



# SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Psychology Master's Program Student Handbook

**Revised Fall 2023**

## Table of Contents

### Contents

<b>M.S. Program Objectives and Tracks</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>M.A. Program Objectives and Areas</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Course Requirements for the M.S. Program (38 Units Required, including Internship)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Suggested Timeline of Events for the M.S. Program</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>M.S. Internship</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>M.S. Program Post-Graduate Opportunities</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Course Requirements for the M.A. Program (30 Units Required)</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Suggested Timeline of Events for the M.A. Program</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Notes Regarding All (M.A. and M.S.) Graduate Courses in Psychology</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Thesis (M.A. and M.S.)</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Important Sources of Information</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>In Pursuit of the Master's Degree</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Step One: Identify Your Program of Study (POS)</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Step Two: Thesis Proposal Preparation</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Step Three: Thesis Proposal Meeting</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Step Four: Recommendation for Advancement to Candidacy</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Step Five: Thesis Data Collection and Analyses</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Step Six: Final Thesis Oral Exam (Thesis Defense)</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Step Seven: Thesis Submission</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Step Eight: Walking at Graduation</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Critical Deadlines</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Summary of Student Responsibilities</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Pearls of Wisdom from Students Who Have Been There</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>M.A./M.S. Checklist</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix A: Program of Study for Industrial-Organizational M.S. Psychology Worksheet</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Appendix B: Program of Study for Quantitative Psychology M.S. Worksheet</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Appendix C: Program of Study for M.A. Worksheet</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix D: Thesis Proposal Abstract Template</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix E: Thesis Defense Abstract Template</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Appendix F: Guidelines for Creating and Completing the Master's Thesis</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Selecting a Topic</b>	<b>25</b>

<b>Selecting a Chair and a Thesis Committee</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Thesis Proposal -General Considerations</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Thesis Defense -General Considerations</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Master's Thesis Regulations</b>	<b>28</b>

## **M.S. Program Objectives and Tracks**

The Master's Degree in Applied Psychology prepares students for jobs that require the application of psychological knowledge to the workplace or to community settings. This involves training in theory, research, and practice. Although some students continue to study for a Ph.D. degree, most accept challenging jobs in public, private, or non-profit field settings upon graduation.

The program has two tracks: a) Industrial/Organizational Psychology and b) Quantitative Psychology. Both tracks are based on a scientist-practitioner model. Thus, graduates from the Applied Psychology program learn to utilize scientific methods and theories to design and/or evaluate measures and interventions in applied settings. One key component of training in applied psychology at San Diego State University is a supervised internship involving the application of classroom learning and acquisition of new skills in a field setting. Students collaborate directly with psychologists and others working in the field.

The Master's program in Applied Psychology at San Diego State University provides advanced training both for recent graduates and for individuals who have been in the workforce for a number of years. The program is designed to take two to three years to complete. It is a full-time program, and therefore serious commitment to graduate training is expected. Funding in the form of assistantships is typically available so that students can give their full attention to their graduate studies.

## **M.A. Program Objectives and Areas**

The Master of Arts program offers students the opportunity to pursue their study of psychology at the graduate level and to prepare themselves for Ph.D. programs in a variety of areas. It is particularly appropriate for students who need advanced work to strengthen their profiles in preparation for application to Ph.D. programs or for those who wish to explore graduate-level work before making a commitment to Ph.D. training. Students who do not continue onto Ph.D. programs gain experience that prepares them for a number of jobs in research, medical, and academic settings.

Students take seminars in major areas of Psychology and have the opportunity to develop an area of expertise through additional course selection and research activity. Research areas include behavioral and cognitive neuroscience, learning and cognition, developmental psychology, social/personality, and physical and mental health research.

This program is research-oriented and provides many opportunities to gain valuable laboratory experience in conducting research in clinical and non-clinical settings. Although many students may continue their education in a Ph.D. program in clinical psychology, the M.A. program does **not** offer instruction in counseling or a counseling practicum for the development of clinical skills. Note: Students completing the Master of Arts program will be treated fairly, with no advantage or disadvantage if they later apply to the SDSU/UCSD Joint Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology.

The program is designed to take two to three years to complete. It is a full-time program, and therefore a serious commitment to graduate training is expected. Funding in the form of assistantships is typically available so that students can give their full attention to their graduate studies.

## Course Requirements for the M.S. Program (38 Units Required, including Internship)

The Master of Science degree requires a minimum of 38 units of graduate-level course work, including required courses and electives. The required courses are designed to provide students with a thorough background in the major theories and findings in their chosen track (i.e., Industrial/Organizational Psychology or Quantitative Psychology), including research methods and statistics in psychology.

Students should take advantage of their electives to supplement the curriculum offered in the Applied Psychology program. Students in Industrial-Organizational Psychology may find courses in Business, Educational Technology, and Statistics particularly relevant for their elective. Students in the Quantitative track have their choice of three electives, two from within the psychology department and one from outside the department. Students are expected to use those electives strategically. Relevant courses may be found in Business, Statistics, Big Data Analytics, and (Computational) Linguistics.

All students should complete their program of study worksheet (See Appendixes A & B) to plan out a curriculum that best matches their interests, in consultation with their faculty mentor and Associate Graduate Advisor. The program of study must receive final approval from an Associate Advisor.

### **Shared Requirements for Both Tracks (20 units):**

PSY 600*	Research Orientation	2 units
PSY 670A-670B**	Advanced Statistics	6 units
PSY 675	Seminar in Psychological Measurement	3 units
PSY 792	Internship in Applied Psychology	3 units
PSY 797	Research	3 units
PSY 799A	Thesis	3 units

### **Required Courses for Industrial-Organizational Psychology Track (18 units):**

PSY 621	Seminar in Personnel Psychology	3 units
PSY 622	Seminar in Organizational Psychology	3 units
PSY 630	Seminar in Organizational Research & Ethics	3 units
PSY 721	Adv. Seminar in Personnel Psychology	3 units
PSY 722	Adv. Seminar in Organizational Psychology	3 units
ELECTIVE***	Graduate Elective (Psych Department or Outside)	3 units

### **Required Courses for Quantitative Psychology Track (18 units):**

PSY 630 OR	Seminar in Organizational Research & Ethics OR	3 units
PSY 610	Advanced Research Methods	
PSY 775	Multivariate Statistics	3 units
PSY 776	Multilevel Modeling	3 units
ELECTIVE***	Graduate Elective (Psych Department)	6 units
ELECTIVE***	Graduate Elective (Outside Psych Department)	3 units

\* PSY 600 is taken over 2 semesters in the first year.

\*\* Students may be eligible to substitute PSY 770A-770B for this requirement based on performance on the advanced statistics placement exam. Consult with your faculty mentor and graduate advising.

\*\*\* See class schedule for current offerings. Electives must be discussed with and **approved by your faculty mentor and graduate advising**. Electives may be selected from 500-700 level Psychology classes or graduate classes from other departments in the University. For students in the Industrial-Organizational Psychology track, we highly recommend taking an additional statistics course relevant to your thesis (e.g., Multivariate Statistics or Multi-Level Modeling) as your elective.

## Suggested Timeline of Events for the M.S. Program

The following is a rough timeline describing significant events students will experience and activities they will participate in, as part of the M.S. program in Applied Psychology. Given the research orientation of the program, students are also expected to register for at least one unit of PSY 797 (Research) each semester as part of their involvement in their faculty mentor's research laboratory and ongoing thesis advising. In addition to the courses and activities listed, there is an annual student review (usually in mid-April) for which students need to prepare a report and meet with program faculty to review progress, obtain feedback about performance and progress, and set goals for future progress. Note that each student's experience in the program is unique and is expected to deviate somewhat from the events listed below.

### SAMPLE TIMELINE AND GOALS

(Note: Timelines for individual students may vary)

#### Fall of Year One (Y1)

##### **Typical Courses: Industrial-Organizational**

PSY 600 - Research Orientation (1 unit)  
PSY 670A – Adv. Statistics (3 units)  
PSY 621 or 622 – Seminar in I or O (3 units)  
PSY 630 – Sem. in Org. Research & Ethics  
PSY 797 – Research (1 unit)

##### **Typical Courses: Quantitative Psychology**

PSY 600 - Research Orientation (1 unit)  
PSY 670A – Adv. Statistics (3 units)  
ELECTIVE #1 (3 units)  
PSY 630 – Sem. in Org. Research & Ethics  
PSY 797 – Research (1 unit)

#### **Fall Y1 Semester Goals** (I/O and Quantitative tracks):

- Meet with faculty to discuss research opportunities and thesis topics
- Review literature relevant to possible thesis topics

#### Spring of Year One (Y1)

##### **Typical Courses: Industrial-Organizational**

PSY 600 - Research Orientation (1 unit)  
PSY 670B – Adv. Statistics (3 units)  
PSY 675 – Sem. in Psy. Measurement (3 units)  
PSY 721 or 722 – Adv. Sem. in I or O (3 units)  
PSY 797 – Research (1 unit)

##### **Typical Courses: Quantitative Psychology**

PSY 600 - Research Orientation (1 unit)  
PSY 670B – Adv. Statistics (3 units)  
PSY 675 – Sem. in Psy. Measurement (3 units)  
ELECTIVE #2 (3 units)  
PSY 797 – Research (1 unit)

#### **Spring Y1 Semester Goals** (I/O and Quantitative tracks):

- Identify internship opportunities
- Decide on the thesis topic area and methods
- Complete annual student progress review
- Write a rough draft of the thesis proposal for initial mentor feedback

#### **Summer Y1 Goals** (I/O and Quantitative tracks):

- Complete internship hours
- Select other members of thesis committee
- Write a complete thesis proposal draft for mentor feedback (See "Thesis M.A. and M.S." and "In Pursuit of the Master's Degree" sections of this Handbook)

## Fall of Year Two (Y2)

### Typical Courses: Industrial-Organizational

ELECTIVE (3 units)  
PSY 622 or 621 – Seminar in I or O (3 units)  
PSY 797 – Research (1 unit)

### Typical Courses: Quantitative Psychology

PSY 775 – Multivariate Statistics (3 units)  
PSY 776 – Multi-Level Modeling (3 units)  
PSY 797 – Research (1 unit)

#### **Fall Y2 Semester Goals** (I/O and Quantitative tracks):

- Finalize thesis proposal document and schedule thesis proposal meeting (send abstract to Admin Coordinator at least two weeks/10 business days prior— see **Appendix D**)
- Submit Internship report and evaluations
- Obtain IRB clearance for thesis project (save all e-mail correspondence from IRB)
- Begin data collection and analyses for thesis (if proposal and IRB are approved)

## Spring of Year Two

### Typical Courses: Industrial-Organizational

PSY 721 or 722 – Adv. Sem. in I or O (3 units)  
PSY 799A – Thesis Research (3 units)  
PSY 792 – Internship in Applied Psy. (3 units)

### Typical Courses: Quantitative Psychology

ELECTIVE #3 (3 units)  
PSY 799A – Thesis Research (3 units)  
PSY 791 – Internship in Applied Psy. (3 units)

#### **Spring Y2 Semester goals** (I/O and Quantitative tracks):

- Register for PSY 799A in the first three weeks of semester (assuming proposal is complete)
- Complete data collection and analyses for thesis
- Write results and discussion sections of thesis
- Check the Graduate Studies Announcements and Deadlines [website page](https://grad.sdsu.edu/announcements-and-deadlines) for registration, graduation and thesis deadlines at <https://grad.sdsu.edu/announcements-and-deadlines>
- Apply for graduation at the beginning of the semester
- Schedule final thesis oral defense meeting (send abstract to Admin Coordinator at least two weeks/10 business days prior— see **Appendix E**)
- Prepare thesis for final processing and submit to Montezuma Publishing. (See “Thesis M.A. and M.S.” and “In Pursuit of the Master’s Degree” sections of this Handbook)

## **M.S. Internship**

An essential component of graduate training in Applied Psychology is an internship experience, which provides students with an opportunity to apply their classroom training in an actual field setting and gain new skills. The Internship Coordinator works with students throughout the internship process, initially by providing leads, position openings, and contacts in local organizations. The Internship Coordinator also helps put a site agreement in place with new internship sites. Parallel to this effort, students work on developing leads for possible internships. After companies have been identified, students work with the Internship Coordinator to take the steps necessary to secure an interview. After the internship is over, students and supervisors send the Internship Coordinator performance and site review documentation.

There are two criteria for an opportunity to meet the requirements of an internship: 1) it must be related to the student's degree objectives, and 2) the site supervisor needs to be a specialist in program evaluation, quantitative science, organizational development, human resources, industrial/organizational psychology, or organizational behavior. Interns work with other psychologists and practitioners in the field, while working under the direct supervision of an internship site supervisor. Students in both emphases are required to work a minimum of 300 hours in an approved internship site to earn 3 units of credit (PSY 792). The internship is typically completed during the summer months. For more details regarding the internship process, refer to the Student Internship Guide or contact your Associate Graduate Advisor.

## **M.S. Program Post-Graduate Opportunities**

Graduates will be prepared to enter rewarding professional careers. This degree enables students to work in corporations, consulting firms, and research labs, and it also can prepare a student for entry into a Ph.D. program.

Those who choose the Industrial-Organizational track may work for corporations or consulting firms in positions involving the development, delivery, and evaluation of human resources interventions. Examples include personnel selection, training, motivation, job design, and quality of work-life interventions, satisfaction/climate surveys or larger-scale organizational change and development efforts.

Students who choose Quantitative Psychology find employment in such settings as health care, education, community-based programs, mental health settings, or government agencies. They perform such functions as: quantitative data collection and statistical analyses, survey design, and program evaluation. They use, interpret, and communicate quantitative findings to effect change in a variety of organizations.

These jobs tend to be intellectually exciting, and the rewards include having an impact on people's lives. Students in either track may also choose to pursue doctoral-level training in related areas of psychology after completing their M.S. degree.



## Course Requirements for the M.A. Program (30 Units Required)

The Master of Arts degree requires a minimum of 30 units of graduate-level course work, including required courses and electives. The required courses are designed to provide students with a training in research methods and statistics in psychology as well as the opportunity to gain specific background in the major theories and findings in their chosen area of interest (e.g., developmental science, social psychology, behavioral and cognitive neuroscience, cognitive psychology, clinical psychological science).

Students should take advantage of their elective to supplement effectively the curriculum offered in the M.A. program. Students may enroll in graduate level courses in Psychology or other departments (i.e. Biology, Social Work, Public Health, or Education) that are relevant for their area of study. All students should complete their program of study worksheet (See Appendix C) to plan out a curriculum that best matches their interests, in consultation with their faculty mentor and Associate Advisor. The program of study must receive final approval from an Associate Graduate Advisor.

### **Required courses (18 units):**

PSY 600*	Research Orientation (1 unit per semester)	2 units
PSY 610	Advanced Research Methods	3 units
PSY 670A/B	Advanced Statistics (3 units per semester)	6 units
OR PSY 770A/B	Advanced Statistics (3 units per semester)	6 units
PSY 797	Research	1 unit
PSY 799A	Thesis	3 units
ELECTIVE	Graduate Elective**	3 units

\*PSY 600 is taken over 2 semesters in the first year

\*\*See class schedule for current offerings. Electives must be discussed with and **approved by faculty mentor and graduate advising**. Electives may be selected from 500-700 level Psychology classes or graduate classes from other departments in the University. Three units of PSY 797 Research units earned for your participation in your research lab (beyond the 1 unit of 797 credit required for your POS) can count as one of these electives.

### **Four core courses from below are also required (others from this list may be used as electives):**

**One** of the following two classes (3 units):

PSY 561	Advanced Neuropsychology	3 units
OR PSY 760	Seminar in Physiological Correlates of Behavior	3 units

**Two** of the following four classes (6 units total):

PSY 632	Theories and Methods in Developmental Science	3 units
PSY 740	Seminar in Social Psychology	3 units
PSY 751	Clinical Psychological Science: Theory & Methods	3 units
PSY 787	Seminar in Cognitive Psychology	3 units

**One** of the following four classes (3 units total):

PSY 568 (OR 768)	Systems Neuroscience	3 units
PSY 569 (OR 769)	Foundations of Neuroimaging	3 units
PSY 675	Seminar in Psychological Measurement	3 units
PSY 767	Seminar in Cognitive and Behavioral Psychology	3 units

You may take additional courses if your schedule permits, but only 30 units of graduate level coursework are needed for your Program of Study.

A deficiency in Physiological Psychology must be addressed by the end of the first year in the program, so please plan accordingly!

## Suggested Timeline of Events for the M.A. Program

The following is a rough timeline describing significant events students will experience and activities they will participate in, as part of the M.A. Program in Psychology. In addition to the courses and activities listed, there is an annual student review (usually in mid-April) for which students need to prepare a report and meet with program faculty to review progress, obtain feedback about performance and progress, and set goals for future progress. Note that each student's experience in the program is unique and may deviate somewhat from the events listed below.

### SAMPLE TIMELINE AND GOALS

(Note: Timelines for individual students may vary)

\*\*Please consult 797 expectations with your faculty mentor. The number of units will depend on mentor expectations, balanced with tuition costs and financial aid implications.

#### Fall of Year One (Y1)

##### Typical Courses if PSY 260 deficiency exists:

PSY 600 - Research Orientation (1 unit)  
PSY 670A – Adv. Statistics (3 units)  
PSY 260 – Physiological Psychology (3 units)  
PSY 797 – Research (1-3 units)\*\*

##### Typical Courses if no deficiency exists:

PSY 600 - Research Orientation (1 unit)  
PSY 670A – Adv. Statistics (3 units)  
Core Course (See above, page 6)  
PSY 797 – Research (1-3 units)\*\*

#### Fall Semester Y1 Goals:

- If applicable, complete PSY 260 (Physiological Psychology) deficiency
- Meet with faculty to discuss research opportunities and possible thesis topics
- Review literature relevant to possible thesis topics
- Formulate thesis research question

#### Spring of Year One (Y1)

##### Typical Courses:

PSY 600 - Research Orientation (1 unit)  
PSY 670B – Advanced Statistics (3 units)  
PSY 610 – Advanced Research Methods (3 units)  
PSY 797 – Research (0-3 units)

#### Spring Semester Y1 Goals:

- Participate in annual student progress review
- Design thesis project
- Draft formal thesis proposal
- Select other members of thesis committee

#### Summer Y1 Goals:

- Obtain IRB clearance by the end of the summer (save all email correspondence from IRB)
- Complete thesis proposal by the end of the summer (See “Thesis M.A. and M.S.” and “In Pursuit of the Master’s Degree” sections of this Handbook)

## **Fall of Year Two (Y2)**

### **Typical Courses:**

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2 Core Courses or 1 Core Course and 1 Elective (6 units)  
PSY 797 – Research (0-3 units) or 799A – Thesis (3 units)\*\*

### **Fall Semester Y2 Goals:**

- Finalize thesis proposal document and schedule thesis proposal meeting (send abstract to Admin Coordinator at least two weeks/10 business days prior— see **Appendix D**)
- Begin data collection and analyses for thesis (if proposal and IRB are approved)

## **Spring of Year Two (Y2)**

### **Typical Courses:**

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PSY 675 – Seminar in Psychological Measurement (3 units)  
1-2 Core Classes or Elective (3-6 units)  
PSY 797 – Research (2-3 units), 799A – Thesis (3 units), or 799B – Thesis Extension (3 units)\*\*

### **Spring Semester Y2 Goals**

- Check the Graduate Studies Announcements and Deadlines [website page](https://grad.sdsu.edu/announcements-and-deadlines) for registration, graduation and thesis deadlines at <https://grad.sdsu.edu/announcements-and-deadlines> prior to beginning of semester
- Register for PSY 799A in the first three weeks of semester (assuming proposal is complete)
- Apply for graduation in the very beginning of the semester
- Write results & discussion sections of thesis early-to-mid semester
- Schedule final thesis oral defense meeting mid-to-late semester (send abstract to Admin Coordinator at least two weeks/10 business days prior—see **Appendix E**)
- Prepare thesis for final processing and submit to Montezuma Publishing. (See “Thesis M.A. and M.S.” and “In Pursuit of the Master’s Degree” sections of this Handbook)

## Notes Regarding All (M.A. and M.S.) Graduate Courses in Psychology

1. Be aware that some courses are only offered in the Fall, some only in the Spring, and some in alternate years (as discussed in PSY 600).
2. Students may take additional courses that are not part of their Program of Study. These courses will appear on students' transcripts and will contribute to your overall GPA. **We urge you to plan ahead, and to get your required courses out of the way before you take your electives.**
3. All graduate students will have the opportunity to take departmental statistics placement exam to determine if they should be enrolled in PSY 670A or PSY 770A. Information regarding the exam is sent in the late spring/early summer prior to admissions. Please contact your faculty advisor and graduate advising if you have questions, but we encourage students to take this opportunity.
4. For tuition purposes, 6.1 units is considered full-time, although the university views 9 units as full-time. If you are receiving financial aid, they may have different requirements, so please verify with the financial aid office. If you have only 799A to complete, you would be considered full-time during that last semester.
5. Grade point average of at least 3.0 must be maintained in all courses listed on the official degree program, and in all courses, 300-level and above, taken at SDSU concurrently with or subsequent to graduate admissions. If a PSY 260 deficiency is fulfilled, that grade will be added to the cumulative GPA. If an individual's grade point average is below 3.0, they may be placed on academic probation and/or may be at risk of losing their teaching assistantship. A cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 must be maintained to graduate.

### Thesis (M.A. and M.S.)

All Master's students are required to complete and present a thesis, involving the design of an original empirical study, data collection as needed, analysis, and a write-up of the study hypotheses and findings. The thesis must fulfill the requirements of the Graduate College, described in the Graduate Bulletin. Students work closely with a Thesis Committee Chair to develop an original empirical project, which is evaluated and approved by a committee chosen by the student and the student's faculty mentor. Students work independently during all aspects of the thesis, including design, data collection, analysis, and write-up. A final report is written by the student, approved by the Thesis Committee, and submitted to the College of Graduate Studies for credit towards the Master's degree.

### Important Sources of Information

To monitor your progress towards program of study completion, you can access your degree evaluation through my.SDSU. Please see the following guide to access and interpret your degree evaluation:

<https://registrar.sdsu.edu/academic-success/understanding-degree-evaluation> Information on graduate programs, including program requirements course descriptions can be found online in the University Catalog at <https://catalog.sdsu.edu/>. Click on the Requirements for Master's Degrees tab for important information.

The College of Graduate Studies website has a wealth of information, including updates on deadlines, policies and procedures. Please keep this site bookmarked for information: <https://grad.sdsu.edu/>. Look under the "Current Graduate Student" tab for forms, grants/scholarships information, deadlines, grad student health insurance (GSHIP), graduation, etc.

## In Pursuit of the Master's Degree

### **Step One: Identify Your Program of Study (POS)**

The Program of Study (POS) is an agreement between the student and the University indicating which classes the student will take to complete the requirements for the student's master's degree. The POS worksheets are found in Appendixes A-C.

During the Fall semester, the graduate advisors will make a presentation during the Research Orientation class (PSY 600) and address questions regarding the completion of the Program of Study. Students can make an appointment with an Associate Graduate Advisor to get additional information. After completing the Program of Study form, the student should meet with the student's faculty mentor to review the POS and obtain the mentor's signature on the form. You will submit this to the Associate Graduate Advisor during PSY 600.

The POS form is a department form. Please note that you should plan on when you will take courses, given that some courses are only offered one semester/year or even once every 2 years. If you decide to take a particular course in a different semester than originally planned, no further action is taken. If you plan to substitute another course that falls within the Course Requirements described above, please contact your Associate Graduate Advisor.

You are responsible for ensuring that you complete the required coursework by monitoring your progress through your Degree Evaluation tile in my.SDSU. The Degree Evaluation system will automatically update with courses that fulfill degree requirements, independent of those indicated on your form. If a change is needed, submit a "Petition for Adjustment of Academic Requirements" form, located at <https://sdsuedu.sharepoint.com/sites/GRA/GA/SitePages/Forms.aspx>. This form will be sent to and must be approved by the Psychology Graduate Advisor (not your Associate Graduate Advisor), then signed by the Assistant Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

### **Step Two: Thesis Proposal Preparation**

Students need to prepare a thesis proposal that outlines the planned research project, in consultation with their Thesis Committee Chair (typically their faculty mentor). The thesis proposal should consist of a description of the study's hypotheses, objectives, design, methods for data collection, planned statistical analyses, and implications of potential outcomes. It must be written in the current APA-approved style. Students may conduct pilot work when developing a thesis topic, prior to their thesis proposal. However, prior work should be limited to pilot studies and be approved by the IRB/ IACUC.

Graduate students commonly underestimate the amount of time it takes for approval between the completion of a first draft to the final proposal draft. Communicate closely with your Thesis Committee Chair to establish clear expectations. Also, look carefully at the materials within the **Thesis Proposal folder within the PSYCH-MA-MS Canvas homeroom**, which includes all forms and procedures.

Students need to also identify Committee members, typically in consultation with their Thesis Committee Chair. The Committee should consist of one additional tenured/tenure-track faculty member from within Psychology and one tenured/tenure-track faculty member from a department outside of Psychology. Additional committee members may be included. If a faculty does not fall into one of these categories (research faculty, lecturer, adjunct, or outside our university), they may be eligible for serving on your committee, but a petition would need to be submitted and approved <https://grad.sdsu.edu/current-students/forms> or directly at <https://grad.sdsu.edu/current-students/committee-petition-v4.1.pdf> (See Appendix D).

Students must apply for approval from the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (or IACUC for animal research) before the proposal meeting and maintain documentation of this submission. Students who are using data from a research project that has already been approved by IRB/IACUC still must submit a modification to that IRB describing how the data will be used for their thesis project. If amendments are required, they can be completed after the proposal meeting. However, collection of the thesis data **cannot** begin until IRB or IACUC approval has been obtained.

In anticipation of their proposal meeting, students should also complete the Rights to Thesis Data and Publication form (PSYCH-MA-MS Canvas Homeroom). This agreement protects both the faculty and student by establishing expectations regarding data ownership and publication authorship.

### **Step Three: Thesis Proposal Meeting**

After the proposal has been thoroughly critiqued and approved by the Thesis Committee Chair, students must then present the thesis proposal at a meeting with their Thesis Committee. It is the student's responsibility to reserve a room (or create a Zoom link) and schedule the proposal meeting at a time when the entire Thesis Committee can attend. The proposal should be distributed to the Thesis Committee members typically 2 weeks in advance of their proposal meeting. In addition, students must complete their abstract announcement (template can be found in PSYCH-MA-MS Canvas Homeroom), which must be approved by the Thesis Committee Chair. After approval of the Thesis Committee Chair and **at least 2 weeks prior to their proposal meeting (or 10 business days)**, students must submit their abstract announcement to the Graduate Administrative Coordinator for approval by the Graduate Advising Team. We are required by SDSU's College of Graduate Studies to send notification of the proposal meeting to faculty **at least 7 days** prior to the proposal meeting date (see Appendices D & E). The purpose of this procedure is to give the faculty an opportunity to provide feedback to the student prior to conducting the study so that the thesis may benefit from the input. Faculty are encouraged to attend the proposal meeting and transmit their comments to the Thesis Committee Chair. Faculty and students are invited to attend the proposal meeting.

For the proposal meeting, the student gives a presentation of thesis project and answers questions from the Thesis Committee members and other attendees. If needed, students can arrange for a laptop computer and projector with the Department of Psychology office, but need to reserve this in advance. At the end of a successful proposal meeting, students should complete the Appointment of Thesis/Project Committee Form from the College of Graduate Studies (fill in official Thesis Chair and Committee names, along with the other information). Approval signatures from the committee can be obtained in one of two ways: (1) if the proposal meeting is in person, the committee can sign the Appointment of Thesis/Project Committee Form directly or (2) if the proposal meeting is virtual, complete the Proposal Approval Report Form and email it to the Graduate Administrative Coordinator so that approval signatures may be obtained via AdobeSign. The student submits (1) this Appointment of Thesis/Project Committee Form, (2) the Rights to Data and Publication form and (3) documentation of IRB/IACUC approval and/or exemption to the Psychology Graduate Advisor (not an Associate Graduate Advisor) for signature.

Once these forms are sent electronically to the Psychology Graduate Advisor for review, they will be forwarded to the College of Graduate Studies.

If no major problems are brought to the attention of the Psychology Graduate Advisor within five working days following the proposal meeting, and all other conditions for Advancement to Candidacy are met, then thesis research may proceed. In the rare event that major difficulties arise, informal resolution is attempted. Failing this, the matter is presented to the Psychology department Master's Committee.

### **Step Four: Recommendation for Advancement to Candidacy**

When 12 units or more in courses on the Program of Study have been completed with an average GPA of B (3.0) or better, and any undergraduate deficiencies have been remedied, students are eligible for Advancement to Candidacy for the Master's Degree. In addition, **students must have successfully proposed their thesis**. Once eligible, students submit a Request for Advancement to Candidacy <https://sdsuedu.sharepoint.com/sites/GRA/GA/SitePages/Forms.aspx> electronically. Once submitted, this e-form information is sent to the Psychology Graduate Advisor and College of Graduate Studies for signatures, approvals and recommendations. Students will be notified when a

final recommendation decision has been made. After proper approval has been made, the student is eligible to enroll in three units of Master's thesis research (799A). The schedule number for 799A is obtained from the College of Graduate Studies once the Thesis/Project Committee Signature Form, IRB/IACUC approval, Rights to Data and Publication and Advancement to Candidacy have been approved. Note that enrollment in 799A or 799B (thesis research extension) is considered a full course load for veteran's benefits, Navy Contract employment, and student financial aid. A letter to this effect can be obtained from the Psychology Graduate Advisor and the College of Graduate Studies.

#### **Step Five: Thesis Data Collection and Analyses**

**Collection or accessing of thesis data can begin only after the thesis proposal has been approved** by the Thesis Committee and the Psychology Graduate Advisor, and IRB approval has been obtained. Pilot data can be collected beforehand (with appropriate IRB or IACUC approval) and may be described in the report. The Thesis Committee Chair (faculty mentor) is to be consulted throughout the data collection, analysis, and write-up of the thesis.

#### **Step Six: Final Thesis Oral Exam (Thesis Defense)**

Students **must be enrolled in 799A or 799B (thesis research extension) in the semester of their thesis defense**. Upon approval by the Thesis Committee Chair and before distribution to the committee, the student will **submit the thesis to Turnitin** within the PSYCH-MA-MS Canvas homeroom. The student will send the report to the Thesis Committee Chair and discuss results. Once approved by the Thesis Committee Chair, the thesis document is distributed to each member of the Thesis Committee, ideally at least two weeks in advance of the final oral defense. It is the student's responsibility to reserve a room (or create a Zoom link) and schedule the defense meeting at a time when the entire Thesis Committee can attend. In addition, students must complete their abstract announcement (template can be found in Master's Canvas Homeroom; see Appendix E), which must be approved by the Thesis Committee Chair. After approval of the Thesis Committee Chair and **at least 2 weeks prior to their proposal meeting (or 10 business days)**, students must submit their abstract announcement to the Graduate Administrative Coordinator for approval by the Graduate Advising Team. Notification of the defense meeting must be sent out to faculty **at least 7 days** prior to the defense meeting date. Faculty and students are invited to attend the defense meeting.

For the defense meeting, the student gives a presentation of the thesis project and answers questions from the Thesis Committee members and other attendees. If needed, students can arrange for a laptop computer and projector with the Department of Psychology office, but they need to reserve this in advance. The Thesis Committee must approve the thesis. For approval, the student should obtain the Thesis Chair's signature on the Oral Defense Report form and complete the rest of the form (found on the PSYCH-MA-MS Canvas Homeroom). Once the form is completed, send to the Graduate Administrative Coordinator and Psychology Graduate Advisor.

The Committee Signature Page of the thesis also needs to be signed by the thesis committee members. If the defense meeting is held in person, the student should download and print the official Committee Signature Page from Montezuma Publishing ahead of time and have the Thesis Committee members sign in black ink at the defense meeting. If the defense meeting is held virtually, the student should download and prepare the official Committee Signature Page and email it to the Graduate Administrative Coordinator so that signatures can be obtained via AdobeSign and submitted directly to Montezuma Publishing.

For more committee signature options, please visit The Committee Signature Page section on Montezuma Publishing's website at <https://www.montezumapublishing.com/sdsuthesisdissertation>.

The signatures indicate final approval of the thesis and is one of the most important parts of the thesis. Although this Committee Signature Page is typically signed at the defense meeting, the

Thesis Committee members may recommend edits to the document. If so, the Committee may sign under the condition that the student make the edits and obtain final approval from the Thesis Committee Chair. Otherwise, the Committee members may not sign until the edits have been made and approved.

### **Step Seven: Thesis Submission**

Finally, the thesis needs to be typed and formatted in just-about-final form. Visit the Montezuma Publishing website <https://www.montezumapublishing.com/sdsuthesisdissertation> under the SDSU Thesis/Dissertation tab for information on templates, deadlines, policies, and procedures for preparing and submitting theses. For students who cannot prepare their theses, this site includes a list of professional formatters to contact. Please be aware that deadlines associated with publishing your thesis have implications for graduation as well as avoiding the need to re-enroll in 799B.

Montezuma Publishing will see that the thesis is printed, bound, and shelved in the library. The Thesis Chair and members of the Thesis Committee may also appreciate receiving a bound copy of the thesis. The department does not need a bound copy of the thesis.

### **Step Eight: Walking at Graduation**

Most students enjoy the experience of closure they get from “walking” through the graduation ceremonies, being hooded by their Thesis Chair at the Department of Psychology Graduate Hooding Ceremony and Reception, and being lauded by their family and friends. Students may “walk” in the graduation ceremonies (either at the college or department ceremony), even if they have not yet defended their thesis as long as the student has (1) proposed their thesis and (2) been advanced to candidacy. It is the responsibility of the student to rent or otherwise obtain the formal cap, gown, and hood, which make up the graduation regalia. These are available through the SDSU bookstore. Be sure to ask your Thesis Committee Chair well in advance of graduation whether s/he plans to attend the ceremonies, and whether s/he would be willing to hood you. If your Thesis Chair is not available for the hooding, you should ask a Graduate Advisor or a favorite professor to do so.

### **Critical Deadlines**

Graduation is not automatic upon filing the thesis. There are deadlines and costs. Students must declare their intention to graduate by filing an Application for Graduation with an Advanced Degree. The application for graduation is a two-step process. Students must apply through my.SDSU by selecting the application for graduation option under the Academic Records tile. As students proceed through the application process, they will be prompted to pay a one-time, non-refundable application fee. After the application fee has been paid, students must navigate back into their application to formally submit the application.

The application is due 3-6 months before the official diploma date and must be done through your [my.SDSU](#) account. Application deadlines are posted on the Academic Calendar and on the Graduate Studies homepage. A registration hold may prevent students from applying to graduate. For more information on registration holds, check the “Tasks” tile in your my.SDSU account or the Registrar's Office website on how to resolve

it: [https://registrar.sdsu.edu/students/registration/registration\\_holds](https://registrar.sdsu.edu/students/registration/registration_holds)

If you have missed the deadline for graduation applications, contact the Graduate Studies office to determine whether it is possible to petition for a late application.

**You must apply for graduation early in the semester in which you plan to graduate, and you must be registered in 799 (A or B) in the semester in which you plan to graduate. Check the current <https://grad.sdsu.edu/> for deadlines.** If, for some reason, graduation during the semester you anticipated is not possible, your graduation fee will not need to be re-paid.



The deadlines for filing for graduation and for filing the thesis manuscript change each semester. Please consult the College of Graduate Studies and Montezuma Publishing websites for current deadlines. There are three important deadlines: Thesis Submission, Thesis Publication, and Thesis Submission to Montezuma Publishing for future degree without 799B re-enrollment. Consider that the Thesis Review Service of Montezuma Publishing takes a substantial amount of time to review most formatted theses and for that reason, they generally list a deadline for Thesis Submission (typically late March/early April) for those graduating in the spring semester. Meeting this submission deadline gives students the best chance for graduating that semester but does not guarantee this. If the thesis is submitted to the Thesis Review Service of Montezuma Publishing after the submission deadline (typically between late March and mid-May for the spring semester), this is considered "at risk". To graduate that semester, the thesis must be approved with final edits by Montezuma Publishing by the Thesis Publication deadline. However, as long as the thesis has gone to the Thesis Review Service before the deadline for Thesis Submission to Montezuma Publishing for a future degree without 799B re-enrollment, the College of Graduate Studies considers it complete, and it will not be necessary to re-enroll in 799 the subsequent semester. The degree, however, may not be conferred until the following semester.

Note that there is a seven-year rule. Students have seven years from the date of their first course on their Official Program of Study to complete all the requirements for the Master's degree. Students **must apply for an official Leave of Absence if they are going to be taking a break** from the program during any time within the program. Please see <http://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/registrar/leave.html> for procedures if you will be absent during the course of your program. Please also inform your Faculty Mentor/Thesis Chair and the Psychology Graduate Advisor of your intended leave.

## Summary of Student Responsibilities

It is the student's responsibility to take care of the following:

1. Read the SDSU University Catalog (Requirements for Master's Degree section) for any graduate student requirements and frequently visit the College of Graduate Studies website for updates.
2. Update any biographic/demographic information (name, address, phone number, gender, etc.), through the **Profile** tile in [my.SDSU](#) and notify the Department via email as well.
3. Obtain approval for transfer units from other schools/departments.
4. Complete your Official Program of Study and submit to the department during PSY 600.
5. Complete your PSY 260 deficiency, if applicable.
6. Fulfill course requirements for specialization (M.A. or M.S.).
7. Keep overall GPA at 3.0 or above.
8. Select a Thesis Committee Chair and a Thesis Committee, and complete the paperwork involved.
9. Obtain approval from IRB (Institutional Review Board) before collecting data for your thesis.
10. Successfully defend your thesis proposal and conduct your thesis research.
11. Write up your thesis in appropriate form, and successfully defend it.
12. Know the required steps and forms to be completed for the thesis.
13. Obtain forms and signatures for all steps of the thesis.
14. File for graduation early in the semester in which you plan to graduate.
15. Complete submission of approved thesis to Montezuma Publishing and edit until approved.

## **Pearls of Wisdom from Students Who Have Been There**

"The expectations for graduate students are different from undergraduates. No one is going to hold your hand and tell you what to do every step of the way. Be prepared to be independent and to take the initiative for all aspects of your education. This includes getting to know professors, finding a thesis topic, making friends, and unearthing answers to administrative questions."

"I thought I knew everything about performing research in the library. In reality, I was completely ignorant. It wasn't until my last year that I discovered all sorts of resources that could have saved me weeks of work. I would advise new students to talk to the librarians about their papers and research projects. Librarians are paid the big bucks for a reason."

"A big mistake I made was to wait until my last semester to start thinking of a thesis topic. I know of some students who knew what thesis topic they were interested in and wrote a paper on the same topic throughout all of their courses. They were really ahead of the game when they sat down to write their final thesis. Other students were a lot more on the ball and actively searched for topics by talking to professors or asking questions in their classes. If I could do it all over again, in each class I would have asked myself the question 'Does this interest me? Could I write a thesis on this subject?'"

"The bureaucracy at SDSU is thicker than cement! There's a form for absolutely everything and the policies (and the forms) are always changing. My advice is to be prepared. Read absolutely everything in the catalog and make sure you understand what you need to do. Asking several sources (the department and the College of Graduate Studies, for example) also helps to get a broader picture of the requirements. Turn in the paperwork as early as possible, in case there are problems (and usually there is at least one box you'll forget to fill in). Another piece of advice is to maintain a Zen-like attitude. Eventually someone will give you the wrong form, the wrong information, or forget to tell you that you needed to fill out Form A before you can turn in Form B. It doesn't help to get upset about it because you'll still have to jump through those hoops whether you want to or not. Throwing a tantrum only makes the person less helpful and raises your own blood pressure."

### **The following was written by Tory Weber, former Master's Student:**

"Why Your Thesis is the Ideal Boyfriend..."

It is always there for you.

It listens and reflects what you have said.

It can provide a great sense of accomplishment. Standing by its side makes you feel intelligent. It can be on your mind without consuming your every bit of attention. It works around your schedule.

It will never take advantage of you.

You will never have to worry about jealousy or apologizing. You will feel the immediate reward for the time you invest in it. It will be at your command, your every beck and call.

It will appreciate your unique ambitions, talents, and insights.

It will never roll its eyes at you or comment in any derogatory manner. It has no preference as to your shape and size.

It will never look to be just friends, but will always desire an intimate relationship.

Once you have established a good working relationship it will reciprocate your every expression of love. It will laugh with you, not at you.

It will hang on your every last word and will always provide more than a one-word answer.

But, most importantly, it will never lead you on or forget to call, and if you have questions, it has the answers.

Good luck to all those working through or taking on the novel endeavor of a thesis. Hopefully, this short piece will encourage you to greet this challenge with smiles and a hearty laugh.

## **M.A./M.S. Checklist**

1. Select a Thesis Topic, Thesis Chair & Thesis Committee
2. Write proposal
3. Send proposal to IRB and get written approval for research
4. Submit abstract and proposal announcement to Graduate Administrative Coordinator.
5. Send thesis proposal to committee members
6. Successfully defend proposal at proposal meeting
7. Submit Thesis Committee Approval form, Rights to Data and Publication form, and IRB approval documentation to the Psychology Graduate Advisor before submission to the College of Graduate Studies.
8. Submit your Request for Advancement to Candidacy electronic form via the Graduate Studies website
9. Get schedule number from College of Graduate Studies, and register for 799A, if date permits
10. Begin data collection
11. Apply for graduation, and/or register for 799B if needed
12. Finish thesis research and writing
13. Defend thesis in oral presentation meeting
14. When all changes requested after defense have been made, obtain committee signatures on official signature page you have prepared
15. Submit correctly typed and formatted thesis, copy of signature page and copy of title page to Thesis Review Service at Montezuma Publishing.

## Appendix A: Program of Study for Industrial-Organizational M.S. Psychology Worksheet

### Total Coursework Required for M.S. = 38 Units

#### Core Requirements (20 units)

PSY	600	Research Orientation	2 Units
PSY	670A-670B	Advanced Statistics	6 Units
Or	770A-770B	Advanced Statistics	
PSY	675	Seminar in Psychological Measurement	3 Units
PSY	792	Internship in Applied Psychology	3 Units
PSY	797	Research	3 Units
PSY	799A	Thesis	3 Units

#### Required Courses for Emphasis in Industrial/Organizational Psychology (18 units):

PSY	621	Seminar in Personnel Psychology	3 Units
PSY	622	Seminar in Organizational Psychology	3 Units
PSY	630	Seminar in Organizational Research & Ethics	3 Units
PSY	721	Advanced Seminar in Personnel Psychology	3 Units
PSY	722	Advanced Seminar in Organizational Psychology	3 Units
		Graduate Electives (with approval of program coordinator)	3 Units

#### Select 1 Elective Class

Elective #1: \_\_\_\_\_

The student and I have reviewed the Program of Study to ensure that the chosen classes fit with their career goals.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name Print and Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Name Print and Signature

**Appendix B: Program of Study for Quantitative Psychology M.S. Worksheet**

**Total Coursework Required for M.S. = 38 Units**

**Core Requirements (20 units)**

PSY	600	Research Orientation	2 Units
PSY	670A-670B	Advanced Statistics	6 Units
Or	770A-770B	Advanced Statistics	
PSY	675	Seminar in Psychological Measurement	3 Units
PSY	792	Internship in Applied Psychology	3 Units
PSY	797	Research	3 Units
PSY	799A	Thesis	3 Units

**Required Courses for Emphasis in Quantitative Psychology (18 units):**

PSY	630	Seminar in Organizational Research & Ethics	3 Units
Or	610	Advanced Research Methods	
PSY	775	Multivariate Statistics	3 Units
PSY	776	Multilevel Modeling	3 Units
		Two elective courses offered by the psychology department	6 Units
		One elective course outside the psychology department (to be approved by the faculty mentor)	3 Units

**Select THREE Elective Classes:**

**Psychology Elective #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Psychology Elective #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Outside Elective #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

The student and I have reviewed the Program of Study to ensure that the chosen classes fit with their career goals.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Name Print and Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Faculty Name Print and Signature**

**Appendix C: Program of Study for M.A. Worksheet**

**Total Coursework Required for M.A. = 30 Units**

**The following courses are required:**

PSY	610	Advanced Research Methods	3 Units
PSY	600	Research Orientation	2 Units
PSY	670A-670B	Advanced Statistics	6 Units
or	770A-770B	Advanced Statistics	
PSY	797	Research	1 Unit
PSY	799A	Thesis	3 Units

**1 of the following 2 classes is required:**

PSY	561	Advanced Neuropsychology	3 Units
PSY	760	Seminar in Physiological Correlates of Behavior	3 Units

**2 of the following 4 classes are required:**

PSY	632	Theories and Methods in Developmental Science	3 Units
PSY	751	Clinical Psychological Science: Theory and Methods	3 Units
PSY	740	Seminar in Social Psychology	3 Units
PSY	787	Seminar in Cognitive Psychology	3 Units

**1 of the following 4 classes is required:**

PSY	675	Seminar in Psychological Measurement	3 Units
PSY	767	Seminar in Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience	3 Units
PSY	568/768	Systems Neuroscience	3 Units
PSY	569/769	Foundations of Neuroimaging	3 Units

**In addition one elective is required (3 Units):**

Electives may be selected from any other 500-700 level Psychology classes or graduate classes from other departments in the University with the approval of a Graduate Advisor. Three units of 797, additional to the 1 required unit, may count as 1 elective.

**Course Decisions (CHOOSE ONE FROM EACH ROW AND MARK YOUR SELECTION)**

<b>CHOOSE 1</b>	<b>PSY 670A-670B</b>	<b>PSY 770A-770B</b>
<b>CHOOSE 1</b>	<b>PSY 561</b>	<b>PSY 760</b>
<b>CHOOSE 2</b>	<b>PSY 751</b> <b>PSY 587</b>	<b>PSY 740</b> <b>PSY 632</b>
<b>CHOOSE 1</b>	<b>PSY 675</b> <b>PSY 768</b>	<b>PSY 767</b> <b>PSY 769</b>

**Select 1 Elective Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

The student and I have reviewed the Program of Study to ensure that the chosen classes fit with their career goals.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Name Print and Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Faculty Name Print and Signature**

## Appendix D: Thesis Proposal A



# SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

## MEMORANDUM

Use this template for your **Thesis Proposal** announcement. Do not use track changes. Set your font to **Arial**, and set the font size to 11. Left justify margins, single space. Edit the red text below to reflect your individual information. Leave it in red when you email it so that we can quickly check these fields.

**DATE:** For date, use the week day that is at least two weeks prior to your meeting. Use this format: January 12, 2012. (note, not 12<sup>th</sup>)  
For dates, don't use ordinals like "1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>."

**MEETING DATE:** Date of the proposal meeting

**TO:** Department of Psychology Faculty

**FROM:** Jennifer Thomas, Ph.D., Psychology Graduate Advisor

**SUBJECT:** Advancement to Candidacy – **First Name Last Name**

**COMMITTEE:** **Name**, Ph.D., Psychology, Committee Chair (or Co-Chair)  
If you have a co-chair, (**Name**, Credential, Department, Institution if not SDSU, Committee Co-Chair.)  
**Name**, Ph.D., Psychology, Committee Member  
**Name**, Credential, Department, Committee Member  
If you have a 4<sup>th</sup> member, put his/her info here. Include institution if not at SDSU.

**First and last name** is eligible for Advancement to Candidacy. Below is an abstract of **their** proposal. The proposal, entitled "**Put your Title here, bold with Title Capitalization**" has been distributed to the thesis committee above for their initial review, and has been reviewed by the committee chair.

**First and last name** will discuss **their** research plan at a proposal meeting on **Day of the week**, **Date**, **Year**, at time, (do time like this: 10:30 a.m., or 4:00 p.m. Use periods... NOT 10 am or 4 pm.) at location. Include suite number if appropriate. Use this format: Monday, April 30, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. in the Hillix-Cronan Conference Room, LS 281. Note LS 281 is the only room that has a designated donor name). If you are defending remotely, include the zoom link and password.

Department faculty and graduate students are invited. If you have questions, comments or are interested in learning more about the topic, please plan to attend. Department members should address comments and/or questions about the proposed research directly to the committee chair.



## Abstract

The Abstract is read first and may be the only part of your work that our department faculty as a whole may see, so make sure the project is well described. It is a brief comprehensive summary of the project in 500 words or less. Please include the headers in black text below; they are included in your word count.

**Purpose:** State the problem you are addressing and the purpose of your study, in one or two Sentences, if possible.

**Participants/Subjects:** (You may choose either Participants or Subjects for your header, as appropriate.) Describe the participants/subjects, specifying such pertinent characteristics as number, gender, species, etc.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** Next, describe the study design/methodology including the apparatus, data-gathering procedures, complete test names or generic names and the dosage of any drugs. Then describe the statistical tests to be used, the interpretation of the various possible outcomes, and the possible implications.

Remember there are no references in your abstract; it is single spaced, and it must be less than 500 words. **Don't indent** the paragraphs, they should be left justified.

## Appendix E: Thesis Defense Abstract Template



# SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

## MEMORANDUM

Use this template for your **Oral Defense** announcement. Do not use track changes. Set your font to **Arial**, and set the font size to 11. Left justify margins, single space. Edit the red text below to reflect your individual information. Leave it in red when you email it so that we can quickly check these fields.

**DATE:** For date, use the week day that is at least two weeks prior to your meeting. Use this format: January 12, 2012. (note, not 12<sup>th</sup>)  
For dates, don't use ordinals like "1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>."

**MEETING DATE:** Date of the proposal meeting

**TO:** Department of Psychology Faculty

**FROM:** Jennifer Thomas, Ph.D., Psychology Graduate Advisor

**SUBJECT:** Oral Defense – **First Name Last Name**

**COMMITTEE:** **Name**, Ph.D., Psychology, Committee Chair (or Co-Chair)  
If you have a Co-Chair, (**Name**, Credential, Department, Institution if not SDSU, Committee Co-Chair.)  
**Name**, Ph.D., Psychology, Committee Member  
**Name**, Credential, Department, Committee Member  
If you have a 4<sup>th</sup> member, put his/her info here. Include institution if not at SDSU.

First and last name will discuss **their** thesis, entitled "**Put your Title here, bold with Title Capitalization**" at a defense meeting on **Day of the week, Date, Year, at time**, (do time like this: 10:30 a.m., or 4:00 p.m. Use periods... NOT 10 am or 4 pm.) at location. Include suite number if appropriate. Use this format: Monday, April 30, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. in the Hillix-Cronan Conference Room, LS 281. Note LS 281 is the only room that has a designated donor name). If you are defending remotely, include the zoom link and password.

Department faculty and graduate students are invited. If you have questions, comments or are interested in learning more about the topic, please plan to attend.

## Abstract

The Abstract is read first and may be the only part of your work that our department faculty as a whole may see, so make sure the project is well described. It is a brief comprehensive summary of the project in 500 words or less. Please include the headers in black text below; they are included in your word count.

**Purpose:** State the problem you are addressing and the purpose of your study, in one or two sentences, if possible.

**Participants/Subjects:** (You may choose either Participants or Subjects for your header, as appropriate.) Describe the participants/subjects, specifying such pertinent characteristics as number, gender, species, etc.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** Next, describe the study design/methodology including the apparatus, data-gathering procedures, complete test names or generic names and the dosage of any drugs.

**Results:** Then describe the statistical tests used, the results, and the interpretation of the results.

**Conclusions:** Describe the implications of your findings.

Remember there are no references in your abstract; it is single spaced, and it must be less than 500 words. **Don't indent** the paragraphs, they should be left justified.

## Appendix F: Guidelines for Creating and Completing the Master's Thesis

### Selecting a Topic

1. How? The following are some methods for narrowing your choices:
  - a. What area interests you?
  - b. What sort of research is currently being conducted by your faculty mentor?
  - c. What topic is currently exciting the field?
  - d. What faculty project can you attach yourself to?
2. Survey the relevant literature in Psychological Abstracts by looking up key words. Often a search via Psych Lit in Love Library is very useful. Read articles in the current issues of the journals, which show up most frequently in your search. Talk to your faculty mentor for guidance.
3. Attend department colloquia and talks, conferences and professional meetings to hear about new ideas and to stimulate your own thinking.
4. Evaluate your personal timetable for completing the thesis in view of your obligations, work habits, scope of the project which interests you--then add four months.

### Selecting a Chair and a Thesis Committee

Typically, your faculty mentor will serve as your Thesis Chair. Meet with your Thesis Chair or Chairs regularly. Describe your ideas, ask about their research interests, what kinds of theses other students have completed with them, and if they think your project would work within their research program. Work closely with your Thesis Chair to identify a realistic project. There seem to be two major faculty styles for directing thesis research. Some faculty tend to be rather non-directive and encourage students to develop their own thesis topic. While this stimulates originality, it may take more time. Other faculty members require that students carry out some project that is of interest to the faculty member, perhaps a component in a larger research program or grant. While this is expedient and convenient, it may not be the most interesting to you. Discuss the approach with your Thesis Chair, as well as expectations and timelines. Above all, you want a Chair who is regularly available to you, one whose students complete their theses, and who may furnish a strong recommendation. You will be happier if your needs and your Thesis Chair's are congruent.

Your Thesis Chair should be able to provide suggestions for Thesis Committee members. The following table shows the faculty appointments eligible for each Thesis member position. Note that Research faculty typically are classified as Lecturers or Adjunct faculty. Final authority for approval of committee members rests with the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Permissible Thesis Committee Member Affiliations					
	Chair	Co-Chair	2nd	3rd	4th
Tenure / Ten. Track (home department)	✓	✓	✓		✓
Emeritus, FERP, Adjunct*, Lecturer* (home dept)	‡	✓	✓		✓
Tenure / Ten. Track (outside department)	‡	✓		✓	✓
Emeritus, FERP, Adjunct*, Lecturer* (outside dept)		✓		✓	✓

\* Lecturers, adjunct faculty and outside experts without any SDSU affiliation must complete a petition.

\* Outside experts without any SDSU affiliation can serve as fourth committee members only. See the home department chair or program coordinator for approval—a petition may be necessary.

‡ Only T/TT faculty from the home department may chair committees, except in unusual circumstances. The Psychology Graduate Advisor must directly contact the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies to petition for an exception. The petition can be found at: <https://grad.sdsu.edu/current-students/committee-petition-v4.1.pdf>.

## **Thesis Proposal - General Considerations**

The aim of the proposal is to spell out clearly what you propose to do for your thesis research study and why, so that you and your committee can discuss the details and arrive at definite decisions and agreement. Proposals are written in the future tense ("will") rather than the past tense ("was"). Otherwise write the proposal in journal article format, following the style of the current APA Publication Manual. If there are some details or procedures you are uncertain about, include a discussion of the various ways you might proceed, indicating the pros and cons of each possible way.

### **Introduction**

Describe the general purpose of the study. Describe the history of the topic, prior research findings and why it is of interest. What are the major theoretical issues generating this line of work? What do you plan to do to extend the research? What is the significance of your proposed research to the field of psychology and the world at large? What is your hypothesis? Include anything else the reader needs to know to understand why the study is being done. Don't include information that does not help to clarify the purpose of the study, the method, or the potential results.

### **Method and Procedure**

Describe exactly how you plan to do the project in as much detail as is currently practical. Include type and number of subjects, experimental design, materials and apparatus, details of procedure and anything else appropriate to how your particular experiment is to be done. Include a draft of any questionnaires or other such materials to be used as well as the formal feedback to be given to human subjects. If uncertain about exactly how you think some particular problem should be handled, include a discussion of the pros and cons of the various alternatives.

NOTE: If you make any changes in the scope of your thesis or in your methods following your proposal meeting, you must contact your thesis members and get approval.

### **Data Analyses**

How will you score the data, and what statistical tests will you use? Which comparisons will be of particular interest?

### **Expected Results**

How might the study turn out? What would it mean if it turned out as expected? What would each of the other ways it could turn out tell you?

In what way could it make an important contribution to knowledge? What are the theoretical implications of the findings for each of the potential outcomes?

### **References**

Include here the bibliography of works that are cited in your paper, following APA citation style.

### **Abstract**

The Abstract is read first and may be the only part of your work that our department faculty as a whole may see, so make sure the project is well described. It is a brief comprehensive summary of the project in 500 words or less. State the problem, in one sentence if possible. Describe the subjects, specifying such pertinent characteristics as number, gender, species, etc. Next describe the experimental procedure including the apparatus, data-gathering procedures, complete test names or generic names and the dosage of any drugs. Then describe the statistical tests to be used, the interpretation of the various possible outcomes, and the implications. Do not include source documentation. You will find it very difficult at first to condense your magnum opus in this manner. However, it is good practice, because submissions to most professional meetings and journals require such brief abstracts. In addition, it will help you to emphasize and clarify those basic elements that are at the core of your research. Please see the **Thesis Proposal Template** found in the PSYCH-MA-MS Canvas Homeroom (and Appendix D).

## **Thesis Defense - General Considerations**

The aim of the proposal is to clearly describe your thesis research study and the implications of the results you found. The final thesis is written in the past tense ("was"). Otherwise write, the thesis in journal article format, following the style of the current APA Publication Manual and using the thesis templates provided by Montezuma Publishing.

### **Introduction**

Describe the general purpose of the study. Describe the history of the topic, prior research findings and why it is of interest. What are the major theoretical issues generating this line of work? What do you plan to do to extend the research? What is the significance of your proposed research to the field of psychology and the world at large? What is your hypothesis? Include anything else the reader needs to know to understand why the study is being done. Don't include information that does not help to clarify the purpose of the study, the method, or the potential results.

### **Methods and Procedures**

Describe the project in as much detail as is currently practical. Include type and number of subjects, experimental design, materials and apparatus, details of procedure and anything else appropriate to how your particular experiment was conducted. Include a draft of any questionnaires or other such materials to be used as well as the formal feedback given to human subjects.

### **Results**

Report on the data and statistical results. Provide data graphs to illustrate your findings and include results of your statistical analyses.

### **Discussion**

Describe what you study found and how you interpret the findings. Do your data support your hypothesis? What are the theoretical implications of the findings? Discuss how your findings fit within the larger literature. How does this study contribute to knowledge in the field? Discuss any caveats and/or limitations of your study. What future studies would you conduct to address any limitations?

### **References**

Include here the bibliography of works that are cited in your paper, following APA citation style.

### **Abstract**

The Abstract is read first and may be the only part of your work that our department faculty as a whole may see, so make sure the project is well described. It is a brief comprehensive summary of the project in 500 words or less. State the problem, in one sentence if possible. Describe the subjects, specifying such pertinent characteristics as number, gender, species, etc. Next describe the experimental procedure including the apparatus, data-gathering procedures, complete test names or generic names and the dosage of any drugs. Then describe the statistical tests to be used, the interpretation of the various possible outcomes, and the implications. Do not include source documentation. You will find it very difficult at first to condense your magnum opus in this manner. However, it is good practice, because submissions to most professional meetings and journals require such brief abstracts. In addition, it will help you to emphasize and clarify those basic elements that are at the core of your research. Please see the **Thesis Defense Template** (Appendix E), also found in the PSYCH-MA-MS Canvas Homeroom.

## Master's Thesis Regulations

### Master's Thesis Overview

1. A master's thesis is an essential component of the requirement for the Master's degree. It is the policy of the Department of Psychology that all theses be empirical studies. The purpose of the thesis is to demonstrate the student's ability to carry out a scientifically valid research project. The skills required include:
  - a. familiarity with previously published scientific literature on the problem
  - b. formulation of a hypothesis
  - c. specification of appropriate procedures and a research design
  - d. collecting or accessing of relevant data
  - e. appropriate data analyses
  - f. appropriate interpretation of the results and conclusions and implications of the findings
  - g. effective written communication of this information in APA style
  - h. satisfactory oral defense of the work

Collection or accessing of thesis data can begin only after the thesis proposal has been approved in writing by the Thesis Committee and Department of Psychology faculty. Pilot data can be collected beforehand and may be described in the report, but are not to be added to or blended with the formal thesis data.

2. The Thesis Chair and Committee will ensure that:
  - a. the student is significantly involved in the development of hypotheses and the study's design and testable predictions.
  - b. the student identifies the appropriate parameters, collects or accesses firsthand the study database, and conducts the necessary statistical analyses.
  - c. when an existing database is used, the student identifies the dependent/independent variables and sample criteria before collecting the necessary sample data from the larger database.
  - d. research designs that do not involve the manipulation of independent variables maintain the same level of scientific rigor as those using experimental designs. The variables under study must be operationally defined and the data must be collected systematically using a method of sampling appropriate to scientific psychological research.
3. A professor can chair or co-chair no more than five active theses simultaneously. Exceptions can be provided by the approval of the Graduate Committee.
4. The Psychology Graduate Advisor, the Department Chair and the Thesis Chair and Committee shall ensure that master's theses comply with the department policies.