

[Graduate Advising and the Degree Plan](#)
[The Thesis Option](#)
[The Comprehensive Exam](#)
[Time Limit on Courses](#)
[The Counseling Practicum](#)
[The Industrial-Organizational Practicum](#)
[Graduate Assistantships and Teaching Assistantships](#)
[Licensure Information](#)

GRADUATE ADVISING AND THE DEGREE PLAN

Each of the three graduate programs in psychology (General, Counseling, Industrial-Organizational) has a Director (or Co-Director), who serves as the Graduate Advisor for his/her respective program: General - Dr. Forbes or Dr. Mowrer, Counseling - Dr. Singg, Industrial-Organizational - Dr. Schell.

Upon admission to the Graduate School, students in psychology should contact the Director of their program for information and advisement. The primary purpose of the initial advising session is for the student, in consultation with the Director, to develop a Degree Plan. The Degree Plan establishes an agreement between the student, the Department, and the Graduate School concerning the exact program of study for the individual student. It incorporates information about the student's selection of the degree option and specifies the course work required for successful completion of the degree. It is the student's responsibility in the initial advising process to be generally aware of the options offered in the program, and to inform the program Director as fully as possible about career interests and aspirations. It is the Director's responsibility to assist in determining an individual plan of study that will most effectively meet the student's goals. Graduate students must file a Degree Plan during their first semester of enrollment at ASU.

THE THESIS OPTION

All new graduate students in psychology are given a non-thesis degree plan. They may switch to the thesis option if (a) they demonstrate skills in the areas required to successfully complete a thesis research project, and (b) a psychology faculty member is willing and available* to supervise the thesis research. The degree plan will be revised to the thesis option by the faculty member who agrees to supervise the thesis.

*Each faculty may, at his/her own discretion, supervise up to three thesis students concurrently.

The Rules for Enrolling in Thesis and the Assignment of a Grade

1. Students must be enrolled in *one* of the two thesis courses (Psy 6399 or Psy 6699) while they are working on their thesis. They may not be enrolled in both thesis courses

concurrently, but they may switch from one course to the other course from one semester to the next.

2. To register, students must obtain the Graduate Course Approval Form from the supervising faculty member and submit it to the Graduate Dean's Office.
3. Students should have their Thesis Committee formed before the end of their first semester of enrollment in thesis.
4. It usually takes more than one semester to initiate and complete the thesis. If some documented progress has been made, students are assigned a grade of *PR* in the thesis course(s) until the thesis has been defended and approved by the Graduate Dean, at which time six credit hours of thesis are assigned a letter grade.
5. A thesis proposal must be submitted no later than one year after the first enrollment in thesis or in the twelfth credit hour of enrollment in thesis, whichever occurs first, or an unsatisfactory grade (*NP*) will be assigned in the thesis course.
6. Students must make some documented progress on their thesis while enrolled in it, or an unsatisfactory grade (*NP*) may be assigned.
7. Students should strive to complete the thesis by the end of their third enrollment in the thesis course.
8. Students may enroll in any combination of Psy 6399 and Psy 6699 from one semester to the next, but those who complete the thesis while enrolled in Psy 6399 must have taken Psy 6399 in a previous semester (regardless of whether they enrolled in Psy 6699 previously). A letter grade is assigned to the last thesis course taken; if it is Psy 6399 then a previous Psy 6399 will be changed from *PR* to a letter grade so that six credit-hours of thesis are earned.
9. Once a student has completed the first semester of thesis with a grade of *PR* or *NP*, he/she must maintain continuous enrollment in courses (thesis and/or other courses) during the long semesters until graduation.
10. Students may enroll in thesis during the summer session(s) if the supervising faculty member agrees to supervise the research during the summer session(s). Faculty who are not teaching classes in a particular summer session are not expected to assist thesis research.
11. Students must be enrolled in Psy 6399 or Psy 6699 at the time of their thesis defense.

Guidelines for Conducting Thesis Research

The thesis research may embrace a wide variety of methods for scientific investigation. The projects may be experiments, field studies, case studies, correlational studies, or extensive library research. None of these approaches is inherently better than the others, and all have resulted in significant contributions to psychological knowledge.

Students should consult the Thesis Manual, which is available at the Graduate School website. It provides instructions for the appointment of the Thesis Advisory Committee and the preparation of the *proposal* and the *thesis*.

There are seven *procedures* that guide students' progress on the thesis research project.

1. Before a research project is begun, a written thesis *proposal* must be approved by the student's Thesis Advisory Committee and the Graduate Dean. The proposal is to be written under the direction of the Chairman of the Thesis Advisory Committee.

Committee members should be allowed at least *one week* to review drafts of the proposal. With final approval, the proposal functions as an agreement on the work to be done in the actual thesis research. Substantial deviations from the proposal must be approved by the committee. It is the responsibility of the student to provide copies of the thesis proposal to each member and, once the members have approved it, to the Graduate Dean.

2. If the thesis research entails collecting data on living human subjects, it will require the review of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Students should consult with the Chairman of their committee for IRB guidelines and the process of submitting the research project for IRB approval. Barring any complications, it normally takes about *two to three weeks* to receive an IRB review.

3. Formulating an idea, preparing a proposal, conducting the research, and writing drafts of the thesis project are lengthy endeavors that will consume a considerable portion of time during the final year of graduate study. It is the responsibility of the Thesis Advisory Committee Chairman to provide all necessary direction and supervision during the process of conducting the thesis project. The student should rely heavily, if not exclusively, on the guidance of the Chairman during the initial stages of the thesis research.

4. After the Chairman has approved it, a draft of the thesis document should be submitted to committee members at least *two weeks* before the anticipated date of the thesis defense. The exact date and time of the thesis defense will be set by the Chairman after the committee members find the document to be acceptable to be defended.

5. The purpose of the thesis defense is to provide an intellectual forum for the student to display and discuss his or her research project. The student will be required to give a brief presentation of the project. This will be followed by questions from the committee members. As a result of the defense, some revisions in the thesis document may be necessary. The final draft of the thesis must be approved by all committee members and submitted to the Graduate Dean at least *three weeks* prior to the anticipated date of graduation. The student is responsible, in cooperation with the Graduate Dean's office, for making proper arrangements for printing and binding the three required copies of the thesis.

6. Students should plan to defend their thesis during the long semesters, *not during the summer*, because it is very unlikely that all committee members would be available for a summer defense.

7. Some scholarship programs (e.g., Carr) financially support thesis enrollment for one calendar year only. In such programs, students who take longer to complete the thesis must do so without continued financial support. Students should be aware of the time limitations of their particular scholarship program. If there are extraordinary mitigating circumstances, some scholarship programs allow students to appeal the time limit. Appeals based upon personal circumstances are under the purview of the particular scholarship committee, and the Chairman of the Thesis Advisory Committee will comment only insofar as an appeal is based upon some uncontrollable procedural delay in the research project (such as the sample of subjects became unavailable to the researcher).

The Thesis Advisory Committee

The primary responsibility of the committee is to guide the student's thesis, from

beginning to end. This committee is composed of four members including three from the faculty in psychology (one of whom will serve as Chairman) and one representative of the Graduate School. The process of forming the committee begins when the student obtains an agreement from someone to serve as the Chairman. The student then queries others about their willingness to serve. Official appointment of the committee requires the approval of the Graduate Dean, and this must be completed no later than the end of the first semester of enrollment in one of the thesis courses (Psy 6399, 6699).

Once the Thesis Advisory Committee has been approved by the Graduate Dean, any change in the composition of the committee thereafter requires the mutual agreement of the chairman and the student. Only in unusual circumstances will changes be made in the absence of a mutual agreement. The procedure for changing a committee in the absence of a mutual agreement is as follows: (a) the student and committee chairman meet and attempt to resolve the difference of opinion; (b) if an agreement is not reached, then the person seeking the change will submit in writing to the Department Head the reasons for the desired change; (c) the Department Head will copy the written "reasons" to both parties and meet with them, either separately or together; (d) the Department Head will approve or disapprove the change, and notify the student and committee chairman in writing; (e) either the student or the committee chairman may appeal the decision of the Department Head to the Graduate Dean.

In the absence of a mutual agreement between the student and the committee chairman, justifiable reasons for changing the committee include, but are not limited to, legal and/or ethical violations, severe personality conflicts, and serious disagreements regarding the thesis topic. Students should be aware that the faculty differ in their willingness to accept changes in the committee. Some prefer that changes not be made anytime after the committee has been officially formed and others are amenable to changes up until the point in time when a thesis proposal has been approved. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the committee chairman's position on this issue before the committee is formed.

THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Each candidate for the M.S. degree in Psychology must successfully pass either a written or an oral comprehensive exam. The written exam format applies to non-thesis students, and the oral exam format applies to thesis students. All course work for the degree (except those courses in progress in the semester when the degree is to be awarded) must normally be completed prior to the exam.

Students who take the comprehensive exam, either oral or written, are graded as "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory." A student who fails the comprehensive examination is allowed to retake the exam no sooner than the next semester. Any student who fails the second comprehensive exam will be terminated from the graduate program at Angelo State University.

The *written* comprehensive exam is administered approximately four weeks before the end of the student's last semester; or in summer sessions it is administered between the first and second sessions. The format of the exam varies depending on the

graduate specialty area. A description of the exam in General Psychology and Counseling Psychology is presented below. A description of the exam in Industrial-Organizational Psychology can be found at the I-O program website.

The *oral* comprehensive exam, required of all *thesis* students, is administered during the thesis defense and evaluated by the Thesis Committee. This exam, called the "comprehensive thesis defense," requires students to view their thesis research from the perspectives of several required courses in their program of study. The particular contents of the oral exam and criteria for satisfactory performance are determined by the Thesis Advisory Committee. The comprehensive thesis defense is scheduled no later than *four weeks* prior to the date on which the candidate's degree is to be conferred.

Additional Information about the Written Comprehensive Exam in General Psychology and Counseling Psychology

The exam is constructed by the graduate faculty, and it covers material from five courses. The courses that are covered on the exam are listed on the application form that students use to sign up for the exam. The application form is available in the department office.

The exam has two parts, and students must earn a score of 70% or higher on *one* of the two parts to pass. Part I has 100 multiple-choice questions that cover five courses (about 20 questions per course). Part II also has 100 multiple-choice questions covering the same five courses. Students who pass Part I need not take Part II. The exam is administered online in the ASU Testing Center, located in Room 291 of the Vincent Building. Immediately upon submitting their exam, either Part I or Part II, students will receive their score. Ordinarily, Part II of the exam is administered a couple of days after Part I for those who need to take it.

A list of the textbooks and the chapters covered on the exam is provided in a *Study Guide*, which is updated each semester and available to students through the department office.

IV. TIME LIMIT ON COURSES

All course work (including thesis if required and any transfer credits) must be completed within a period of six years from the date of the earliest credit to be counted on the degree. Under certain circumstances,* the Department Head may approve a time extension for up to two years for a maximum of three courses.

*Student has applied for an extension with the Dean of the Graduate School and presented an acceptable explanation for why the degree was not completed in a timely manner.

V. THE GRADUATE PRACTICUM IN COUNSELING

For those students who choose the Counseling Option within the psychology graduate program, a key opportunity to enhance professional skills is offered in the

graduate counseling practicum (Psychology 6371, 6671). Nine semester credit hours of practicum are required for students pursuing the counseling option, and completion of the course entails 450 clock hours of supervised practical experience in a suitable field setting offering psychological services. Departmental guidelines governing the practicum are as follows:

1. Prior to the enrollment in the counseling practicum, each student must complete Psychology 6307, 6323, and 6324 at ASU as prerequisites.
2. At least eight weeks before the semester of the practicum the student must contact Dr. Singg, practicum supervisor, for a detailed information packet and to make arrangements for site and insurance. Prior to the beginning of the practicum experience, each student will be required to obtain professional liability insurance. Such insurance is available at nominal cost from the American Psychological Association.
3. Once a student enrolls for any practicum hours (Psy 6371, 6671), he or she is expected to complete the required 450 clock hours for nine semester credit hours within two consecutive, long semesters (fall, spring) and, if necessary, one summer session.* Students who do not complete the entire practicum requirement (450 clock hours) within a given semester of enrollment will be assigned a grade of "I" (i.e., incomplete) for their work during that semester, and a final grade will be assigned upon completion of the total 450 clock hour requirement. The grade of "I" will automatically become a grade of "F" after one year unless the practicum supervisor has entered an official change of grade before that date. Students who fail to complete both practicum courses Psy 6371 and 6671 within two long semesters and one summer session will be assigned a failing grade for all practicum work, and the entire nine semester credit hour requirement will have to be repeated. Exceptions to the time limitation may be granted only when there are mitigating circumstances.
*In summer, practicum work can occur only during *one* of the two sessions; the session in which the work is done must be the one in which the practicum supervisor is scheduled to teach.
4. During the time of the practicum experience, the department and graduate faculty require the student to demonstrate the highest ethical standards of the profession and to progress in the development of a skilled capacity to deliver needed psychological services to clientele. In the event that a practicum student is believed to be exhibiting conduct unbecoming the profession or damaging to clientele, the practicum supervisor may recommend to the Head of the Department that the student be dropped from enrollment in the practicum with a grade to be specified in the supervisor's recommendation. Additionally, if it is the supervisor's judgment that violations of Angelo State University's standards of conduct for students (see the Student Handbook) have occurred, the supervisor may refer the matter to the Dean of Student Life.

VI. THE GRADUATE PRACTICUM IN INDUSTRIAL-ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Students in the Industrial/Organizational program may choose a practicum as the culminated event in their degree plan (PSY 6372, 6672). A minimum of six (6) semester hours of credit are required for non-thesis students, but thesis students may also take either 3 or 6 credits of the practicum course as an elective. Though the I/O and

Counseling practica both have as their ultimate goal supervised experience and practice in relevant career situations, they approach the course differently in some important ways. First, the I/O practicum is a course, and will require the completion of course assignments (such as in-depth library studies and presentations) in addition to any field site work that is being done. Secondly, the individuals participating in the I/O practicum work more as a team of intern consultants, whereas students in the Counseling practicum typically work individually at different sites. Third, there is no clock hour requirement for the I/O practicum since there is no licensing body for the field. Thus, students may spend varying amounts of time depending on the projects and tasks that must be done. Finally, non-thesis students in the I/O practicum must attend the practicum course meetings for two consecutive long semesters, regardless of whether they choose to enroll in PSY 6372 twice or PSY 6672 once to account for the required 6 credits. In short, we have designed the I/O practicum to operate as a simulated consulting firm which interacts with the local community as such a firm would, including marketing services, doing survey-feedback studies of community needs, and contracting with companies to complete projects. As a result, students will get some indication of what it is like to staff and manage one's own consulting business.

Departmental guidelines for both PSY 6372 and PSY 6672 are as follows:

1. Students must have satisfactorily completed nine (9) credits of I/O core coursework (PSY 6350, 6351, 6352, 6353, 6354, 6355, 6356, 6357, 6358, 6359, 6360). Concurrent enrollment in I/O courses to meet this requirement is allowed.
2. Students are expected to complete six (6) credits of practicum work during the course of two long semesters. The summer term is considered long if the student is involved in the practicum for both terms. At the end of the first semester of enrollment, students will receive a grade of *I* (incomplete), which will be changed to a permanent letter grade at the end of the second semester.
3. If a student is working on a project when their practicum term ends, they are required to meet with the practicum supervisor before the end of their practicum term to arrange for the transfer of the project to another student if needed.
4. Students will be evaluated by the practicum supervisor and will report directly to this person who will serve in the role of lead consultant on every practicum project. This evaluation will include not only work in field sites, but also the quality of work on the assignments and presentations mentioned previously.
5. During the time of the practicum experience, the department and graduate faculty require the student to demonstrate the highest ethical standards of the profession and to progress in the development of a skilled capacity to deliver needed psychological services to clientele. In the event that a practicum student is believed to be exhibiting conduct unbecoming the profession or damaging to clientele, the practicum supervisor may recommend to the Head of the Department that the student be dropped from enrollment in the practicum with a grade to be specified in the supervisor's recommendation. Additionally, if it is the supervisor's judgment that violations of Angelo State University's standards of conduct for students (see the Student Handbook) have occurred, the supervisor may refer the matter to the Dean of Student Life.

VII. GRADUATE, RESEARCH, AND TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

Normally, five graduate assistantships, two research assistantships, and three

teaching assistantships are available for outstanding students in psychology during each academic year. The *Graduate Assistant's* duties are to assist a graduate faculty member in the delivery of undergraduate courses and/or professional research endeavors. Examples of duties include supervised classroom instruction, tutorial work with undergraduate students, development of course testing and grading instruments, course-related library investigation, and assisting in all phase of projects. The *Research Assistant's* duties are limited exclusively to assisting in research activities. The *Teaching Assistant* responsibilities are to assist in the delivery of instruction of an introductory psychology course in the fall semester and then teach two sections of the course in the spring semester. The teaching assistantship is a contract appointment for an academic year, and the other assistantships (graduate, research) are staff appointments without a fixed term. The Department usually limits students from serving as a teaching assistant beyond one year and from serving as a graduate or research assistant beyond two years. Out-of-state teaching assistants and research assistants qualify for in-state tuition rates in addition to receiving the normal financial stipend. Acceptance of an assistantship does not disqualify the student from applying for scholarships and other financial aid through the University's Office of Financial Aid or the Carr Academic Scholarship program. Students who accept appointments to assistantships (graduate, research, or teaching) are expected to devote full-time to the combination of their studies and assistantship duties. Consequently, the assistants should not seek or obtain other employment in conjunction with appointments, and they are required to maintain at least a six semester credit hour course load for the duration of the assistantship with a grade-point average of at least 3.00.

The selection process is described below.

Graduate Assistant and Research Assistant positions. Applications may be obtained online at the ASU website or from the Graduate College Office or from the department office. Submit the applications to Ms. Tonya Drost in the department office. Three reference letters must accompany the application. Students should seek references who can testify to their commitment and qualifications for study in psychology. Normally, applications should be submitted when the student has been accepted into one of the graduate programs. Decisions on the positions will normally be made early in the spring semester (prior to an appointment for the next academic year) by the graduate program directors.

Teaching Assistant positions. Applications may be obtained online at the ASU website or from the Graduate College Office or from the department office. Submit applications to Ms. Tonya Drost in the department office. To qualify, students must have completed 18 graduate credit hours by the beginning of the academic year when the position begins (normally the student's second year in the program). Consideration of the applications will begin in the third week of April each year (for appointments that will begin the next fall semester).

LICENSURE INFORMATION

Current licensing requirements for licensed professional counselors (LPC) can be found on-line at http://tdh.state.tx.us/hcqs/plc/lpc/lpc_lic.htm and for licensed psychological associates (LPA) at <http://tsbep.state.tx.us>.