Cognitive Program Master’s/Doctoral Requirements
And Other Program Guidelines (08/15/08 revision)

This document presents the requirements of the Cognitive Program for completion of the MA and Ph. D. degrees as of Fall, 2008 and also describes other program-related guidelines and considerations. The requirements described here consist of specific dates by when certain progress milestones should or must be completed, along with particular course requirements. Certain of the progress milestone dates and course requirements are common across all programs in the Department, but others are specific to the Cognitive Program and thus may differ from the requirements listed by other programs.

NOTE THAT for students entering the Cognitive program in Fall 2008 or thereafter, this document supersedes the earlier program requirements document with the revision date of 10/23/06. As is usual practice, however, students entering the program prior to Fall, 2008 have the option of remaining with the requirement structure in effect at the time of their matriculation or electing to follow the latest requirements revision. The only aspect of the requirements stated in the 10/23/06 revision that is no longer applicable to any current student regardless of their matriculation date is the minimum hours requirement for the doctoral degree as set forth by the Graduate School, which as noted herein is now 55 hours rather than the 72 hours previously in effect.

Recommended and Final Progress Milestones Dates

It is expected that each student in the Cognitive program will complete the following progress milestones on or before the recommended dates, but no later than the final dates shown below. PLEASE NOTE that many of these dates are not the same every year because semesters don't necessarily begin and end on the same days. Students need to consult current and future University academic calendars and Graduate School calendars to determine the exact dates that apply to them. Last defense dates for Spring and Summer sessions, respectively, are usually around (but may not always be exactly on) 4/14 and 7/14 each year. ALSO NOTE that students who entered the Cognitive Program prior to Fall, 2006 can elect to use the published deadlines in effect at the time of their matriculation, or the current dates, whichever are more favorable to them. However, the milestones below will apply to all students entering in Fall, 2006 or thereafter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Recommended date</th>
<th>Final Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Year Project</td>
<td>September 15th (Year 2)</td>
<td>January 15th (Year 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA Proposal</td>
<td>Last day of Spring semester (Year 2)</td>
<td>Last day of Fall Semester (Year 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA Defense</td>
<td>Last day to defend MA Thesis for Spring graduation (Year 3)</td>
<td>Last day to defend MA Thesis for Summer graduation (Year 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Exam (Doctoral Written)</td>
<td>1st day of classes Fall semester (Year 4)</td>
<td>Last day of Summer Session (Year 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Proposal (Doctoral Oral)</td>
<td>Last Day of classes Spring semester (Year 4)</td>
<td>Last Day of classes Summer Session (Year 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Defense</td>
<td>Last day to defend Dissertation for Spring graduation (Year 5)</td>
<td>Last day to defend Dissertation for Summer graduation (Year 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The procedures applicable to each of these milestones for Cognitive Program students follow those described in the Departmental General Requirements booklet (Appendices 3, 4 and 6) except for the Preliminary Exam (Doctoral Written), which is described in the next section.

**Cognitive Program Preliminary Exam Structure**

Rather than a traditional written examination, the Cognitive Program preliminary exam has been structured so as to encourage doctoral candidates to engage in academic behaviors similar to those required of them on a professional level. This exam presently follows the three-part structure described below. The first part requires that the doctoral candidate develop a set of teaching materials for a course in Cognitive Psychology including a completed syllabus and a comprehensive set of lecture notes with PowerPoint slides or other appropriate visual aids. The second part requires that the student deliver one of the prepared lectures to an examination committee to be constituted as described below. The third part requires that the student submit a completed draft of the introduction to their dissertation research project. Given the preparation and materials development required for this exam, students should plan to begin their work on it well in advance of the desired examination date.

**Preliminary Exam Committee**

Preliminary exams are evaluated by a committee consisting of the student's advisor and two other faculty members within in the Department selected by the student in consultation with his or her advisor. At least one of two remaining committee members should be a faculty member within Cognitive Program. The third member can be selected from the Department at large. Departmental faculty who have declared either primary or secondary interests in the Cognitive area (see Program Director for this list) may be selected as third members without any further approval process. A faculty member other than those with declared primary or secondary interests in Cognitive may be appointed to the preliminary exam committee, but only with approval of the Cognitive Program. This approval should be solicited from the Program Director in advance of committee formation. Preliminary examination committees should be formed by the student at least 30 days prior to the first day of the scheduled exam. Two weeks prior to the scheduled preliminary exam, the student must submit to the Committee a complete listing of the lecture topics that will be included in the completed course materials. One week prior to the exam the committee will inform the student in writing of which lecture from the student’s list has been selected for presentation. This communication also will include details about how and when the deliverables for each part should be submitted/presented by the student. The Director of Graduate Studies will be copied on this communication.

**Exam Part 1: Lecture Notes**

This part of the examination is designed to prepare the student to teach a survey course in Cognitive Psychology. Completion of this part requires the student to turn in a syllabus and complete set of lecture notes and other appropriate materials (e.g. PowerPoint slides, handouts, etc.) for 42 classes that meet for 50 minutes each, three times per week in a standard academic semester. The committee will evaluate these materials on the 6-point scale described in Appendix 7 of the Departmental General Requirements booklet. All materials related to this part must be submitted according to the committee’s instructions prior to the end of the scheduled exam time on Day #1 of the Departmental preliminary exams.
Exam Part 2: Lecture

The student will be required to give one of the prepared 50-min. lectures to the committee. The specific lecture will be chosen by the committee from the list of lecture topics submitted by the student two weeks prior to the exam (see above). The committee will choose the topic of the lecture and will inform the student of it at least 1 week before she or he is to deliver the lecture to the committee. Both the quality (clarity) of the lecture's delivery, and its content (accuracy and amount of information) will be evaluated. The final score on this part will be given on the 6-point scale described in Appendix 7 of the Departmental General Requirements booklet and will reflect a weighted average of the quality (40%) and content (60%). This part should be completed according to the committee’s instructions prior to the end of the scheduled exam time on Day #2 of the Departmental preliminary exams.

Exam Part 3: Introduction to the Dissertation

The student's complete introduction to his or her dissertation constitutes the third part of the exam. The introduction should be a thorough literature review of the dissertation's topic as well as a substantial critical analysis of the literature. It should also include a description of the specific research question to be addressed in the dissertation, along with a discussion of its theoretical significance. The committee will evaluate this part on the 6-point scale described in Appendix 7 of the Departmental General Requirements booklet. The completed introduction should be submitted according to the committee’s instructions prior to the end of the scheduled exam time on Day #2 of the Departmental preliminary exams.

Grading and Outcome Notification

The grading of the overall exam will consist of three separate scores, each representing an average of the three committee member’s 6-point scale scores for that part. A student will pass the exam only if his or her average score for each part is 3.5 or better.

Written notification of performance will be provided to all students within three weeks after the exam date. In addition, a student’s committee members may write comments highlighting specific strengths and weaknesses in the various parts of the student’s performance. These comments, if available, will be included with the notification letter.

Students who fail the exam may request their average scores for each part. Students must retake any part(s) of the preliminary exam on which they failed to achieve an average score of 3.5 or better. Students must complete all necessary retakes at the next available exam opportunity, and they can retake each failed part only once.

MA and Ph. D. Cognitive Course Requirements

The overall course requirements for the Cognitive MA and Ph. D. degrees are shown below, along with a sample 5-year curriculum. NOTE THAT the courses shown below that are designated with an asterisk (*) are departmental requirements while the others are program specific. ALSO NOTE that graded courses refer to those that result in letter grades (usually
courses dealing with content areas of methods), while research courses refer to those involving an S/U assignment (usually special studies, thesis or dissertation research, or directed readings).

The Cognitive Program currently requires a total of six (6) graded courses in addition to the four (4) required by the Department, which amounts to a total of 30 credit hours. In addition, until the graded courses are completed, both Program and Department require that students enroll for a minimum of 9 hrs per semester. After all graded courses are completed, students may enroll for only 1 hour per semester.

To encourage students to achieve a broad perspective on the field of Cognitive Psychology, the six (6) required Cognitive courses involve 1 “Survey of Cognitive Psychology” course to be taken in the first year, along with five (5) additional courses from the following list, one from each of the three categories, plus two electives from one or more categories. NOTE THAT the availability of any specific Cognitive course below will depend on faculty availability as well as other Departmental and Program teaching requirements.

Survey of Cognitive Psychology + five (5) courses drawn from the following topics, one from each major category (I., II., or III.) and two additional from one or more categories. The topic areas shown below under the main categories are merely exemplars of appropriate subtopics and are not intended to be exhaustive lists. Instructors will decide under which main category each of their graduate courses will have the best fit. Students will keep track of which courses they have taken in each main area and will report this information annually in their year-end reports.

I. Basic Mechanisms and Methods
   a. Neuroscience
   b. Sensation and Perception
   c. Attention

II. Cognitive Fundamentals
   a. Concepts
   b. Categorization
   c. Language
   d. Learning
   e. Memory

III. Higher-Order Processes
   a. Text Comprehension
   b. Problem Solving
   c. Decision Making
   d. Spatial Cognition
   e. Pragmatics

MA Requirements (Minimum of 24 credits including):

- Quantitative Methods I* and II* (3 credits each for a total of 6 credits)
- One additional quantitative course* (3 credits)
- Cognitive Survey course (3 credits)
- Three Required Cognitive courses (3 credits each for a total of 9 credits)
- One Elective Cognitive course (3 credits)
- Any remaining credits would be from research courses.

Ph. D. Requirements (Minimum of 55 credits consisting of 30 from graded courses plus 25 additional research course credits) that include the following:

- Either Advanced Research Methods or Psychological Measurement (3 credits)
- One additional Elective Cognitive course (3 credits)
- Any remaining credits may be earned via additional graded or research courses.

As noted above, general Departmental and Graduate School policies indicate that a student will be considered “full time” only if they carry at least 9 credits per semester until they complete graded course requirements for their Program. After that, “full time” status can be maintained with just 1 credit per semester. A minimum of 55 credits are required for the doctoral degree and students must be enrolled for at least 1 credit in each semester (including Summer sessions) prior to their graduation.

Sample 5-year Cognitive curriculum schedule (credits in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Courses</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
<th>Cumulative Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Methods I* (3)</td>
<td>Quantitative Methods II* (3)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Survey Course (3)</td>
<td>Req. Cognitive Course #1 (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/Directed Readings (3)</td>
<td>Research/Directed readings (3)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
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**Year 2 Milestones:** First year project presentation; MA proposal defense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2 Courses</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
<th>Cumulative Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional Quant Course* (3)</td>
<td>Req. Cognitive Course #3 (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Req. Cognitive Course #2 (3)</td>
<td>Elec. Cognitive Course #1 (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Research (3)</td>
<td>Thesis Research (3)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
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**Year 3 Milestone:** MA thesis defense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3 Courses</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
<th>Cumulative Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Res. Methods or Psy Measurement* (3)</td>
<td>Research/Directed readings (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/Directed Readings (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
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Year 4 Milestones: Written Prelims; Doctoral Oral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 4 Courses</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
<th>Cumulative Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elec. Cognitive Course #2 (3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation research (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dissertation research (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
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Year 5 Milestone: Doctoral Defense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 5 Courses</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
<th>Cumulative Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation research (1)</td>
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<td>Dissertation research (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
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</table>

NOTE: this sample shows 9 hours per semester until the final graded course is taken in the Fall semester of the 4th year. Taking the final course earlier would allow permit a student to enroll earlier for just 1-hour per semester.

Annual Evaluations of Student Progress by Program Faculty

Primary annual evaluations of student progress will be conducted by program faculty in the last month of the Spring Semester. In preparation for those evaluations, all program students must submit an updated copy of their CVs together with an annual report containing the following information related to research, teaching, service, and professional goals.

Student Annual Report Categories

1. **Research.** Brief description of research activities over the past year including the stage of each project, publications or conference presentations that have or will emanate from the work, and the projected timeline for completion.

2. **Teaching.** Description of any teaching done during the past 12 months. This should include a description of TA duties performed for which faculty member or designation if the student was the instructor of record. Also relevant are guest lectures and any informal teaching activities such as supervision of undergraduates in the research lab or consulting activities.

3. **Service.** Provide overview of any service activities engaged in since last evaluation. These should include any service to the Department, College, University, field or local community.

4. **Goals.** The goal statement should include (but is not limited to) a description of (a) the activities that the student plans to engage in over the next 2-3 years, which should be updated yearly, (b) whether he/she plans to acquire the teaching certification, and if so, when (s)he would like to be instructor of record and which course (s)he is interested in teaching, (c) if he or she plans to pursue the quantitative minor, (d) where (s)he is with respect to progress milestones, and (e) eventual career goals.
Additional information about any student can be submitted by faculty outside of the program who may have supervised the student’s teaching or other activities.

**Evaluation Criteria**

The result of each annual evaluation will be a determination of whether or not each student is in **good standing** with regard to progress related to research, teaching, service and goals. Program faculty will review each student’s progress with respect to the recommended and final milestone dates, as well as other qualitative information (e.g., course work, performance of TA/RA duties, involvement in and contributions to the Program/Department, etc.), and will collectively determine if the student shall be deemed to be in good standing. All determinations related to student standing will be made based on a simple majority vote of all program faculty. The student’s advisor will then draft a feedback letter to the student detailing student strengths as well as any suggestions or recommendations related to areas of research, teaching, service and goals. All feedback letters will be circulated to program faculty for comment prior to being sent to students.

For students not in good standing, the letters must contain a specific plan agreed to by the advisor and the student according to which the student can regain good standing. This plan should detail specific strategies and deadlines by which any unmet requirements will be completed, along with a date before the end of the following semester by when the student could regain good standing status if some or all of the actions and accomplishments outlined in the plan occur. These plans must be reviewed by program faculty before the feedback letter is sent to each student.

Following the receipt of annual feedback letters, all students should set up an appointment with their advisor to discuss the annual evaluation results and their progress in the program. Separate appointments can be made with the Program Director if students so desire. Students may elect to respond in writing to their written evaluations. Such responses should be directed to faculty advisors with a copy to the Program Director. Students not in good standing will have 30 days to appeal their status to the graduate committee.

**Funding**

Funding is guaranteed for Years 1-5 provided that the student remains in **good standing**. Petitions for a 6th year of funding will be considered by the Program for students in good standing who have been actively involved in research but who have not yet completed the dissertation. Those petitions approved by the Program will be forwarded to the Graduate Committee.

Failure to remain in good standing automatically results in probationary status, which if not remedied by the end of the subsequent Fall semester, will result in loss of all Departmental funding. Students can exit from probation and regain **good standing**, pending program approval, given that the progress goals outlined in the student’s feedback letter are achieved by the end of the Fall semester.
While grant funding cannot be terminated automatically, PIs are strongly encouraged to remove grant funding when Departmental funding is lost. Exceptions to this would be expected to be rare.

**Supplementary Evaluations**

At the end of each Fall semester, a supplementary evaluation will be conducted to gauge progress of students who have previously been determined to be on probation. Feedback letters regarding progress toward goals will be sent to these students including any notices of funding terminations that are appropriate.

**The Invitation to Apply for Doctoral Candidacy**

In accord with general Departmental policy, students must receive an invitation from the Program to apply for doctoral candidacy. Ordinarily, these invitations will be issued at the end of the third year, but before Prelims are taken. In some cases, a decision to invite may be delayed beyond the end of the third year in the event the MA Thesis Defense has not yet occurred. Students not invited to apply will not be able to complete Prelims or embark on Doctoral dissertation work.

Generally, invitations to apply for Doctoral Candidacy will be issued to all students in **good standing** provided that the results of annual evaluations by program faculty do not reveal other significant reasons for concern. Students who are not in good standing will not be invited to apply for candidacy.

**Program Transfers**

The Cognitive Program offers the following as recommended guidelines for those wishing to transfer to or from the Program:

- Cognitive faculty must formally vote to accept students wishing to transfer into the Program.
- Students who are not in good standing are not be allowed to transfer out of the Program.
- When a Cognitive student transfers out of the Program that student’s stipend should remain with the Program, or Cognitive should be given a new stipend for the next year’s recruiting class. This policy is necessary to prevent programs from becoming disadvantaged over time as a result of transfers.

Also, it should be noted that students do not have to transfer out of Cognitive to have a non-Cognitive advisor supervise their research. All that is required is Program approval, which can be petitioned for through the Program Director.