the supervision of a faculty member who is not a member of the Portfolio Committee, this faculty member will be expected to attend the meeting.

At the conclusion of this Portfolio Committee meeting, the student will be excused, allowing the faculty members to discuss briefly the student's performance. Upon completion of the discussion, the student will be invited back into the meeting and informed as to the Portfolio Committee's evaluation of the student's research project.

For completed projects, the three possible evaluations are: *outstanding*, *satisfactory*, and *unsatisfactory* (as seen on the form). In the event that the Portfolio Committee deems a student's performance to be *unsatisfactory*, the committee will require the student to remediate the Independent Research Project in some way. It is also conceivable that despite an *outstanding* or *satisfactory* evaluation, the Portfolio Committee may recommend that the student improve the project in some way. This should be noted on the form under "additional comments."

For projects that receive an Incomplete Evaluation, the Portfolio Committee will establish a final due date by which the project must be completed. By this date, the Portfolio Committee must hold an in-person final meeting to determine the final evaluation using the aforementioned criteria.

In all cases, the Portfolio Committee will provide the student with clear, concrete, and realistic steps that they expect the student to take in order to achieve a satisfactory evaluation. In addition, the Portfolio Committee must provide the student with a specific date by which the remedial steps must be taken. Under no circumstances may this date be more than six months beyond the meeting date of the Portfolio Committee, at which point the Committee must reconvene to reevaluate the student's progress.

Should the student fail to meet the remedial steps by the agreed upon date, then the Department Chair will convene a meeting of the department faculty with the purpose of determining whether the student will be allowed to continue in the overall graduate program. If the student is allowed to continue, the department faculty will specify the student's further course of study.

M.A. Degree

The M.A. degree is not officially part of the Ph.D. program, but students who desire a formal M.A. degree may submit a write-up of their research to the Graduate School as their M.A. thesis. There will be no thesis defense. However, if a student chooses to submit a M.A. thesis, there should be an additional reader who approves the manuscript prior to submission. This additional reader can be a member of the student's portfolio committee or another faculty member in the department. The University requirements, which are concerned primarily with formatting issues, are available from the Graduate School Coordinator online at <https://www.clarku.edu/student-resources/>. *The final thesis should be submitted online to the Graduate School through ProQuest at least 5 days in advance of the Graduate School submission deadlines.*

Exceptions

All first- and second-year students are required to complete and present their Independent Research Project at the Graduate Research Festival, unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as personal factors requiring a leave of absence. In the absence of such approved circumstances, unsatisfactory work at the end of the second year will at minimum result in being placed on [Probationary Status](#) and may result in termination from the program.

In some highly unusual circumstances, prior completion of a master's degree in psychology at an institution requiring an *empirical* master's thesis may result in a waiver of the requirement of the Independent Research Projects. However, this deviation from the normal program is exceptional and would require the *prior approval* of the student's faculty advisor, the appropriate program chair (i.e., Clinical, Developmental, Social), and the Department Chair. Students wishing to deviate from the normal program must write a letter stating their reasons in detail. It is likely that the majority of requests for waivers of the Independent Research Project will not be approved. Those few students who receive approval will be required to present some research project along with the other students at the Graduate Research Festival (e.g., prior master's work, dissertation work-in-progress, or some other research that they have worked on during their year at Clark).

THE PH.D. DISSERTATION

The Ph.D. dissertation is the means by which students demonstrate the ability to conduct rigorous and meaningful research. Students are granted dissertation status (i.e., become Doctoral Candidates) by having successfully completed all of the Ph.D. requirements (see below). Upon completion of these requirements, a Dissertation Committee of three faculty members is formed to supervise all phases of the research. A dissertation proposal is first written and then defended at a meeting with the committee and other faculty who have read the proposal.

The dissertation, once completed and approved by the committee, is presented publicly to members of the Clark faculty and graduate student community, and is open to questions from the faculty and committee members. The format of this oral examination is that of a professional presentation. Students are expected to demonstrate the ability to address questions on their work and on related matters. The oral examination includes at least the committee and two additional faculty members. Upon successful defense of the dissertation, the student submits a written copy to the university. The Dissertation Format guide is available [online](#).

Completion of Ph.D. Requirements

Advancement to Ph.D. dissertation status requires the successful completion of the following areas of study:

- **Coursework:** Students will have met all of the course requirements, including History, Theory and Methods: Research Design (PSYC 301), two semesters of Statistical Methods (PSYC 302), and one semester of Advanced Stats or Advanced Qualitative Methods (optional but encouraged for clinical students). A total of 16 one-semester courses is required for the Ph.D.
- **Independent Research Project:** Students will have successfully presented their Independent Research Project at the Graduate Research Festival at the end of the first and second years.
- **Portfolio:** Students will have completed their portfolio of elements totaling 6 points during the first three years.

Dissertation Committees

The Dissertation Committee takes the place of the Portfolio Committee in supervising the student's work. The Dissertation Committee is composed of at least three members, including the faculty advisor (who chairs the Dissertation Committee) and at least two faculty members who participate as full committee members. The roles of the Dissertation Chair and the

committee members are to assist the student in the conceptualization of the dissertation proposal and to provide mentorship and feedback in the execution of the dissertation project.

The members of the Dissertation Committee are identified when the dissertation proposal is started, and a copy of the names of committee members and proposal title is given to the Department Administrator. Unlike with the Portfolio Committees, the student, together with the Dissertation Advisor, is responsible for the identification of faculty who will participate on the Dissertation Committee as full committee members. At least two members of the committee, including the primary advisor, must be tenure-track faculty members of Clark's Psychology Department. Students are welcome to invite external faculty members (i.e., from another department or other university) to serve on the Dissertation Committee. Emeritus faculty members may also serve on the Dissertation Committee as external faculty members.

Given the variability in dissertation projects, the level of involvement of committee members will likely be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, however, the Dissertation Chair, prospective committee members, and student will clarify roles and expectations for involvement at the point of forming the committee. The student is responsible for speaking with each faculty member and clarifying the roles and expectations involved in working together. These discussions should include terms of involvement (e.g., what intellectual support each faculty will provide) and proposed timeline for completion of the dissertation. Students and faculty members should document these expectations in writing.

Following discussion of expectations, the student will inform the Department Administrator of the composition of the committee and provide copies of the student-faculty agreements to the Department Administrator and each member of the dissertation committee. In this way the expectations of both the student and faculty members will be clear from the beginning, and there should be no question as to the composition of the committee.

All members of the committee should be kept informed as to the progress of the proposal and of the dissertation at regular intervals. Any major change in timelines will be communicated to all committee members. Changes in committee membership do occasionally occur. See [Administrative Aspects](#) for more information about this process.

Meetings of the Dissertation Committee

Because the Dissertation Committee replaces the Portfolio Committee, the Dissertation Committee now assumes the role of the regular supervisory meetings, which will continue to be held at least once a year. Two of these meetings will have very specific purposes: the first will be the dissertation proposal defense; and the final meeting shall be the defense of the dissertation itself (see below for a more comprehensive description). Students are encouraged to ask for additional meetings with committee members at any point if s/he or the advisor believes this would be useful. Other meetings might be necessary to review the student's progress and further discuss career development. The meetings of the Dissertation Committee are mandatory.

Dissertation Proposal

Due to considerable variability in methodology among the different areas of psychology, there is likely to exist similar variability with regard to dissertation proposals. Some dissertation proposals will take the form of a grant proposal and will include topics such as specific aims and hypotheses of the project, background to the research, design and methods, limitations, significance of the study, and timetable. Other dissertation proposals will be in [journal article format](#) or will have a more traditional form. Thus, the Dissertation Committee and the student

will collaboratively decide upon an acceptable format for a dissertation proposal prior to the student commencing its development.

The purpose of the proposal defense is to ensure that the candidate is ready to continue with a feasible project. The Dissertation Committee and others involved in the work will meet with the candidate to discuss the proposal and suggest any revisions. The Dissertation Committee and student must identify a clear date by when the revisions shall be made. When the revisions are complete, the Dissertation Committee signs the appropriate form (obtained from the Department Administrator) and submits it to the main office. This process may happen through individual meetings or through email communication, and so the Dissertation Committee may choose not to formally meet to evaluate the revision. Students must submit the final proposal to the Psychology Department main office.

Dissertation Readers

In addition to the members of the Dissertation Committee, each student shall have two additional faculty members participate as readers of the dissertation. These readers are randomly selected by the Department Administrator once the student has successfully defended the dissertation proposal and submitted the appropriate paperwork. The student and the assigned readers shall be informed of the selections by email. The role of the readers is to provide an external perspective on the dissertation. They will participate in the candidate's oral examination and participate in the vote that determines whether the dissertation should result in the granting of the Ph.D. degree.

Dissertation Defense

Because of the variability in faculty expectations for deciding when a student is ready to hold a dissertation defense, the responsibility lies with the student to coordinate this with each member of his or her committee. Generally, the advisor determines when the dissertation is ready to be sent to the Dissertation committee members. The Dissertation Committee members then have a few weeks (usually around 3-4, but to be mutually agreed upon by the committee members and student) to review the dissertation and give their feedback and, if needed, require additional drafts after revisions. Once the Dissertation Committee agrees that the student is ready for the defense, the student must notify the Department Administrator of that decision and the date on which the defense will be held. Two weeks prior to that date, the student must submit a completed copy of the entire dissertation to each member of the Dissertation Committee and the two readers. One week prior to the defense date, the student must submit a copy of the dissertation to the Department Administrator, who will make it publicly available to the entire department. Given the theoretical and methodological diversity of research within the department, the format of dissertations varies, although many students write their dissertations in [journal article format](#).

While we prefer to think of the defense as a discussion, we retain the term with the understanding that in the world of academia one is indeed called upon frequently to defend one's position. The defense will consist of an oral presentation by the student, followed by a question-and-answer period led by the student's advisor. The full Dissertation Committee, along with the readers, must be present at the defense. In extenuating circumstances, if a reader is not able to participate in the actual defense (either in-person or remotely), the Department Administrator will select a new reader. Typically, an oral defense will consist of a 45-minute presentation by the student followed by another 45 minutes of questions, answers, and discussion. The defense is open to the public. All department faculty and graduate students are invited to attend; the

students may choose to include other guests. Once the formal presentation of the defense is done, guests will be asked to leave the room before the question/answer portion of the meeting begins.

Final Dissertation

It is not uncommon for the Dissertation Committee to request minor revisions following the successful completion of the Dissertation Defense. In these situations, the student is expected to coordinate with his or her advisor in determining when the product is ready for submission to the Graduate School. Submission to the Graduate School must occur before the student is considered “finished.” For formatting guidelines see <https://www.clarku.edu/student-resources/>.

Evaluation of Progress

In order to maintain regular communication among the student, the advisor, and the Dissertation Committee, all students on dissertation status must complete a brief progress report, including an updated CV and a cover letter describing dissertation progress and timeline for completion project completion. The student’s advisor will use this progress report to provide information to the department faculty on the student’s progress at the annual [Graduate Student Evaluation Meeting](#). Students must submit their annual progress report to their advisor by April 30th.

Dissertation Timeline

It is expected that many students will successfully defend their dissertation proposal by the end of their third year, and some will defend their proposal at the end of their fourth year. Students who have not successfully defended their dissertation proposal by the end of their fifth year may be asked to leave the program. It is expected that most students will complete their dissertation within one year of the successful defense of their dissertation proposal.

Some students may find that the particular methodological requirements for their dissertation research necessitate more than one year to complete the research and write-up. In addition, some students may require some additional time to prepare themselves for the job market (e.g., writing up and publishing existing data, completing an externally-funded dissertation fellowship). No particular action is needed (apart from communication of this plan to the dissertation committee) if this additional time will not delay completion of the dissertation beyond the sixth year. Students who believe that their situation will prevent them from completing their dissertation by the end of their sixth year, however, must formally request an extension in the dissertation timeline. This request for [Extended Status](#) must be in writing and the dissertation proposal must already have been successfully defended. The request consists of a letter to the Department Chair that outlines the rationale for the extension, along with a detailed description of how the extension will be used. *This letter must be co-signed by each member of the dissertation committee.* If the extended deadline is not met, the student may be dropped from the program.

Any student who does not complete all requirements for the Ph.D. by May 31st of the seventh year will be asked to leave the program. Only extraordinary circumstances may allow for continuation after this date, and only if approved by a unanimous vote by the Dissertation Committee and the Department Chair.

TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

Teaching Assistantships

In addition to coursework and research, most students in the graduate program receive opportunities to teach undergraduate students. Most commonly, this opportunity occurs when a graduate student becomes a teaching assistant, whereby the graduate student assists a faculty member in the instruction of one course each semester. Students who are teaching assistants receive a [Teaching Assistantship stipend](#) through the department. Before becoming a teaching assistant, the student must attend the TA Workshop held by the University during fall orientation.

Students are strongly encouraged to contact the faculty instructor of the course for which they will TA prior to the semester to discuss the faculty member's expectations for the teaching assistants, both in terms of time commitment and pedagogical commitment (e.g., what/how faculty members would like them to assist in teaching).

While there exists variability across faculty in their expectations for their teaching assistants, responsibilities typically include conducting discussion sessions, supervising laboratory sections, holding tutorial sessions, and grading papers and projects. Assistantships typically involve a commitment of approximately half time (an average of 17.5 hours per week). In addition, there is a general expectation that teaching assistants be available shortly before the semester to help with course preparation and that they remain available through the finalization of grading. A tuition-remission scholarship accompanies the TA stipend.

Evaluation and Documentation

The faculty member for whom the student serves as a teaching assistant is primarily responsible for evaluation of the student's performance. All students and faculty members are required to have an individual meeting at the end of the semester to review the student's performance. The faculty member must complete the [Graduate Evaluation Form for Teaching Assistant Performance](#), which will be available to the student. In addition, the University has a system whereby all teaching assistants are evaluated by the undergraduate students in the course. Copies of these forms are kept with the Department Administrator and can be made available to the Teaching Assistants once grades have been submitted for the semester, as well as to the Portfolio Committee and student for discussion at the annual meeting.

Reviews of teaching duties will be recorded by the Department Chair, communicated to the student, and kept on file in the main office. The department takes teaching seriously and may choose to not offer a Teaching Assistantship to students who have multiple instances of unsatisfactory performance.

Independent Teaching

In addition to Teaching Assistantships, advanced graduate students may, on occasion, be invited to teach a full course as an independent instructor. These opportunities are rare and are extended only to those graduate students who have demonstrated excellence in their performances as teaching assistants. In addition, in order to be eligible for independent teaching, all graduate student instructors will need to have taken the initial CT 901 Seminar in College Teaching, formerly offered through the [Higher Education Consortium of Central Massachusetts \(HECCMA\)](#), or the Clark seminar in college teaching offered at no cost to Clark students.

The Department Chair assigns a faculty mentor to any graduate student teaching an independent course. The faculty mentor will, ideally, be someone who has taught the course in the past. It is up to the student and faculty member to negotiate the parameters of this mentorship relationship; however, most commonly faculty members will offer students support and concrete advice on a semi-regular basis. Given the independent nature of this relationship, no formal evaluation exists. It is expected that faculty mentors will intervene when students are performing poorly and present this information to the overall department at the yearly Graduate Evaluation Meeting.

YEARLY GRADUATE EVALUATION MEETING

In order to monitor student progress, provide regular feedback, recognize exceptional performance, and address any problems that may arise, the department faculty hold a meeting at the end of the academic year in which student performance is evaluated. At this meeting, the student faculty advisor will report on the student's performance and progress to the rest of the faculty.

For students in their first three years, the faculty advisor describes the student's general performance in coursework, summarizes the evaluation of the Independent Research Project (for first and second year students), and provides an update on the student's progress in the Portfolio System. For students who have advanced to dissertation status, the dissertation chair provides a brief update on the student's progress on the dissertation and anticipated completion date. Other faculty members subsequently have the opportunity to supplement these summaries with their own evaluations, including teaching evaluations (see [Graduate Evaluation Form for Teaching Assistant Performance](#)).

Following this meeting, the faculty advisor or dissertation chair will provide a summary of the faculty's feedback to the student. This feedback should be in written form, but it should also occur through an individually meeting with the student. The written feedback should be emailed to the student and to the Department Administrator, to be kept on file. Concurrent with the faculty advisor's summary, the Department Chair will also provide a condensed summary of the faculty's feedback to the student in the form of a brief written letter. In the letter, the student's performance will be deemed *excellent*, *satisfactory*, or *unsatisfactory*. For students in their first three years, an *unsatisfactory* review would be the result of poor performance in any one of the following areas: coursework, Independent Research Project (in the first or second year), or the Portfolio System. For students who have advanced to dissertation status, an *unsatisfactory* review would be the result of poor progress in the dissertation process.

An *unsatisfactory* review is a serious matter and any student who receives this review will be required to meet with the Department Chair to discuss it. Following this meeting, the student will have a clear understanding of the steps required to respond to the review and, together with the Department Chair, create a plan of action by which these steps will be carried out. Both the student and Department Chair will sign the action plan. An evaluation meeting including the student, advisor, and Department Chair will occur at the end of each semester until the student receives a satisfactory review. After receiving an *unsatisfactory* review, the student will be placed on [Probationary Status](#). In cases where a student receives two year-end *unsatisfactory* reviews, the Department Chair will convene a meeting of the department faculty with the purpose of determining whether the student will be allowed to continue in the overall graduate program.

In addition, as described in the section on [Teaching Assistantships](#), the department may choose to not offer a Teaching Assistantship to any student who has multiple instances of *unsatisfactory* performance in the fulfillment of teaching duties. The Graduate Evaluation Meeting will also include discussing students who may be ready to assume full responsibility for teaching a course.

EXPECTATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

As described in the Clark University Student Handbook, all students are expected to behave in ways that demonstrate their care, respect, and responsibility for the personal dignity, rights, and freedoms of all members of the community, including faculty, students, and staff. The Psychology Department is committed to sustaining a diverse and inclusive community of faculty, students, and staff. As a result, we expect all Department members, including students, to reflect this active engagement with varied perspectives and constituencies in their own research, teaching, practice, administrative duties, and clinical work.

Students are expected to behave in ways consistent with the [University Student Code of Conduct](#) and the APA's Ethics Code (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>). This expectation for professionalism encompasses the various roles that students take on (i.e., student in class, teaching assistant, research assistant, course instructor, mentor). It is also expected that students apply this professionalism when outside of the program structure.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

Changes in Mentorship

Change in Faculty Advisors

In graduate education, either party (i.e., faculty or graduate student) may terminate the advisor-advisee relationship. Such changes typically happen, for example, when the research interests of the advisor and advisee diverge, when the collaboration is otherwise not working due to personal conflicts or issues with professional conduct, or when advisees identify another faculty member whose research interests more closely align with their own.

Faculty who do not want to continue advising a graduate student must first have a discussion with the graduate student, explain the decision, and reach a common understanding of the reasons for the faculty advisor to terminate the advising relationship in writing, which must be shared with the Program Director and Department Chair. If either advisor or advisee decides to terminate the advising relationship, the faculty advisor must then meet with the Program Director or Department Chair in order to discuss the rationale for the decision (e.g., research interests diverging, issues with professional conduct), identify potential solutions to maintaining the advising relationship (if any), and develop a timeline for the student to transition to another faculty advisor or (if no other faculty advisor is available) for the student's status in the program to be evaluated by the department's faculty.

Students who believe that changing advisors is in their best interest are strongly encouraged to consult with the Chair and/or their Program Director in order to determine the best course of action.

- When the student and the new advisor have agreed to work together and the new faculty advisor is within the same program, the Program Director, the original faculty advisor, the new advisor, and the Department Chair must be immediately informed in writing, with appropriate explanations. The Program Director and Department Chair will meet to discuss the advisor change and decide whether it is in the student's best interest.
- When the student identifies a new faculty advisor from a different program *yet wishes to remain in the original program*, the original faculty advisor, the new advisor, the Program Director, and the Department Chair must be immediately informed in writing, with appropriate explanations. The faculty from the original program will convene for the purpose of determining whether the student will be allowed to continue in the program with an advisor from a different program.
- In the event that the student identifies a new faculty advisor in a different program *and wishes to change program areas*, the original advisor, the new advisor, both Program Directors, and the Department Chair must be immediately informed in writing, with appropriate explanations. In addition, both Program Directors will meet with the Department Chair to discuss the program change and decide if such a change in program areas is possible.

During any periods of transition between advisors (and/or programs), the student automatically becomes the temporary advisee of the original Program Chair (i.e., Clinical, Developmental, or Social). In cases where the Program Chair was the original advisor from which the student is changing or cases involving changes in programs, the Department Chair assumes the role of temporary advisor.

The period of transition between advisors is expected to last no longer than one month. In cases where a student is unable to identify a new advisor within one month, the Department Chair will convene an end-of-the-semester meeting of the department faculty with the purpose of determining whether the student will be allowed to continue in the overall graduate program. During this period, the student would continue with the temporary advisor.

Changes in Portfolio Committees

In the event that the student's faculty advisor changes ([see above](#)), the new faculty advisor becomes the Chair of the Portfolio Committee. Upon such a change, the student will be required to immediately convene a meeting of the Portfolio Committee to review progress and assist the student in refining future plans. If the student does not have a new advisor yet, the director of the student's program will act as temporary chair.

With regards to the non-advisor members of the Portfolio Committee, it is only under extremely rare situations that changes in membership will occur. The composition of the Portfolio Committee is designed to provide students with a breadth of supervision, so normal changes in research focus do not warrant changes in Portfolio Committee membership. Moreover, students and faculty members alike are expected to handle personality conflicts in ways that obviate any need for change. In the exceedingly rare instances when this is not possible, the Department Chair will handle requests for change on a case-by-case basis.

Non-advisor faculty members of the Portfolio Committee who have a pending sabbatical and who believe that they will not be able to participate in their assigned Portfolio Committees must inform the Department Chair. The Department Chair will then assign a replacement, which may be temporary or permanent depending on the individual circumstances of the student's needs.

Changes in Dissertation Committees

In the event that the student's faculty advisor changes ([see above](#)), the new faculty advisor becomes the Chair of the Dissertation Committee. Upon such a change, the student will be required to immediately convene a meeting of Dissertation Committee to review progress and assist the student in refining future plans.

Unlike with the Portfolio Committee, the composition of the faculty members who are full members of the Dissertation Committee is flexible. While unusual, it is possible for the student to request a change in membership should the topic of the dissertation change such that another faculty member would provide better supervision. Changes of this sort should be substantive in nature, as students and faculty members alike are expected to handle personality conflicts in ways that obviate any non-substantive needs for change. In all cases, the student and the advisor must meet and be in agreement regarding this change prior to its implementation, and then the student must notify the Department Chair for approval of this change.

Because the function of the readers is to provide an external perspective on the dissertation, change in membership is not recommended. Changes of this sort must be approved by the student's advisor and Department Chair. The Department Administrator will then randomly assign a new reader.

Non-advisor faculty members of the Portfolio Committee who have a pending sabbatical and who believe that they will be not able to participate in their assigned Portfolio Committees must inform the student and the advisor with sufficient notice to allow them to locate a replacement.

Financial Support

Tuition Remission and Stipend

The department typically provides tuition remission and a 9-month graduate assistantship stipend (although not to those who have successfully obtained external funding). There are two primary types of stipends available to students: Research Assistantships and Teaching Assistantships.

Research Assistantships are negotiated with individual faculty members who have the funds to hire a graduate student research assistant. Teaching Assistantships are provided to those students who are unable to procure a research assistantship or who wish to develop experience in teaching, contingent on satisfactory performance in prior years. Teaching assistants receive their stipend on a semester-by-semester basis. Before becoming a teaching assistant, the student must attend the TA Workshop held by the University during fall orientation.

Funding through the fourth year is a departmental priority for all students making continued good progress towards the Ph.D. Tuition remission is provided to all full-time graduate students, regardless of whether they have an assistantship.

In return for the stipend, the department expects 17.5 hours of time dedicated to the assistantship work (i.e., as a teaching or research assistant) and the remaining time devoted to progress within the department (i.e., coursework, portfolio, dissertation). Thus, students who are receiving funding from the department may not engage in outside employment, unless such employment is clearly in the educational interest of the student. Students who believe that they have identified such opportunities may request permission in writing to their faculty advisor, Program Director,

and Department Chair for permission to take such outside employment. Such requests must clearly describe the potential employment, identify the number of hours, and delineate the educational merit of the opportunity.

Research and Travel Support

Through the generous support of the Hiatt fund, the department is often able to provide some financial support for student's research activities in three primary ways. First, students in between their first and second years are eligible to apply for a summer Hiatt stipend that will fund them for part of the summer months. First-year students submit a proposal for summer funds before May 1 of each year. The proposal should be no more than 2 pages long and should summarize the planned research that will occur over the summer. In addition, the student's faculty mentor for the summer research must submit a letter of endorsement. The amount of this stipend varies each year depending on the budget, so first-year students should communicate with the Department Administrator for more information in this regard. Upon their return in September, students who received summer funding should submit a one-to-two page summary of their summer research to the Department Administrator.

Second, students are eligible for up to \$150 to support their work on the Independent Research Project during their first year, \$300 to support the completion of their Independent Research Project in the second year, and \$500 to support the completion of their dissertation. To be reimbursed for these expenses, students must submit original receipts to the Department Administrator no later than May 15th.

Third, each academic year, the Department determines an amount that each graduate student may receive to support travel to a conference. This travel is supported only for those students who are presenting at the conference as first author on a poster or talk, or who are the organizer of a symposium. Travel receipts should be turned in to the Department Administrator along with proof of presentation at the conference, such as the conference acceptance letter or a copy of the program page with your presentation listing.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Probationary Status

Probationary Status is assigned to any student who has not completed a program requirement (see [General Requirements of the Graduate Program](#)) on schedule. In such a situation, the student will be placed on Probationary Status *for no longer than one semester*. During this time, only Directed Study relating to the incomplete work can be pursued. Failure to complete requirements after one semester on Probationary Status will result in termination from the graduate program. Students can be placed on Probationary Status *a maximum of two times* throughout their time in the Ph.D. program. Thus, any student who has been on Probationary Status twice and then fails to complete a requirement that would normally place them on Probationary Status will be terminated from the program.

Extended Status

Extended Status is assigned to any student who has successfully applied for an extension to the maximum 6-year dissertation timeline. During this time, the student is expected to devote the majority of his or her efforts to the dissertation. Other activities (e.g., teaching, clinical work,

etc.) must be approved by the student's faculty advisor. Extended Status can only be granted for one year.

Extended Status can also be assigned for *one semester* to a student who has previously been dropped from the graduate program [due to failure to complete the dissertation by the 7-year deadline](#), but who has successfully [re-applied](#) for the sole purpose of defending the dissertation. During this period, the student will then have the opportunity to present and defend the dissertation. Students who are unable to meet this deadline will be dropped from the program and will not be allowed to reapply.

Extended Status is unrelated to the issue of whether a student is considered a student in residence or [nonresident](#). Those Extended Status students who are students in residence (the majority of cases) remain eligible to be supported by a stipend and have tuition remitted. In addition, these students still qualify for the various health insurance options provided to all Ph.D. students in residence.

Nonresident Status

Nonresident Status is a Graduate School category reserved for students who have completed their coursework, who are writing their theses/dissertations, and who are only occasionally making use of Clark facilities. Thus, it is unlikely that nonresident students will register for courses again, although this is possible with the approval of the student's advisor, the Department Chair, and the Dean of Graduate Studies. This status most typically applies to students beyond their fourth year.

Given the timeline required to complete the dissertation, it is unlikely that many psychology graduate students will make use of this provision. However, students who choose to move to Nonresident Status *must continue to register each semester* until graduation. The nonresident student status fee is \$200 each semester for the first three years and \$400 each subsequent semester (summers excluded). Please see the [University Graduate Handbook](#) for more information regarding this status.

Leave of Absence

Students may, under some circumstances, apply for a leave of absence. The University currently allows leaves of absence to students who have completed their coursework for a variety of reasons, including illness, maternity, and military service. Students taking voluntary leaves of absence are still considered degree students who will automatically resume their studies after a short time away from school.

Students on leave of absence do not pay tuition and are not eligible for stipend, loan deferment, or any Clark benefits. International graduate students seeking a leave of absence must contact the director of the International Students & Scholars Office (<https://www.clarku.edu/offices/isso/>), in addition to the Department Chair, before contacting the Dean of Graduate Studies.

For students who take an approved leave of absence, the normal timeline of expectations will be adjusted accordingly. This new timeline applies to all academic requirements as well as the receipt of stipends.

Students who wish to take a leave of absence from the University for any reason must request permission, in writing, from the department. Leaves of absence must be granted by the Dean of Graduate Studies on the recommendation of the department for a designated period and not normally exceeding one year. For special reasons, leaves of absence may be extended beyond one year by the Dean of Graduate Studies on the recommendation of the department.

Re-Applying to the Program

In general, students who have been dropped from the program due to poor academic performance must submit an entire new application should they wish to be readmitted. There is one exception to this and it concerns students who have successfully defended their dissertation proposal, but then were dropped from the program [due to failure to complete the dissertation by the 7-year deadline](#). Students in this situation who wish to return to the program for the sole purpose of defending their dissertation and receiving their degree must complete a one-time application *within one year of being dropped from the program*.

The reapplication consists of the following material: (1) a letter to the Department Chair requesting readmission, (2) a completed draft of the dissertation, and (3) confirmation in writing from each member of the Committee attesting to his/her belief that the student is able to defend the dissertation within the course of the semester. Upon receipt and consideration of these materials, the Department Chair will make a reinstatement recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Upon reinstatement approval, the Chair will then assign the student [Extended Status](#) for a period of *one semester only*. During this period, the student will then have the opportunity to present and defend the dissertation. Students who are unable to meet this deadline will be dropped from the program and will not be allowed to reapply.

Grievance Procedures

Ordinarily, difficulties that may arise between students and faculty are resolved through informal discussions between the individuals involved. When a student believes that such discussions have not led to a fair outcome, the student may ask their particular Program Director or the Department Chair to intervene. Again, the faculty members intervening will attempt to resolve the issue informally through discussions with those involved.

If the student considers that these methods have failed, the student may ask the Chair to convene a meeting of the Grievance Committee for resolution. Generally, the Committee consists of one standing faculty member. However, the convening of the Grievance Committee necessitates that the Department Chair appoint two additional faculty members and one graduate student selected by the aggrieved student. If the aggrieved student believes that one of the faculty members is biased against him or her, the Chair will not appoint that faculty member to the Committee.

Students who believe that they have not been treated fairly through such procedures may bring their grievance to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Guidelines for Doctoral Dissertations Using the Journal Article Format

October 2018

The Psychology Department at Clark University permits various formats for dissertations. Specifically, students have the option of completing a “Traditional Format” dissertation that focuses on presenting (in greater detail than is possible in journal articles) the rationale, methods, results, and interpretations of a single empirical study. Students also have the option of completing a “Journal Article Format” dissertation.

Journal Article Format dissertations constitute a series of studies emanating from a program of inquiry that are organized around a coherent theme or topic of study – and that belong to the same program of research. Given that integration across articles is a critical feature, Journal Article Format dissertations must include separate introduction and discussion/implications sections that demonstrate the programmatic and thematic bridges across the individual studies. These sections can be fairly brief (e.g., 5 pages). The main strength of the Journal Article Format is that it increases the odds that the dissertation (or portions of the dissertation) will be published soon after defense/completion. Simultaneously, it provides the doctoral student with guided opportunities for mastering this format and for communicating his/her inquiry. These Journal Article Format dissertations typically include multiple empirical papers presented according to a standard peer-review manuscript structure (e.g., introduction, method, data analysis plan, results, discussion). They can be based on different data sets or the same data set, and already collected data or data that is collected as part of the dissertation (just like with the traditional dissertation format, where students may use data from larger ongoing studies, archived data, large nationally representative samples where data has been made publicly available, etc.).

Students may opt to propose the Journal Article Format according to the following guidelines:

- 1) The dissertation must contain a **minimum of two empirical articles**, each of which must be suitable for submission to refereed journals for publication. This may not include the primary article from the student’s second year project. A third article, though not required, could be theoretical in nature (e.g., a review article or article proposing a theoretical model pertinent to the students’ empirical papers). Alternatively, a third paper, though not required, could present empirical results that are clearly linked to the other empirical papers in the dissertation.
- 2) At the proposal stage, both of the empirical articles must be unsubmitted. At the defense stage, one of the two primary empirical articles may be submitted or published. Because the third article is optional, there is no stipulation on the publication status other than the authorship requirements (see below).
- 3) For the proposal stage and meeting, the committee members retain the same rights and responsibilities as with the traditional format proposal meeting. With the journal-format, the proposal clarifies the theoretical framework and the proposed studies as well as articles for the dissertation, stipulating which data and methods will be used and which journals the articles might be submitted to (the latter is not binding, however, as it also depends on the robustness of the future findings). Parallel to the role of committee members for the traditional dissertation format, the committee members may make suggestions for adding or dropping studies or using different data sets, bundling the studies differently for publication, etc.

4) The doctoral student must be the primary author of any article(s) published prior to or submitted for publication prior to the defense. The article(s) will be based on students' conceptualization of the study topic and their lead role in writing all manuscripts.

5) If a manuscript is submitted upon defense, and if the chair of the dissertation committee is a co-author, that individual must maintain the role of dissertation chair (and not the role of co-author) until after defense. That is, the doctoral student should be the sole writer of the manuscripts until after the defense. After the defense, the chair may assume a more active, co-author role; however, the student should always be the primary author of the manuscripts that are part of their own dissertation. While having co-authors (who are not members of the student's dissertation committee) is permitted after the defense, their role must be clearly specified to the dissertation committee.

6) The doctoral student is responsible for requesting copyright permission(s) from the publishing journal(s) to include a published article(s) in his/her dissertation. Students have either the option of publishing their dissertation through ProQuest or using an institutional repository. The ProQuest option allows for dissertations to be accessible via common search engines (e.g., PsycInfo) while the Institutional Repository allows the dissertation to be archived within the Clark University library system (Clark Digital Commons: <http://commons.clarku.edu/>) and is searchable through some external search engines as well (but not PsycInfo). Students must obtain copyright permissions for both options [not doing so is breaking U.S. copyright laws.].

PORTFOLIO PROGRESS FORM

Student Description of Progress in Program

Student Name: _____

Date of Current Meeting: _____ Date of Last meeting: _____

1. Portfolio Elements already completed and approved:

Portfolio Element	Description	Point Value
Total Points		

2. Portfolio Elements that have been completed since the last Portfolio Committee meeting, and now require approval:

Portfolio Element	Description	Proposed Point Value	Faculty supervisor signature of approval

3. Proposed future Portfolio Elements:

Portfolio Element	Description	Proposed Point Value	Faculty supervisor signature of approval

Courses Completed

No.	Course Name	Semester/Year	Type of Course (e.g., content area, core course)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			

RA or TA Activity

Semester	Activity	Professor

Additional Departmental Activities (e.g., Grad representative, etc.)

Semester	Activity

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE FORM
Overall Graduate Evaluation Form

Student Name: _____ Meeting Date: _____

Name of Portfolio Chair: _____

Name of Portfolio Committee Members: _____

Date of last Portfolio Committee Meeting: _____

1. Coursework

Overall performance in coursework	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
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If you answered Unsatisfactory above, provide an explanation:

2. Portfolio

Has the student demonstrated adequate progress since the last meeting?	YES	NO	N/A*
------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------	-----------	-------------

Has the student completed those elements that were identified as <i>pending</i> at the last meeting?	YES	NO	N/A*
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------	-----------	-------------

Total number of elements completed: _____

Has the 1 st author empirical manuscript been submitted?	YES	NO	N/A*
---------------------------------------------------------------------	------------	-----------	-------------

Is the student demonstrating adequate breadth across the portfolio?	YES	NO	N/A*
---------------------------------------------------------------------	------------	-----------	-------------

Is the student demonstrating adequate depth across the portfolio?	YES	NO	N/A*
-------------------------------------------------------------------	------------	-----------	-------------

Overall performance on the Portfolio	Outstanding	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
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If the student is deficient in any of the above areas, provide an explanation:

*Note: N/A only applies to 1st year students in the first semester.

3. Independent Research Project (For 1st and 2nd year students)

Quality of the student's presentation of the independent research project **Outstanding** **Satisfactory** **Unsatisfactory**

Quality of the student's discussion of the independent research project in the Portfolio Committee Meeting **Outstanding** **Satisfactory** **Unsatisfactory**

Overall evaluation of the student's independent research project	Outstanding	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
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If unsatisfactory, provide an explanation:

1. Provide an explanation:

2. Provide a detailed plan for remediation (may require additional pages)

If you have answered UNSATISFACTORY to any of the above items, then the Portfolio Committee must convene another meeting before October 31 of the following semester.

Please indicate the proposed date of this additional meeting: _____

Additional Comments:

Signature of Student

Signature of Portfolio Chair

Signature of Portfolio Committee Member

Signature of Portfolio Committee Member