Department of Psychology Graduate Program By-Laws
September 2025

The Graduate Program:

The Department of Psychology offers a terminal MA in psychology and doctoral degrees in four areas of psychology: Cognitive Science, Clinical Psychological Science, Integrative Neuroscience, and Social & Health Psychology.

The unit of organization within the Department is the "area" each of which reflects one of our four doctoral level training programs.

The MA program is implemented as a separate program not affiliated with any area.

The graduate program is subject to all the policies and regulations of the Graduate School. The current regulations and policies can be found in the [Graduate Bulletin.](#)

Faculty of the Graduate Program:

Tenured/tenure track faculty members of the Department will affiliate with an area. They are voting members who are capable of recruiting doctoral students into their labs.

Lecturers will not formally affiliate with areas. However, they may participate in areas informally if they choose. They are not voting members and do not recruit doctoral students.

Affiliated faculty from other departments are not voting members and they do not recruit doctoral students.

All faculty must participate in mentorship training that is provided by the university.

Mentoring practices and success will be reviewed yearly by the Department Chair and by the Area Head, and will be done in consultation, as needed, with the Graduate Program Director. Should mentoring remediation be needed, a remediation plan will be developed and implemented by the Graduate Program Director and/or the Department Chair. Remediation plans may include additional mentorship training, mandatory co-mentors, and/or "down time" from mentoring (e.g., not recruiting new students; transfer of existing students to other mentors).

Administrative Structure of the Graduate Program:

Title	Current Position Holder as of October 2025
Department Chair	Joanne Davila, Distinguished Service Professor
Graduate Director	Susan Brennan, Distinguished Service Professor
MA Program Director	Kristin Bernard, Associate Professor
Assistant to the Chair (F/T staff)	Cynthia (Cindy) Forman
Graduate Program Coordinator (F/T staff)	Risa Stein

The **Department Chair** is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the department's functioning, including, but not limited to policy and procedures, budget, curriculum, hiring, promotion and tenure, faculty-related issues, staff-related issues, and student-related issues.

The **Graduate Program Director** (GPD) oversees the Psychology Department's four Ph.D. programs, which includes implementing and following Graduate School policies, managing admissions and outreach, monitoring and documenting student progress, advising students, acquiring and distributing resources to ensure funding for all those making good progress, staffing courses with appropriate TAs, assessing the Advanced Graduate Certificate programs, and conducting Responsible Conduct of Research training for new MA and Ph.D. students (via PSY 504: First Year Lectures). The GPD takes a student-centered approach—communicating with students about opportunities for funding and professional development, nominating students for awards and fellowships, and working with both faculty and student representatives on the Graduate Committee to review, shape, and understand policies, solve problems, and provide advocacy. These activities are done in collaboration with the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC), the Management Team, and the Area Heads.

The **MA Program Director** is responsible for overseeing administration of the program, advising MA students, and coordinating MA-relevant activities with other department faculty/staff. Regarding admissions, the MA Director serves as the head of the MA Admissions Committee, recruits other faculty to serve on the committee (ideally one from each program area), plans and oversees the timeline of admissions decisions, reviews/rates a subset of applications, and coordinates the distribution of admissions offers with the Graduate Program Coordinator. When MA students begin the program, the MA Director teaches a 3-credit course ("Academic and Professional Development") in Summer Session 1, which covers topics such as engaging in graduate research, career/graduate school pathways, diversity in psychological science, and academic reading/writing/presenting. The MA Director coordinates with applied internship supervisors about available positions within their clinics or other settings and with Psychology/Psychiatry faculty about positions within their labs. The MA Director prepares and supports students in applying for applied internships and research positions. As needed, the MA Director helps facilitate research/internships placements for the year by communicating directly with potential faculty mentors or supervisors. Prior to the fall and spring semesters, the MA Director assesses graduate course availability and advises MA students about their course selections. Alongside the Graduate Program Coordinator, the MA Director ensures that all students are in good academic standing on a semester basis and fulfill their graduation requirements. Throughout their time in the program, the MA Director meets with MA students as needed (individually or in group settings) for additional professional/career advising and offers support when challenges arise with coursework and/or research/internship placements. The MA Director also communicates with faculty and staff about any MA student-related issues.

The **Assistant to the Chair (ATC)**
Provides comprehensive administrative support to the Chair of Psychology, as well as providing support to all faculty, students, and staff. Provides leadership in managing all administrative aspects of running the Department of Psychology including operational and strategic planning, undergraduate/graduate program development, fiscal management, and administrative oversight of facilities, space, equipment, and personnel (including supervision, hiring, training and evaluation). Supervises and coordinates department's grant initiatives, including identification of funding sources, monitoring grant fund expenditures and compliance with grant requirements, and development of budgets. Note that these grants/research administration tasks were previously conducted by a separate staff member dedicated

to this role. The tasks were collapsed into the ATC position years ago during a hiring freeze. The university has allowed us to re-create the grants administrator position and we will be hiring to fill that position for Fall 2025.

The **Graduate Program Coordinator**
Responsible for all aspects of the Psychology graduate program's academic administrative matters (Masters and Ph.D. program), such as academic planning, administering program policies/procedures, student recruitment, admissions, registration, financial support, and advising; course catalog, department brochures, and grades reporting. Acts as the primary liaison between students, internal faculty advisors/committees and external Program members. Serves as point person and information source for all University and departmental policies and procedures relevant to the graduate program. Coordinates and assists with clinical program accreditation processes.

The Graduate Program Committee:

The department maintains a Graduate Program Committee that is composed of one tenured/tenure track faculty representative elected by the faculty constituency of each of the areas of the Department, and one graduate student representative from each area elected by the corresponding subset of the graduate constituency; the Graduate Program Director is also a voting member of the Committee. The Chair or the Chair's designee may sit as an ex-officio member of the committee without vote. Election of all members shall be for one-year terms beginning in September.

The Graduate Program Committee is responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies governing graduate training in the Department, including department-wide graduate admissions requirements, graduate curricula and graduate degree requirements. The Committee shall keep records of all actions and make them available to members of the Department Senate.

All proposals for change to graduate program relevant procedures are discussed in the graduate committee, with the departmental faculty, and with the Departmental Management Team (Chair, Director of Graduate Studies, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Director of the MA Program, Director of Diversity Efforts). Changes to program rules must be approved, ultimately, by the Departmental Management Team.

Grievance, Appeals, and Conflict Resolution:

Depending on the source of any difficulty, graduate students should seek the advice of their advisor, their Area Head, the Director of Graduate Studies, the Chair, and/or the department's grievance committee.

Grievance procedures can be found on the department webpage:
https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/psychology/about/grievance.php

Outside of the department, there are grievance reporting procedures available. Students can discuss concerns with the SBU Ombuds Office:
https://www.stonybrook.edu/ombuds/

And/or the Graduate Student Advocate:
https://www.stonybrookgso.org/graduate-student-advocate

Students may report instances of sexual harassment (that have happened to them) here: https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/oea-equity/reporting

Responsibilities of Program Faculty:

All faculty are expected to:

- Participate in mandatory program activities (to be determined by each area). These will minimally include: area faculty meetings, area colloquium, graduate student evaluation and feedback meetings and procedures.

- Mentor students in line with recommended Graduate School standards, e.g.:
https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/grad/academics/mentor_plan.php
https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/grad/professional_development/research-mentor-training.php

- Follow all university policies:
https://www.stonybrook.edu/policy/

- Act in accordance with ethical standards of behavior:
https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/ethics-code-2017.pdf

Responsibilities of Graduate Students:

All students are expected to:

- Follow all university, departmental, and area requirements for their program:
Doctoral: https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/psychology/current_students/requirements.php
MA: https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/psychology/masters/index.php

- Respond in a timely and collegial manner to emails from the Psychology Graduate Office

- Engage in mentoring relationships in line with recommended Graduate School standards, e.g.,:
https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/grad/academics/mentor_plan.php

- Follow all university policies:
https://www.stonybrook.edu/policy/

- Follow all university standards for student conduct:
https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/studentaffairs/sccs/conduct.php

- Act in accordance with ethical standards of behavior:
https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/ethics-code-2017.pdf

Departmental Diversity Statement:

The departmental diversity statement and related information can be found here:

https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/psychology/diversity/diversity_inclusion_excellence.php

Requirements for Advancement to Candidacy:

Requirements can be found here:
https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/psychology/current_students/requirements

In general, students must complete the following to advance to candidacy by the end of their 3rd year in the program: required foundational coursework, three breadth courses, second year project, specialty project, all SDIs.

Vacation Policy and Notification Procedures:

These are to be determined in collaboration with the student's advisor, instructors, and clinical supervisors.

Student Funding:

All doctoral students are admitted on state TA, RA, or GA lines that include, at present, 5 years of funding (stipend and tuition remission). In addition, the department/faculty mentor will provide each student with a small summer stipend.

All MA students pay their own tuition. Some may be eligible for funding on partial TA lines or related funding if available.

Procedures for Switching Advisors:

Students are permitted to switch advisors. Depending on the circumstances, they should discuss this with the area head, as well as the current advisor and the new advisor. The area head, graduate program director, and/or department chair can assist in facilitating a successful transition.

Review of the By-Laws:

These by-laws will be checked for accuracy on a yearly basis.