Student Handbook

Master of Science Program in Educational Psychology

Georgia State University

Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education

This document has been prepared as an overview for the convenience of the student. It is not intended, nor should it be used, as a substitute for the careful reading of the Graduate Bulletin and other official documents of the College of Education. It is the student’s responsibility to know about requirements, and any revisions, for his or her program. The official document for your program is the College of Education Graduate Bulletin for the academic year in which you were admitted.

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Introduction

Study in educational psychology involves the application of the principles of psychology to the systematic study of education. A major in educational psychology allows a student to emphasize such content areas as learning, instruction, life-span development, applied behavior analysis, cognition, and socialization. The Masters in Educational Psychology program prepares students to pursue a variety of career paths, including research, evaluation, and the applied practice of a number of disciplines. Those students who are currently certified or licensed in such fields as teaching, nursing, speech pathology, and physical therapy can further develop their expertise in these fields by studying the psychological principles of development and learning.

Advisory Committees
A committee of three faculty members guides study for the M.S. in Educational Psychology. Upon admission, students will be assigned an advisor. Typically the advisor becomes chair of the committee, but many students choose a different faculty member in EPY to become the chair. In either case the person chosen to chair the committee should have interests that are congruent with the student’s interests. After completing nine semester hours of work, the student must select one additional faculty member to be on his or her advisory committee. These two faculty members must approve the student’s planned program of study. A third faculty member must be added before the student begins work on the master’s thesis, master’s project, or master’s examination. Two of the three committee members (including the chair) must hold an appointment in the Educational Psychology program.

Continuous Enrollment Requirement
Graduate students must register for at least a total of six hours of coursework during any period of three consecutive terms (fall, spring, and summer) until completion of degree. In order to graduate students must be actively enrolled in coursework in the program of study during the term they finish degree requirements for graduation. For the most up-to-date continuous enrollment policy, please go to: http://education.gsu.edu/oaa/3983.html.

Program of Study

There is a minimum requirement of 36 hours of graduate credit. All credit hours are to be taken with the consent of the advisory committee. To stay in compliance, all students must have a signed program of study by the end of their first year. Students who are not in compliance will receive a non-compliance letter, which will also be placed in their file.

A. Professional Studies (15 HOURS)
Educational Research (6 hours): EPRS 7900 Methods of Research in Education, and an additional course with the EPRS prefix or EPY 8850.

Social Foundations of Education (3 hours): Select one course with the EPSF prefix

For student’s completing a master’s thesis:
EPY 7990 Master’s Capstone (Requirement is 6 hours)

*For student’s completing a master’s project OR master’s examination:*
EPY 7990 Master’s Capstone (Requirement is 3 hours)
Select one additional course from the Educational Psychology Program (3 hours)

**B. MAJOR (Required 15 Hours)**
The student selects a minimum of 15 hours of course work in the field of Educational Psychology. At least 12 hours must be with the EPY prefix, with the remaining course work highly related to educational psychology. In the beginning of their program of study, students are required to enroll in EPY 8961 (Professional Development Seminar in Educational Psychology - 3 hours). Advanced students who are getting ready to work on their project or thesis are encouraged to enroll in EPY 8010 (Professional Studies in Educational Psychology – 3 hours). Students should note that prerequisites for this course include two graduate methodological courses or consent of instructor.

**C. Electives (Required 6 hours)** The student selects six semester hours of program-related course work with consent with his or her advisor. The purpose of the elective hours is to enable a student to create a program of study to fit his or her individual intellectual interests.

A copy of the planned program form to be completed by the student and advisory committee is available in the EPSE departmental office, and at: [http://education.gsu.edu/EPSE/forms_epse.htm](http://education.gsu.edu/EPSE/forms_epse.htm)

**Comprehensive Examination**
Students in Educational Psychology fulfill the college's Comprehensive Examination requirement by completing (1) a master’s thesis, (2) a master’s project, or (3) a master’s examination.

1. The master's thesis is either a basic or applied research project conducted by the student under the supervision of the chair of his or her advisory committee. At the prospectus defense students are required to propose to their committee their detailed plans for data collection, including the timeline, the method, the people involved in data collection, and the potential use of previously collected data related to the thesis. Only after passing the prospectus defense and receiving approval from the GSU IRB may students begin to pursue research participants.

2. The master’s project consists of a comprehensive written review of literature on a selected topic. A written prospectus describing in detail the proposed project must be submitted to and approved by all three members of the students' advisory committee before the work is begun.

For those pursuing the thesis or project options, as the thesis or project nears completion, the chair of the committee must approve the written document before it is submitted to the entire committee. This process often involves multiple drafts so it is wise to plan for this accordingly.
3. The master’s examination consists of a 4-hour, in-house written examination on a question or questions to be determined by the committee in collaboration with the student and advisor (see below for more information*).

On completion of the thesis, project, or written examination, each student must complete an oral examination of approximately two hours. The examination will be administered by the student’s advisory committee, and it will focus on the thesis, project, or written examination.

*Master’s Examination Option

Details concerning the examination are as follows:

a. The exam will include one comprehensive question on a topic of interest to the student. It will be a reflective exam, asking the student to pull together what has been learned.

b. The student and adviser will identify a body of literature on a topic of interest to the student. The student will develop an annotated bibliography (about 15 -20 references) that reflects the body of literature of their interest. Once the adviser has given approval, the student will present to their committee this annotated bibliography.

c. At the committee meeting, as part of their presentation, the student will propose 3 possible exam questions. The committee without the student present will decide on a question informed by the student’s presentation (annotated bib. and 3 questions) to the committee.

d. Within 5 business days, students are given their exam question. Up to one month later they come in and sit and type their answer on the computer (up to 4 hours). Failure to sit for the exam after a month of receiving the question is considered a failure.

e. Orals as described above

f. The adviser and each committee member independently review the performance and grade via consensus. The test is graded as pass/fail. This is graded within 3 weeks of taking exam.

If a student fails the exam, they have to meet with the committee the following academic semester (fall or spring semester, only) to receive a NEW question. Only 1 failure is permissible and if a student fails twice, s/he is terminated from the program.

Human Subjects Review
All research involving human subjects requires review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). IRB forms and instructions are available at [http://www.gsu.edu/research/human_subjects.html](http://www.gsu.edu/research/human_subjects.html)

Non-Degree and Transfer Credit
Sometimes, prior to admission to the Master of Science Program in Educational Psychology, a student may be admitted as a non-degree student. To be considered for non-degree status, a student must have an undergraduate GPA of 2.5 or higher and submit a relevant goals statement and transcript. A maximum of nine semester hours completed as a non-degree student may be applied to the M.S. program.

Students must take a minimum of 27 semester hours of course work at Georgia State University. This means that a maximum of nine hours of transfer credit may be applied to a 36 hour M.S. program. Occasionally, a student may be in a position to request that both non-degree credit earned at GSU and transfer credit from another institution, be applied to the Master of Science planned program in Educational Psychology. However, all non-degree and transfer credit that a student wishes to apply to the M.S. program in Educational Psychology must be approved by the student’s advisory committee in advance. The College of Education’s Petition to Transfer Graduate Credit is available from the College of Education’s Office of Academic Assistance available online at:
http://education.gsu.edu/oaa/4013.html

**Evaluation**
Evaluation of a student’s performance is continuous and involves considerations of a student’s performance in all academic settings. Only courses in which the student earns a grade of “B” or higher, will be counted toward degree fulfillment. Failure to make progress in a timely manner or inappropriate or unprofessional conduct may result in the student’s withdrawal from a course or the program. If such removal from a course is necessary, the student will receive the grade of “F” for the course and may be judged ineligible to re-enroll in the course.

**Degree Completion**
The minimum acceptable grade for all course work is B. Students must earn an overall grade point average of 3.00 calculated on all graduate course work attempted. No course work may be more than six calendar years old at the time of graduation.

The student must submit an application for graduation with the Office of the Registrar at least two semesters prior to the expected date of graduation. Students should plan on graduation during fall or spring semester because many faculty members are not under contract in the summer.