

# MS IN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Units required for MS: 31-33

## Program Description

The MS program in Psychological Research is designed to provide both broad and specialized education in the field. With an MS in Psychology, one can prepare for employment in positions similar to those associated with a Bachelor's, although at a higher level of responsibility. Completing a MS may also prepare the student for doctoral studies in Psychology. Applicants to the MS program should first determine their sub-disciplinary area(s) of interest represented among our faculty and identify desired mentors based on match in research interests to serve as their faculty advisor before submitting an application. The Graduate Brochure contains the department application procedures.

In our MS program, students complete a culminating project; this is typically a thesis which is an original research paper of publishable quality. Students are matched with a faculty advisor that supervises their research and provides professional development opportunities. Advisors play an active role in students' planning and research process from the start. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with their faculty advisor on a continual and intensive basis as soon as they begin their studies in the program. Through this relationship and cooperative research units, students can prepare for employment or doctoral study in any area of psychology related to/represented within our program faculty's areas of expertise.

Although the program is based on a core set of requirements through coursework, the structure of the program allows for specialization through research experience and research-based coursework. MS students progress through the program as a cohort formed from all students admitted in the same academic year. The program is planned for all students in a cohort to take coursework together throughout the program. Students engage in breadth requirements through formal classroom education, enrolling in coursework across the discipline of psychology. Although specific graduate course offerings vary year to year, courses satisfying each of the program requirements are offered on a regular basis allowing timely progression to degree. The Department recognizes that specialized study and the development of certain types of skills must take place on a one-to-one student-instructor basis. Thus, students engage in depth requirements by developing expertise in collaboration with and under the supervision of their faculty advisor. This includes research activities in the laboratory, field, or library. In addition, under faculty guidance, students may have an opportunity to participate in teaching and teaching related experiences and/or engage with community mental health agencies, government agencies, schools, non-profit organizations, and/or businesses. Academic credit under individualized study, cooperative research, and fieldwork designations are available for these purposes. Students should discuss career goals, time-to-degree plans, and financial aid requirements when enrolling in courses with these designations.

## Admission Requirements

Admission to graduate study in Psychology is selective. An overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 is recommended and minimally qualified applicants will have a 2.5 GPA or above. When making admissions decisions, the Department takes into consideration the candidate's

cumulative GPA, relevant coursework, letters of recommendation, previous (research and/or practical) experience, the curriculum vitae, a scientific writing sample (i.e., sole authored research report, research proposal, and/or literature review), a personal statement that includes the candidate's interest in a particular faculty member's (or multiple members') research agenda. During the admission process an interview may be requested and additional information from the interview helps guide the decision of admissions.

Applicants are required to have completed upper division undergraduate psychology courses in statistics and research methods, with at least "C" grades in those courses, as well as a balanced and academically strong group of at least five upper division courses in substantive topic areas in Psychology, such as, but not limited to: Abnormal Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Behavioral Neuroscience, Perception, or Social Psychology.

The upper division psychological research methods/statistics requirement is met by PSYC 121 and PSYC 102 taken at Sacramento State, or their equivalents at other universities. Upper division research methods/statistics courses from other four-year universities must be reviewed and approved for equivalency by the Department's Graduate Coordinator. PSYC 102 can be remediated in the first year of graduate school.

### Admission Procedures

All applicants, including Sacramento State graduates, must apply to both the University and the Psychology Department. Please submit the following:

- a completed application for admission—via CalState Apply (<https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/>)
- one set of unofficial transcripts from all colleges and universities attended, other than Sacramento State transcripts;
- three letters of recommendation, from individuals who can evaluate the applicant's potential for successful graduate study. At least two letters from faculty are preferred. The link to send requests to referees can be found in the CalState Apply process;
- curriculum vitae;
- writing sample (i.e., sole authored research report, research proposal, and/or literature review);
- personal statement that includes the applicant's research interests and professional goals, and outlines their interest in a particular faculty member's (or multiple members') research agenda.

### Minimum Units and Grade Requirement for the Degree

Units required for the MS: 31-33

Minimum Cumulative GPA: 3.0. All units must be completed with a grade of "B" or better.

### Advancement to Candidacy

Students must be advanced to candidacy in the semester prior to enrolling in at PSYC 500A. Advancing to candidacy means that the University permits students to register for the culminating requirement (thesis or project) units; it also makes students eligible for special library privileges. In order to advance to candidacy students must:

- Remove any deficiencies in admission requirements
- Complete the University Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) for graduate students or successfully completed a Graduate

Writing Intensive (GWI) course in their discipline within the first two semesters of coursework at California State University, Sacramento.

- Have completed at least 12 units of graduate (200-series) psychology courses with a minimum GPA of 3.0
- Have decided upon all of the courses to be applied toward the degree
- Submitted a summary and signed Approval of Thesis or Project Proposal form to the Psychology Department (available on the Graduate Student Canvas).

Once students have completed the above, they must file an Application for Advancement to Candidacy with the Office of Graduate Studies. Deadlines: every October 1 for Fall Semester (to advance for Spring semester) and February 1 (to advance for Fall semester). The application for advancement to candidacy form and instructions are available from the Graduate Studies website.


#### Number of units to record on the petition

The petition asks for a list of courses the student has taken, is taking, and plans to take to fulfill University graduation requirements. It also asks students to specify whether they are doing a thesis or a project (although this changes from time to time). MS students should specify only the minimum 31 units required for the degree even though they may have taken many more courses.

#### Changes in Plans after Filing the Advancement to Candidacy Petition

If a student needs to change their Advancement to Candidacy plan in any way (e.g., not taking a course listed on the petition, changing from thesis to project or the other way around) they must submit a Petition for Exception. This petition must be approved by both the Department and the Office of Graduate Studies. Failure to file this petition (if a difference exists between the student's record and the Advancement to Candidacy form) will cause the University to withhold the granting of the degree.

## Program Requirements

Code	Title	Units
<b>Required Core Courses</b>		<b>6</b>
PSYC 200	Methods in Empirical Psychology 	
PSYC 202	Survey of Contemporary Statistical Methods in Psychological Research	
<b>Individual/Social Seminar</b>		<b>3</b>
Complete one of the following:		
PSYC 209	Seminar in Systems of Psychology	
PSYC 210	Theories of Personality	
PSYC 217	Seminar in Social Psychology	
PSYC 235	Psychology of Culture, Race, and Ethnicity	
PSYC 251	Developmental Processes	
PSYC 268	Advanced Psychopathology	
<b>Biological/Cognitive Seminar</b>		<b>3</b>
Complete one of the following:		
PSYC 240	Seminar in Behavioral Neuroscience	
PSYC 241	Seminar in Cognitive Psychology	
PSYC 242	Seminar in Learning and Behavior	
<b>Additional Courses</b>		<b>9</b>
Complete three courses in any combination from the list below that have not been used to fulfill to another category:		

PSYC 204	Advanced Topics in Statistical Methods for Psychological Research	
PSYC 205	Measurement Methods for Psychological Research and Practice	
PSYC 206	Tests and Measurement	
PSYC 209	Seminar in Systems of Psychology	
PSYC 210	Theories of Personality	
PSYC 217	Seminar in Social Psychology	
PSYC 235	Psychology of Culture, Race, and Ethnicity	
PSYC 240	Seminar in Behavioral Neuroscience	
PSYC 241	Seminar in Cognitive Psychology	
PSYC 242	Seminar in Learning and Behavior	
PSYC 251	Developmental Processes	
PSYC 268	Advanced Psychopathology	
PSYC 272	Research Methods in Behavior Analysis	
PSYC 277	Special Topics Graduate Seminar in Psychology	
PSYC 283	Teaching Of Psychology	
<b>Research</b>		<b>6</b>
Complete two of the following:		
PSYC 294	Cooperative Research	
PSYC 297A	Advanced Graduate Research I	
PSYC 297B	Advanced Graduate Research II	
PSYC 299	Special Problems	
<b>Culminating Experience</b>		<b>4 - 6</b>
PSYC 500A	Culminating Experience <sup>1</sup>	
PSYC 500B	Culminating Experience	
<b>Total Units</b>		<b>31-33</b>

<sup>1</sup> Students must enroll in PSYC 500B if thesis/project is not satisfactorily completed while enrolled in PSYC 500A.