GUIDEBOOK FOR THE RESEARCH PSYCHOLOGY M.S. DEGREE PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA (UTC)

Last update: September 2016

PROGRAM MISSION/VISION

The mission of the Master's of Science degree program in Research psychology at UTC is to prepare students for careers in research and teaching. Using a mentoring model in which each student works closely with a faculty sponsor, we allow students to gain in-depth knowledge and research experiences that will prepare them for doctoral work or applied research positions. We achieve these objectives in three primary ways. First, we prepare students with critical thinking, methodological and statistical skills that enable them to assist in designing and conducting research and analyzing behavioral data. Second, we allow students to work in a collaborative fashion with experienced research scientists to gain first-hand knowledge of the demands of research. This task is often accomplished through service learning activities connecting the student with projects in the community. Third, we teach our students to teach others, and provide them with opportunities to gain supervised experience conducting classes in the Department of Psychology, including laboratory supervision and teaching a self-contained undergraduate course.

The Research concentration is designed for students who wish to pursue graduate study of topics *other* than I-O or clinical psychology. Various specialty areas related to the interests and backgrounds of primary supervising faculty are offered. Because of the tutorial nature of the program, students whose interests and abilities closely approximate the areas of interest of the primary supervising faculty will be most able to profit from the program. In our mentoring model, each student works closely with an individual faculty member throughout his/her course of study within the department. That faculty member is identified during the application process as the best match available given the student's background and interests. The person identified is the student's faculty sponsor; this sponsor typically becomes the student's academic advisor and chairs the student's thesis committee. Opportunities for intensive individual study in the chosen specialty area will be provided. Students will be given research experience under the supervision of a faculty adviser. This research experience will culminate in the preparation of a thesis. Students will also have opportunities to work with faculty members other than their appointed advisor.

Although a majority of our students plan to continue to doctoral programs, many of our graduates have chosen work in other fields based on some combination of their interests and circumstances. Graduates have often employed their research and analysis skills in areas such as healthcare (insurance companies and clinical trials), legal (jury selection and trial consulting), education (educational research, training), and nonprofits (grant-writing, program evaluation).

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Details regarding the admissions requirements and procedures for the UTC Research program can be found on our program website. (http://www.utc.edu/psychology/graduate/rmpsych/rm-requirements.php)

ADVISING

Advising within our program is handled primarily by the Graduate Program Director (Amye-Warren@utc.edu) in coordination with your faculty advisor. To ensure efficient and timely progress, all graduate students complete a Program of Study (POS) form early in their first semester in the program. Details on this process and the required form can be found in the Graduate Catalog and through the Graduate School's website. (http://www.utc.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/forms.php)

CURRICULUM

The curriculum for the UTC Research psychology program is designed to provide students with both depth and breadth in the science of psychology as well as ample skill and experience in research design and statistics. This is accomplished through a combination of elements, as detailed in the Program Description portion of our website. (http://www.utc.edu/psychology/graduate/rmpsych/rm-requirements.php)

A typical program of courses is shown below.

FALL YEAR 1
- PSY 5020 – Teaching of Psychology
- PSY 5100 – Statistics and Research Methods in Psychology I
- PSY 5950 – Advanced Studies in Experimental Psychology

SPRING YEAR 1
- PSY 5130 – Statistics and Research Methods in Psychology II
- PSY 5140 – Advanced Research Design
- PSY 5960 – Advanced Studies in Developmental/Personality/Social Psychology

FALL YEAR 2
- PSY 5950 – Advanced Studies in Experimental Psychology
- PSY 5999 – Thesis
- PSY Elective

SPRING YEAR 2
- PSY 5960 – Advanced Studies in Developmental/Personality/Social Psychology
- PSY 5999 – Thesis
- PSY Elective

CULMINATING EXPERIENCE

Students in our program must successfully complete a thesis, which involves extensive collaboration with a faculty member who serves as the primary thesis supervisor. Thesis topics are chosen in conjunction with the thesis advisor, who supervises the topic and research plan development, data gathering and analysis, and final write-up and reporting of findings. A committee of additional faculty members is also involved in evaluating the quality of the proposed and completed project. It is common for theses to be accepted for paper presentations at regional or national conferences and to be accepted as fulfilling thesis requirements in doctoral programs.

CRITICAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

These requirements are more fully detailed on our program website and in the current Graduate Catalog. While all students must complete a core set of courses, as detailed in our program curriculum, there is a great deal of

flexibility regarding which electives are taken to fulfill these requirements. The following points are important to highlight about electives in our program:

- Please note that thesis hours (PSY 5999) *cannot* be counted as electives. Even if more than 6 hours of thesis are taken, only 6 thesis hours will be accepted towards the 36 hours required for graduation.
- Not all acceptable electives are offered in all semesters or years.
- Many students take Independent Research (PSY 5997) or Independent Studies (5998) to fulfill at least one elective course. Please note that these courses require individual studies contracts to be developed with the instructor prior to registration. (http://www.utc.edu/graduate-school/pdfs/individualstudiescontract.pdf)
- Students are permitted to take a portion of their elective coursework outside the department as a form of cross-disciplinary study. Such choices must be approved by the faculty advisor as well as the Graduate Program Director.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

In *addition* to coursework, there are many activities necessary for successful completion of the Research Master's program and especially for building competitive application portfolios for doctoral programs or applied research jobs. Most of these tasks will require considerable initiative and independence. Each individual student's experiences will differ to some degree based on their faculty advisor, goals, and other factors, but the following timeline shows the elements common to the majority of students attempting to complete the Research program in two years.

FALL YEAR 1
- Work with advisor to plan program of study and complete Program of Study Form
- Complete training regarding research ethics and responsible conduct of research (IRB or IACUC)
- Work on research projects with advisor and/or other faculty members
- Conduct literature review to generate ideas for master's thesis
- Identify conferences for research presentations
- Explore options for internal and external funding for research and travel support

SPRING YEAR 1
- Design thesis research project
- Continue research projects with advisor and/or other faculty members
- Apply for Provost Student Research Award
- Present research at UTC's Research Dialogues
- Attend/present research at regional, national, or international conferences

SUMMER YEAR 1
- Propose thesis
- Submit IRB or IACUC for approved thesis project
- Collect pilot data for thesis project
- Study for/retake GRE if desired
- Identify potential doctoral programs/doctoral research supervisors

FALL YEAR 2
- Collect data for thesis project
- Apply to doctoral programs
- Apply for Graduation

- Teach Introductory Psychology
- Present research at Psychology Department Brown Bag

SPRING YEAR 2
- Defend thesis
- Submit final thesis to graduate school
- Present research at UTC's Research Dialogues
- Present research at regional, national, or international conferences
- Apply for jobs

CONTINUATION REQUIREMENTS

To maintain their status as members of the UTC Research program, students must meet all standards for continuation as specified by the Graduate School (see details below). Please note that students in this program are expected to demonstrate the highest level of professionalism and ethics at all times, in and out of the classroom. Each graduate student's overall performance as a member of the program will be regularly evaluated by the faculty; poor evaluations may be grounds for dismissal from the program. See also the section on Dismissal below.

PERTINENT GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

Students are advised to carefully review the entire section of UTC's Graduate Catalog pertaining to "General Master's Degree requirements" (http://bit.ly/27T3Uxs). Some of the most critical policies to note in this section are highlighted below for your easy reference.

RESIDENCY CLASSIFICATION FOR PAYING FEES

At the time of admission, each student is assigned a residence classification for fee purposes. Full details on Graduate School policies pertaining to this issue, including appeals processes are found here: http://catalog.utc.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=465&hl=residency&returnto=search#Residence_Classification_for_Paying_Fees

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate students have a variety of opportunities to earn at least partial financial support for their studies at UTC. The primary mechanisms of financial support for which the Graduate School has at least some oversight are summarized in the Graduate Catalog and referred to as:
- Graduate Assistantships: http://bit.ly/1PRmhHO
- Opportunity Assistantships (Application; Equal Opportunity Form (Must be completed and submitted with Opportunity Assistantship Application)
- Scholarships: http://bit.ly/1Wsi6G6

An important point to note about these various forms of financial support is that they are not all equivalent. Specifically, while scholarships typically function as awards or grants to support your studies, Graduate Assistantships are work arrangements between students and a particular department or office on campus. It is important for students to understand that the financial benefits associated with a Graduate Assistantship come with time and effort commitments. The specifics of these commitments vary somewhat by assignment and area. Students are advised to be mindful of this when making plans regarding how many credit hours to enroll in for a given semester and also how much outside or additional work they are planning on doing in a given semester.

PROVOST STUDENT RESEARCH AWARDS

The Provost Student Research Awards (PSRA) are designed to provide UTC students with a special opportunity to participate in original research with faculty members. They may be used to support thesis research projects. In past years, these competitive applications have been due in early March; funded projects begin July 1 and must be completed (funds spent and submitted for reimbursement) by June 30. Awards are limited to $1000. See the application for all guidelines and submission instructions. (http://www.utc.edu/research-sponsored-programs/funding-opportunities/internal-competitions.php#PSRA)

ADDITIONAL AWARDS

The Graduate School as well as the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs typically offer additional competitive awards each year. UTC Research Dialogues is held every spring, and offers a monetary award for the best graduate student research presentations. The Graduate School also offers an award to one Outstanding Graduate Student, selected by program faculty.

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The Graduate Student Association represents graduate students across all programs on campus. Although its specific programming and activities vary from year to year, one of its primary functions as an organization is to award and distribute funds to support graduate students participating in professional development activities. Graduate students may apply for funding to support travel to conferences, particularly when presenting research. Details can be found here (http://bit.ly/1QLwwgx).

PROGRAM OF STUDY

Each degree seeking graduate student must complete and file a Program of Study form by the end of the first semester of enrollment in graduate coursework. This form serves as a roadmap for successful completion of the program's curricular requirements. More details on this form can be found here. (http://bit.ly/1TrcpKB)

COURSE WITHDRAWALS

Withdrawing from courses once registered can be easily done before the formal drop period for a given semester. After this period ends, a backdated withdrawal may be needed. Details on this process can be found in the catalog here: http://bit.ly/1ROnhRI

THESIS REQUIREMENTS

Important guidelines regarding the thesis process, composition of a thesis committee, and other thesis-related requirements (including necessary forms, style templates, and timelines) are summarized by the Graduate School here. (http://bit.ly/1oqjs9e).

Within the UTC Research program, students typically are admitted with a designated faculty member who will most likely serve as the thesis committee chairperson. In the first fall semester, students read the literature and work on relevant research projects. In the spring semester of their first year, students complete a required research design and thesis preparation course (PSY 5140). Soon thereafter, students should work with their thesis committee chair to formally propose their thesis research no later than September of their second year. Students must complete all thesis-related work by early March of their second year to comply with Graduate School

deadlines (http://bit.ly/1oqjs9e) for May graduation. A typical calendar of events for Psychology thesis completion may be found here (http://www.utc.edu/psychology/pdfs/thesiscalendar16.pdf).

A student's thesis committee shall consist of a chairperson and at least two other persons. The chairperson must be a full-time faculty member in the thesis student's department in a tenure-track position and should have at a minimum full master's graduate faculty status. One other member of the committee must be a full-time faculty member in the thesis student's department. The remaining member(s) of the committee must either be full-time faculty members in the student's department or must possess qualifications that are deemed suitable for committee membership by the student's department and by members of the Graduate Faculty. Once a committee is set, the student is responsible for completing a Thesis/Dissertation Committee Appointment form, obtaining signatures of all committee members, and submitting the form to the departmental degree program secretary and a copy to the Graduate School in a timely fashion.

There are many important policies to note and adhere to when completing the thesis. These are all detailed in the Graduate School websites linked above, but it is especially important for students to note the following:

1. The student must register for departmental thesis/dissertation courses for each semester the thesis/dissertation is in progress and for each semester or term in which the student receives faculty assistance and/or uses University facilities and resources. In our program this means that students must continue to register for PSY 5999r Thesis each fall and spring semester after the initial registration until the thesis is accepted for submission to UTC Scholar. The student must be enrolled for at least two semester hours of thesis during the semester the thesis is submitted. (Students graduating in August must register for thesis hours in at least one summer term.)
2. The thesis and dissertation format and other technical matters shall conform to the University's Theses and Dissertations Standards (available on the Graduate School website; http://www.utc.edu/graduate-school/pdfs/theis-dissertation-standards-9-1-2015.pdf).
3. Following acceptance of the thesis/dissertation by the student's committee, the student will conduct a presentation open to the public and an oral defense of the work before the committee. After the defense, the student's graduate committee shall approve or reject the thesis/dissertation. Students must make all corrections and changes in the thesis/dissertation as agreed upon and recommended by the committee prior to final approval.
4. Upon passing the defense and having the thesis/dissertation approved by the committee the student must submit an electronic copy, using UTC Scholar, to the Graduate School to allow for checking that the document adheres to the University established formatting standards. The student will be required to make all formatting corrections using UTC Scholar.

GRADUATION AUDIT
Students entering their second year in the program will be asked to submit a revised Program of Study and apply for graduating early in their second year. This form must be approved by both the faculty advisor and the Research Program Director. At this time, a full Graduate School audit of the student's graduate course-progress is conducted. The details and form(s) for this process can be found here (http://bit.ly/1ROnhRI).

PETITIONS AND APPEALS
Whenever a graduate student feels that his/her rights and interests have been seriously jeopardized by unfair, arbitrary, or malicious exercise of faculty grading prerogative, the student may appeal a grade within five (5) days

of final grade posting for a given semester. The details of this process are outlined in the Graduate Catalog (http://bit.ly/20ZPCdx)

Student petitions for readmission, late candidacy, extension of candidacy, course waiver/substitution, request to take excessive hours, and requests for second extensions of IP grades will be heard at the program level. The dean of the Graduate School will act on decisions made at the program level. In cases where a student wishes to appeal a petition decision at the program level or decision by the dean of the Graduate School, the Graduate Appeals Committee will hear the appeal. Residency petitions are submitted directly to the Dean of The Graduate School. Students should note that the burden of proof for petitions and appeals is on the student. Full details for both of these items are provided in the Graduate Catalog.

(http://catalog.utc.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=465#Petitions_and_Appeals)

DISMISSAL

Students may be dismissed from a graduate program for failure to meet course and non-course related criteria. Full details on dismissal policies and procedures can be found in this portion of the Graduate Catalog (http://catalog.utc.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=465#Academic_Dismissal)

PERTINENT UNIVERSITY POLICIES

All students at UTC, undergraduate and graduate, are expected to abide by certain other policies and standards. The most critical are outlined below.

HONOR CODE

The Honor Code is based upon the assumption that the student recognizes the fundamental importance of honesty in all dealings within the University community and that education is a cooperative enterprise between student and teacher and between student and student. Any act of dishonesty violates and weakens this relationship and lessens the value of the education which the student is pursuing. The Honor Code, the Honor Court, and its procedures are detailed in the UTC Student Handbook (http://www.utc.edu/dean-students/pdfs/academics15.pdf)

FINANCIAL AID

UTC has several financial programs to assist graduate students with the cost of advanced studies. The University provides funds to students who have documented financial need; it also has assistance that is not need-based. Students who want further information about academic merit awards (graduate assistantships) should contact the department of the program to which they are applying for graduate study and obtain applications from The Graduate School office, as noted above. Here's a summary of the main types of financial aid available to most graduate students at UTC:

Type of Aid	Application	Eligibility
Part-time employment for students who do not meet the federal guidelines for employment under the College Work Study Program	Placement Office Application, Student Application, Employment Financial Aid Office	All students

Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loans	FAFSA (www.fafsa.gov)	All students enrolled at least half-time in a degree seeking program
Graduate Assistantships	Specific degree program office	Graduate students who plan to enroll for at least six credit hours
Graduate Opportunity Assistantships Program	Office of Equity and Diversity	First year/first generation graduate students
Scholarships	Graduate School Office	All students meeting donors' criteria
Grants	FAFSA	All students meeting specified criteria

Many students also benefit from the Academic Common Market program, offered by the Southern Region Education Board (SREB). This program allows a student to enroll in an undergraduate or graduate program at a university in another state without having to pay out-of-state tuition if that program of study is not offered by the public institutions in the student's home state. Each participating SREB state has a coordinator for the Academic Common Market. The state coordinator's name and address are listed on the SREB Web site (www.sreb.org). Any student interested in the Academic Common Market should contact the state coordinator in his or her home state. The state coordinator will help the student determine whether he or she is eligible to participate.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

There are a variety of support services available to all students at UTC. Here is a summary of the main resources that may be helpful to you at some point during your time as a student in our program:

- Student health http://bit.ly/1ToxAeY: Services include visits for acute and chronic illnesses, physical exams, screenings, immunizations, lab services, TB skin testing and allergy shots.
- Counselling http://bit.ly/1or15kE: Services include individual and group counseling, testing, psychiatric services, referrals, consultations, and outreach to the university and broader community.
- Disability Resource Center http://bit.ly/1R9TRLI: The DRC facilitates in the removal of barriers and creation of an accessible environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors to our campus. The DRC provides opportunities for education and advocacy by helping to promote independence and growth for our students, supporting our university's core values. For more information, please contact the Disability Resource Center at (423) 425-4006.

LIBRARY

Our mission is to contribute to the intellectual endeavors of the UTC community by assisting in the discovery of information and providing the infrastructure and resources for learning (http://bit.ly/1Ks8WJ8).

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

At some point here you will need help with technology-related questions. Our Technology Support center (http://bit.ly/1Ks90Zw) can help with just about every technology-related issue you might experience, including:

- management of your UTC ID account (Account Management)
- UTC MocsMail+ email account (Knowledge Base - MocsMail+; also Campus Email)
- connecting to the campus network (Connecting to the UTC Network; and Knowledge Base - UTC Network)

- On-campus printing ([MocsPrint](#); and [Knowledge Base - MocsPrint](#))
  Personal computer purchasing (at discount; see [Purchasing Personal Computers](#))
- Accessing necessary software, including SPSS, EndNote and Microsoft Office ([Software for Students](#))

UTC LEARN

UTC Learn is home to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's distance learning opportunities. UTC Learn houses both synchronous and asynchronous programming utilizing a variety of technologies including Blackboard Learn, Adobe Connect, video conferencing, and Media Site. For more information about UTC Learn, please visit: [UTC Learn](#)

UTC ALERT

UTC ALERT is a messaging system that allows UTC to communicate with members of the campus community quickly in the event of an emergency. You can sign up for this helpful service by following these instructions. (http://www.utc.edu/information-technology/knowledge-base/accounts/utc-alerts/sign-up-for-utc-alerts.php)