**Behavioral and Brain Sciences Program Document**

**Fall 2023**

(version 9/06/23**)**

**Objectives and Purposes**

The overarching goal of the doctoral program in Behavioral and Brain Sciences (BBS) is to prepare students for successful careers as scholars in academic or other professional settings. Students all start with the general requirements for the Master of Science (MS) degree and upon completion, pursue more targeted study, as specified by the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree. BBS students develop expertise in any of an extensive range of specialty topic areas supported by our faculty. As is necessary for a diverse program, training differs between laboratories and is directed by each faculty member as appropriate for the subfield. In order to accommodate different training needs, the BBS program document is purposely flexible to allow students to optimize the program to best fit to their individual needs. *In sum, BBS students are encouraged to devise a program of study best suited to their particular training needs and future aspirations, and to work in conjunction with the guidance and approval of their supervising faculty (i.e. Major Professors and advisory committee members).*

**Diversity and Inclusion Pledge**

We seek to create and foster an equitable and inclusive environment for all members and potential members of the BBS program, with respect to historically underrepresented, understudied, underserved, underpowered, and marginalized groups, including but not limited to: individuals from different social and ethnic backgrounds, of different sexes, sexual orientations and gender identities, political ideologies, creeds and religious affiliations, veteran status, as well as individuals with mental health conditions and different abilities, in an effort to ensure all people feel welcome and safe in our program, department, and university.

**Program Document**

This BBS Program Document serves as a reference for the graduate students and their major professors in the BBS Program. It serves as a supplement to, and not a replacement for, the Psychology Department Graduate Studies Policy Manual. Every effort has been made to align policies between the two documents, but in case of conflict, the Departmental Policy Manual will prevail. It is each student’s responsibility to know and meet the requirements specified by the Graduate School, the Psychology Department Policy Manual, and this BBS Program Document.

**General Definitions and Descriptions**

**Major Professor**

Because advanced graduate education here proceeds primarily via an apprenticeship model, the choice of mentors is an important decision in students’ graduate careers. Students enter the BBS program with a plan to work with one (or sometimes two) Major Professor(s). The Graduate School requires that the Major Professor is a member of the UGA Graduate Faculty to supervise Master’s Theses and Doctoral Dissertations. Students’ academic and research interests can undergo significant changes, especially during the first two years of study. If students desire additional or different mentorship, that should be addressed with the current Major Professor(s), the Chair of the BBS program, and/or the Department of Psychology Graduate Coordinator.

**Advisory Committees**

Advisory committees serve important roles in shaping students’ educational plans, assessing progress, and conducting evaluations. The Master’s Advisory Committee (MAC) serves the student through the defense of the Master’s Thesis, at which point the student appoints a Doctoral Advisory Committee (DAC). Committees are chaired by the Major Professors. Committee membership is negotiated between students and their Major Professors, and is subject to approval by both the Psychology Graduate Coordinator and the Dean of the Graduate School. *Students are encouraged to select members with the greatest expertise in the relevant content areas (without concern for departmental affiliation).* The composition of the two committees detailed below may differ completely, or not at all.

*Master’s Advisory Committee*: The MAC consists of three members (minimum), named during the first year of study. Typically, members are all UGA graduate faculty, although exceptions are permitted. For information on atypical committee membership, see link. ( <http://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/academics/types-of-degrees-offered/masters-degrees/> ) Students develop plans for an initial first year “Program of Study” (in consultation with their Major Professors), subject to approval by the MAC. Additionally, the MAC: a) advises on projected course selection, b) assesses the first year research project, and c) evaluates the written Master’s Thesis and Oral Defense. MAC Meetings: The MAC does not have to convene for a proposal of the Master’s Thesis, but must convene for the Oral Defense of the Thesis.

*Doctoral Advisory Committee*: The DAC consists of three people (minimum) named before the end of the first year of doctoral study. At least three members of UGA Graduate Faculty are required. Typically, one non-Psychology faculty member is permitted but not required. For information on inclusion of provisional graduate faculty or non-UGA faculty, or consideration of committees with more than three members, see link. ( http://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/academics/types-of-degrees-offered/doctor-of-philosophy-phd/doctor-of-philosophy-advisory-committee/ ) Students develop plans for the doctoral Program of Study, in consultation with the Major Professors and subject to approval of the DAC. Additionally, the DAC: conducts the Comprehensive Written and Oral Examinations, approves the final Dissertation Prospectus, and evaluates the completed Dissertation and the final Oral Defense.

DAC Meetings: Students convene an in-person meeting of the DAC before starting on comprehensive exams. Students prepare a document (roughly 2 pages) for this meeting that includes the following: courses completed and planned, a list of projects and project status, plan for Comprehensive Exam and brief description of Prospectus topic (if known), as well as a projected timeline. The DAC also convenes in person for the following sessions: a) the Oral Comprehensive Exam, b) the Dissertation Prospectus, and c) the final Oral Dissertation Defense.

**Program of Study**

A Program of Study constitutes a minimal contract between students and the University, specifying the course requirements necessary for consideration of a graduate degree. The Program of Study (and any subsequent changes) is developed in consultation with the Major Professors and must be approved by the majority of the appropriate advisory committee, the Psychology Graduate Coordinator, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

*Master’s Degree*: The MS Program of Study must be filed with the Graduate School by “Friday of the second full week of classes of the semester in which degree requirements are completed” (per Graduate School documents).

*Doctoral Degree*: A preliminary PhD Program of Study is filed by the end of the first year of doctoral training. The final version of the document is submitted “prior to notification of the comprehensive examination.” See link. (<http://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/academics/types-of-degrees-offered/doctor-of-philosophy-phd/doctor-of-philosophy-programs-of-study/> )

Change in the Program of Study must be submitted via GradStatus for approval by the Advisory Committee and the departmental Graduate Coordinator. If the program of study changes after the form has been approved, students may submit a Recommended Change in Program of Study for to the Graduate School for approval.

Although the Graduate School requires only that a B average be maintained among courses listed on the Program of Study, the Psychology Department has its own requirements that pertain to BBS students. To be eligible for graduation, a student must maintain a 3.0 (B) average on the graduate transcript and on the graduate program of study. No course can be included on the Program of Study in which the student has earned a grade lower than B-.

**Proseminar**: Throughout the duration of their training, all BBS students enroll in the weekly Proseminar each fall and spring semester. Each semester is worth 1 credit (7100 for master’s students, 9100 for doctoral students), and credits accumulate across years. Proseminar 7100 and 9100 credits count towards course requirements. The Proseminar provides multiple opportunities for students to present their research to program faculty and graduate peers (see details below). Other programming scheduled during Proseminar includes professional development, teaching development, industry-related content, and issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Finally, guest speakers provide exposure to cutting-edge research, and help build professional networks, with efforts to feature historically underrepresented voices.

**Student Research Talks**: Students present talks in Year 2 (12 minutes), Year 3 (25 minutes) and Year 4 or 5 (50 minutes). These talks allow students to present their ongoing research, building opportunities for gaining speaking experience and receiving constructive feedback from the program faculty and peers. In addition, at the most general level, all the work going on in BBS studies behavior, which is impacted by race, ethnicity, gender and other important variables that are frequently not assessed in ongoing research. To support training that considers overlooked variables, BBS Proseminar research talks (including Second Year Talks) are expected to dedicate at least 10-15% of allotted time to address issues of diversity, as it relates to the specific research topics and broader research area (for more information, see “Resources for Enhancing Research via Consideration of Diversity” below (l. 479)).

**Second Year Talk**: In the first year of training, all BBS students conduct a research project (PSYC 7000, “Master’s Research”). The work is presented to the program faculty and student peers during the fall semester of the second year. All students complete this research requirement whether or not they pursue a Master’s Degree at UGA. If not pursuing a Master’s Degree, the course numbers 8330 (“Laboratory Apprenticeship”) and 9000 (“Doctoral Research”) allow students to use these courses on their doctoral Programs of Study. Students may continue to develop this project for the Master’s Degree project, or work on a different project.

**Master of Science (MS) Degree Criteria**

**MS Degree**: Admitted students are expected to complete the criteria for a MS degree. Initially, students confer with their MAC to develop a Program of Study that supports their training goals.

The MS Program of Study requires at least 30 hours of combined research and class hours. For Graduate School Master’s Degree Requirements, see link. (<http://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/academics/types-of-degrees-offered/masters-degrees/> )

*Research Hours (9 hrs)*: Students apply exactly 9 research hours using the following combination: 6 hours via Psych 7000 and 3 hours via Psych 7300. Students may enroll in additional research hours, although they are not counted towards the program of study.

*Course Hours (21 hrs)*: Students fulfill 21 hours via 6000-7000 level courses (the equivalent of seven 3-hour classes).

*Course selection*: Students take two classes in quantitative methods/experimental design (Psych 6420 and 6430), or equivalents approved by their Major Professors and the departmental Quantitative Committee. Students take a class featuring matters of diversity (suitable classes may be found in our department or in other departments, and relevant topics might include race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or other relevant topics). Additional hours are fulfilled with Proseminar (7100, typically about 4 hours). Remaining hours are filled by departmental class offerings at the 6000 or 7000 level. The criterion may be satisfied in part by taking classes in other departments (as approved by Major Professor). Hours from GRSC 7770 (a Departmental requirement) do not count towards these hours.

**Master’s Thesis**

*Written Thesis*: The Master’s Thesis is written under the direction of the Major Professor, who approves the final version before it is distributed to the MAC. Per Graduate School policies, committee members are provided three weeks to read the document, and at least two members must approve the thesis as ready for a final Defense.

*Oral Defense*: The Oral Defense of the Written Thesis is open to the public. “The defense is attended by all members of the committee simultaneously for the entire defense period. The defense consists of a public presentation followed by a private defense during which only the student and advisory committee will be in attendance” (per Graduate School documents). Non-chair committee members may attend via teleconference or videoconference, if necessary but the Chair and the student must be in attendance together.

If the summary vote of the MAC is a Pass (with no more than one dissenting vote), then the Master’s Thesis and Defense are successfully completed, and the committee members sign the necessary paperwork. This signifies completion of master’s requirements, at which point students initiate work on doctoral requirements. If the result is a No Pass, the student may request another opportunity to take the Oral Defense.

For important information on relevant Master’s Degree timing, deadlines and other details determined by the Graduate School, see link. (<http://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/academics/types-of-degrees-offered/masters-degrees/> )

**Entering the BBS Program with an Existing Master’s Degree**

Students entering the BBS program with a Master’s Degree in Psychology or a related discipline may have questions regarding potential transfer of course and Thesis requirements. Students who wish to be exempted from statistics class requirements may submit their syllabi and grades to the Quantitative Committee for consideration. All other determinations will be made by the MAC, which should be identified and convened as soon as feasible. The MAC determines whether coursework from a previous institution fulfills BBS program requirements (sometimes by requesting evaluation of a UGA faculty member teaching a similar course). Modifications to the BBS program of study for the MS degree may be recommended in such cases. The MAC also will consider whether a Thesis from another institution meets the BBS requirements. The Thesis must be the equivalent of the UGA requirements such that it is an independent research project, with a submitted Written Thesis, as well as an Oral Defense. On the occasion of a completed Master’s Degree without an Oral Defense, the enrolling BBS student will be asked to provide a brief oral presentation of their work to the MAC (who will determine format, timing, etc).

**Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree Criteria**

**PhD Degree:** *The PhD Program of Study and other PhD requirements are additional requisites beyond those completed for the MS Degree.* Awarding of the PhD Degree is contingent upon: a) a minimum of 30 hours of doctoral level class and research hours, b) satisfactory performance on both the Written and Oral Comprehensive Examinations, c) successful completion of the Dissertation Prospectus, d) submission of a Written Doctoral Dissertation and satisfactory Defense of the Dissertation in a final Oral Examination.

*Research Hours (14 hrs)*: Students complete 14 hours using 9000 (“Doctoral Research”) and 3 required hours of 9300 (“Dissertation Writing”). Students may enroll in additional research hours, although they are not counted towards the program of study.

*Course Hours (16 hrs)*: Students fulfill 16 hours via 8000 - 9000 level courses (the equivalent of five 3-hour classes plus one additional hour).

*Course selection*: Students must take one additional quantitative, methods, or laboratory class (e.g., 8330 “Laboratory Apprenticeship”) within or outside the department, as approved by their Major Professors and the Department Quantitative Committee. Additional hours are fulfilled with Proseminar (9100, typically around 4 credit hours), as well as departmental class offerings at the 8000-9000 level. The criterion may be satisfied in part by taking classes in other departments (as approved by Major Professor). Up to one intensive training institute taken in short-format outside the university may be substituted at the Major Professor’s approval.

**Doctoral Assessments** (see detailed descriptions below)

1. Doctoral Comprehensive Examinations
   1. Written
   2. Oral (*open to all faculty members*)
2. Dissertation Prospectus Oral Examination
3. Written Dissertation Approval

IV) Final Oral Dissertation Defense (*open to the public*)

**Ia. Written Comprehensive Examination (WCE)**

The doctoral written Comprehensive Examination requires selection of one of the three options presented below. *This selection is made in careful consultation with the student’s Major Professor and DAC, as each option requires different preparation and provides unique opportunities and challenges.* **Option 1** is a closed book **structured essay examination (SEE)** with reading lists and questions determined by the DAC. **Option 2** is a scholarly, review-type **comprehensive** **manuscript (CM)** on a subject and in a format approved in advance by the DAC. **Option 3** is a **grant proposal (GP)** on a topic approved in advance by the DAC.

For each written comprehensive exam option, the topic areas approved are considered by the DAC to be of substantial importance, and generally reflective of the student’s program of study.

The evaluation criteria for each option require that the work reflect graduate-level performance as evidenced by theoretical and conceptual depth, logical structure, professional editing, and appropriate citations to the extant scientific literature. Finally, it is expected that all students abide by the UGA Academic Honesty Policy. Students who violate the Policy in the course of the written comprehensive exam will be reported to the appropriate UGA judicial body for further action. (<https://honesty.uga.edu/_resources/documents/academic_honesty_policy_2017.pdf> )

**Option 1: Structured Essay Examination (SEE)**

The structured essay examination (SEE) evaluates breadth and depth of content knowledge.

The student meets with each committee member to discuss performance expectations, and each member provides a reading list. Based on the reading list, each member generates a set of questions. Each day the student is provided with the questions from one member of the committee. The questions are not seen in advance and are designed to take approximately one-half day (3-5 hours) for the student to answer. The exam is taken over consecutive days (either in morning or afternoon sittings) in a room in the Psychology Department on a computer with no internet access, no notes or other reference materials, and no cell phone or other electronic devices.

Each member reads and grades each *individual* answer (Pass / Fail), and assigns an overall *summary* score. The Major Professor collates the individual scores to determine the status of each answer and the overall summary score. The DAC then considers the course of action (based on the summary score):

* Pass
* Conditional Pass
* No Pass

The Major Professor presents the student with the overall summary score, the collated comments and critiques, and the recommended course of action.

1. Pass - The DAC (with no more than one dissenting vote) determines that the written

comprehensive exam is successfully completed, and the student prepares for oral exams.

1. Conditional Pass - One or more issues need to be addressed before re-taking the SEE.

The student is informed of the modifications and preparations required before the re-test, as well as the required time-line. The degree of revision is determined by the DAC and is generally commensurate with the degree of deficiency. The re-test is administered in the same manner as the original test and may range from re-taking a specific question to sitting again for up to half of the exam.

1. No Pass- Over half of the exam answers requires correction, or if the DAC

otherwise considers the summary evaluation to be characterized by inadequate expertise and/or poor writing and editing skills.A student may request an opportunity to take a second SEE with the expectation that it covers new material. If the DAC agrees, the second SEE must be completed within a time period determined by the committee (although not longer than 6 months from the presentation of the feedback on the first SEE). A DAC may decline to grant a request for a second SEE, however, and would thereby dissolve itself by written announcement to the student and to the Psychology Graduate Coordinator. If the DAC dissolves itself, the student must form a new DAC before filing an appeal to the BBS program.

If the student has previously received a No Pass on any WCE option, then a second No Pass results in dismissal from the program at the conclusion of the current semester.

**Option 2: Comprehensive Manuscript (CM)**

The comprehensive manuscript (CM) is an independent, scholarly review of the history, and theoretical or methodological significance of a subject presented in the manner of a journal review article or a meta-analysis. The CM manifests the student’s ability to review and critically evaluate a body of literature, and to formulate the resulting ideas, findings, and conclusions into an appropriately written document consistent with the breadth, depth, and format expected in a journal review article or meta-analysis.

Advance approval of the manuscript topic, objectives, and format must be documented for each committee member *before* a student begins work on the CM. The specific mechanism by which a student’s DAC seeks definition and provides approval will be determined by the members of the committee. Unless there are extenuating circumstances approved by the DAC, the CM is submitted for evaluation to the Major Professor within six months of the date the proposal is approved. Family or medical emergencies may permit extension of this six month deadline by up to twelve weeks. If a family or medical emergency extends the deadline, it is expected that students explicitly stop work on the project and extend by the amount of time for which work is stopped. Extensions beyond twelve weeks may be considered with approval of the BBS program faculty.

Students are expected to write a manuscript that, with additional collaboration with the Major Professor and/or other colleagues, may be submitted to a high-quality refereed journal. The CM submitted to the committee, however, should reflect the student’s own independent work, without any collaboration from the Major Professor or other individuals.

The Major Professor distributes the CM to the committee. The evaluation procedure is structured after the peer-review process for journal publications. Evaluation of the CM is carried out independently by each member of the DAC as a scholarly peer review, and each review is written using constructive commentary and sufficient detail. Reviews are submitted to the DAC chair, who distributes the package of committee evaluations to each member and schedules a meeting to determine the summary evaluation and the course of action (possibilities outlined below):

- Pass (“accept as is”)

- Conditional Pass (“revise and resubmit”)

- No Pass (“reject with no revision acceptable”)

The Major Professor presents the student with the overall evaluation, the collated reviews, and the recommended course of action.

1. Pass - The DAC (with no more than one dissenting vote) determines that the written

comprehensive exam is successfully completed, and the student prepares for oral exams.

1. Conditional Pass - One or more issues must be addressed before the manuscript is

reconsidered. The student is informed of the required modifications to be completed within a specified time period. Upon submission, the revision is accompanied by a cover letter including point-by-point responses to reviewers’ comments. The revisions of the manuscript are evaluated in the same manner as the original document.

1. No Pass - It is determined that the student has not demonstrated adequate expertise,

mastery of the literature, and/or writing and editorial skills expected at this stage in graduate study. If the result of the CM is a No Pass, the sole available option for a student who wishes to continue in the program is to meet the written comprehensive exam requirement by taking the structured essay exam (SEE). If the DAC agrees, the student may attempt the SEE one time (not two, as allowed for students who start with the SEE) to be completed within a time period determined by the committee (although not longer than 6 months from the presentation of the feedback on the CM). A DAC may decline to grant a request for a SEE, however, and would thereby dissolve itself by written announcement to the student and to the Psychology Graduate Coordinator. If the DAC dissolves itself, the student must form a new DAC before filing an appeal to the BBS program.

If the student who has previously received No Pass on the CM receives a second No Pass on the SEE, it results in dismissal from the program at the conclusion of the current semester.

**Option 3: Grant Proposal (GP)**

The Grant Proposal (GP) incorporates relevant literature, specific aims and/or hypotheses, significance and/or innovation of the research, and the theoretical and methodological expertise associated with programmatic development of a project. The GP manifests the student’s ability to critically evaluate a body of literature, formulate testable hypotheses, design a study with feasible methods, and articulate the significance of potential results in a research protocol that is consistent in depth and quality with proposals submitted to a granting agency.

Students target the desired grant (including common mechanisms such as; NIH-R01, R03, R21 or NRSA (and excluding NSF GRFP)). The DAC may approve an equivalent grant mechanism that is more relevant to the student’s field. Students prepare standard components of a federal grant application, such as project summary/abstract, hypotheses, research strategy, study design and methods (including proposed data collection, analytic plan, power calculations), expected outcomes and potential concerns and solutions, innovation, research timeline, and bibliography/references. The exact combination will be specific to the targeted grant mechanism. Because of the collaborative nature of grant applications, students are allowed to discuss the topic with faculty, but the GP submitted to the DAC must be written solely by the student.

Advance approval of the grant mechanism, grant topic, objectives, and format must be documented for each committee member *before* a student begins work on the GP. The specific mechanism by which a student’s DAC seeks definition and provides approval will be determined by the members of the committee. Unless there are extenuating circumstances approved by the DAC, the GP is submitted for evaluation to the Major Professor within six months of proposal approval approved. Family or medical emergencies may permit extension of this six month deadline by up to twelve weeks. If a family or medical emergency extends the deadline, it is expected that students explicitly stop work on the project and extend by the amount of time for which work is stopped. Extensions beyond twelve weeks may be considered with approval of the BBS program faculty.

Successful attainment of grant funding is *not* required, but students are expected to write a competitive application with plans to submit the proposal to the funding agency for review.

The Major Professor distributes the GP to the DAC. The evaluation is structured after the grant review process. Evaluation of the GP is carried out independently by each member of the DAC as a scholarly critique of grant significance, innovation, and approach. Each committee member’s review documents constructive critiques in sufficient detail. Reviews are submitted to the chair who then distributes copies of all evaluations to each member. The Major Professor schedules a meeting of the DAC to determine the overall evaluation and the course of action. The student receives the following feedback:

- Pass (“accept as is”)

- Conditional Pass (“revise and resubmit”)

- No Pass (“reject with no revision acceptable”)

The Major Professor relays the DAC’s overall evaluation to the student, along with the collated reviews and the recommended course of action.

1. Pass - The DAC determines (with no more than one dissenting vote) that the written

comprehensive exam is successfully completed and the student prepares for oral exams.

1. Conditional Pass - One or more issues must be addressed before the proposal is

considered for a Pass. The student is provided with the reviews and informed of the modifications required for re-evaluation. The communication stipulates a reasonable time period within which the revision of the GP is to be completed. The revision is accompanied by a cover letter including point-by-point responses to reviewers’ comments. The revisions of the proposal are evaluated in the same manner as the original document.

1. No Pass - It is determined that the student has not demonstrated adequate expertise,

writing skill, or both on the grant proposal. If the result of the GP is a No Pass, the sole available option for a student who wishes to continue in the program is to meet the written comprehensive exam requirement by taking the structured essay exam (SEE). If the DAC agrees, the student may attempt the SEE one time (not two, as allowed for students who start with the SEE) to be completed within a time period determined by the committee (although not longer than 6 months from the presentation of the feedback on the first SEE). A DAC may decline to grant a request for a SEE, however, and would thereby dissolve itself by written announcement to the student and to the Psychology Graduate Coordinator. If the DAC dissolves itself, the student must form a new DAC before filing an appeal to the BBS program.

If the student who has previously received No Pass on the GP receives a second No Pass on the SEE, it results in dismissal from the program at the conclusion of the current semester.

**Ib. Oral Comprehensive Examination (OCE)**

After a student passes the WCE, an Oral Comprehensive Exam (OCE) is scheduled at the earliest possible date (usually within one semester). Notify the Graduate Coordinator or Graduate Coordinator’s Assistant when the exam is scheduled, at least two weeks prior to the exam date, so that it is reported to the Graduate School. The OCE is open to all members of the faculty and announced by the Graduate School two weeks prior to the exam date. The exam is attended by all members of the committee, simultaneously and for the entire period.

The OCE covers both breadth and depth (and normally lasts between one and several hours). Generally, the exam is inclusive of the student’s general field of study, as well as the specific program of study. To prepare, the student confers with each committee member about expectations. The DAC chair will collect committee members’ questions roughly one week prior to the exam. The chair determines the order of questions, making sure that each member’s questions receive equivalent time and attention from the student. When the submitted questions are finished, the floor is open for additional questions as the committee sees fit. The contents of the WCE may also be evaluated during the OCE.

Prior to the beginning of the OCE, the chair provides the student with a copy of the exam questions. The student has *30 minutes* to organize their thoughts and make notes. The student may not access personal notes, or outside sources (including electronics of any kind) during this period. Paper and pens are the only items allowed in the room. The student never brings material for presentation to this exam, it is completely question and answer based.

Upon completion of questioning, the student is dismissed from the room. The DAC deliberates on the quality of performance with each member eventually submitting a summary vote. The only two options for the OCE are “Pass” or “No Pass.” If the summary vote of the DAC is a Pass (with no more than one dissenting vote), then the OCE is successfully completed, and the committee members sign the necessary paperwork. The student may initiate work towards the Dissertation Prospectus. If the result is a No Pass, the student may request another opportunity to take the OCE.

If the student receives a No Passon the second Oral Comprehensive Exam, itresults in dismissal from the program at the conclusion of the current semester.

**II. Dissertation Prospectus (DP)**

The Dissertation Prospectus is submitted to the DAC in the traditional format of a Dissertation Proposal (e.g., introduction, literature review, rationale, proposed research/analysis methodology, etc.) developed under the direction of the student’s Major Professor, and in consultation with the other members of the DAC. The student submits the Written DP to the DAC at least three weeks in advance of the Oral DP (which necessarily occurs on a different day than the OCE). The Written DP may be electronic or hard copy, as determined by the DAC. The Written DP is expected to reflect professional standards commensurate with this advanced stage of study.

*The DP is critically important for informing progress through the remaining period of doctoral study. During the Oral DP, the surrounding discussion determines the standards and expectations to be integrated into the Written Dissertation. Additionally, committee approval of the DP serves as an agreement between the student and the committee that the proposed research is satisfactory for a Dissertation project.*

A “Staple” Dissertation may be proposed with the support of the Major Professor. Generally, a Staple Dissertation consists of three manuscripts submitted for publication on which the candidate is first author (and with work completed while a graduate student at UGA). The papers have a coherent theme, and the student provides a detailed introduction and conclusion. This option is available only at the discretion of the DAC (with no more than one dissenting vote).

If the summary vote of the Dissertation Prospectus by the DAC is a Pass (with no more than one dissenting vote), then the appropriate forms are signed and filed with the Graduate Coordinator. For Graduate School policy on the Prospectus, see link. ( <http://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/academics/types-of-degrees-offered/doctor-of-philosophy-phd/doctor-of-philosophy-dissertation-planning/> )

**III. Dissertation Approval**

The Dissertation is written under the direction of the Major Professor, and with the input of the DAC. The Major Professor certifies the final version before distribution to the DAC. The Dissertation may be electronic or hard copy, as determined by the DAC. Committee members have three weeks to read the document and agree (with no more than one dissenting vote) that the Dissertation is ready for Oral Defense. The Graduate Coordinator must notify the Graduate School of the Defense date at least two weeks prior. Written dissertations must meet all Graduate School formatting requirements.

For Graduate School Policy see link. (<http://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/academics/types-of-degrees-offered/doctor-of-philosophy-phd/doctor-of-philosophy-dissertation-approval-and-defense/> )

**IV. Dissertation Defense**

As per Graduate School requirements: “The defense of the dissertation will be chaired by the student’s Major Professor and attended by all members of the advisory committee simultaneously for the entire defense period. The defense will consist of a public presentation followed by a private defense during which only the student and advisory committee will be in attendance. The public presentation is open to anyone who wishes to attend*.* The student and committee chair must appear in person for both components of the defense, but other members may participate via teleconference or video conference”. See link. (<http://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/academics/types-of-degrees-offered/doctor-of-philosophy-phd/doctor-of-philosophy-dissertation-approval-and-defense/> )

At the conclusion of this examination, the DAC votes for Pass or Fail. Approval is pending no more than one dissenting vote and the vote is documented via completion of the appropriate Graduate School forms.

The Graduate School has specific and important deadlines for Dissertation submission with serious consequences for not complying. Please see link for details. ( <http://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/academics/types-of-degrees-offered/doctor-of-philosophy-phd/doctor-of-philosophy-submitting-the-dissertation/> )

**Resources for Enhancing Research via Consideration of Diversity**

It is the expectation within the BBS program that all students and faculty will consider issues of diversity in the laboratory and classroom work that we do. This will be a continual process, and an area in which we encourage and teach one another, and learn from our colleagues who come from underrepresented or marginalized communities. Specific suggestions for how to consider information on diversity are found below.

a) Discuss the demographics of participants that research in your area of study has historically centered on, and who had been omitted. Consider what implicit assumptions there might be about who appropriate research participants are, and who might represent a niche population for whom findings may not be considered generalizable to humanity more broadly.

b) What diversity is represented in your sample, and how might that present limitations? How might centering white Americans as the norm in your field of study (as is the case in many areas of psychology) be problematic, inappropriate, and/or lead to inaccurate conclusions about psychological phenomena?

c) Thinking about your area of study, when are people of color included in research samples? Are studies based on participants of color valued on their own or must the be compared to white samples in order to be published in top journals?

d) How might research questions that are asked in your area of study, and the conclusions that are drawn, be shaped by the lived experiences of the researchers (as it relates to understudied populations)? How might research in your area be biased by a white American (or western) cultural lens? What can you (and others in your area) do to promote moving outside of the narrow focus to better include the diverse perspective and experiences of those who are underrepresented in this area.

e) To what extent does research in your area take a deficit orientation with regard to research on understudied populations? Does research with non-white samples focus on explaining/examining ways in which people “fail to measure up” to white people? What message does that send? How might such a focus obscure systemic/structural barriers, and siphon critical resources away from research that could address systemic issues?

**For student speakers:**

All students giving research talks during Proseminar are expected to dedicate at least 10-15% of allotted time to address issues of diversity, as it relates to their targeted research topics and broader research area. Generally, students are encouraged to ponder the questions posed above to inform and improve their own current, and future, research. Specifically, students can use these prompts to prepare for their talks (focusing on one or two of the questions, rather than trying to address them all). Students speakers also can contact student and faculty members of the BBS Diversity Committee for further assistance.