

WELCOME TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY & SPECIAL EDUCATION

The faculty of the Department of Psychology and Special Education welcomes you to graduate study at Texas A & M University-Commerce. We are pleased that you are interested in attending TAMU-Commerce for your graduate studies and promise to work diligently with you to ensure your success. Among the major resources available to you at Texas A & M University-Commerce are the faculty, fellow graduate students, an excellent library with many on-line databases, courses and seminars, multimedia instructional classrooms and resources, computer labs, the University computer network and high-speed connection to the Internet, and access to a variety of other resources and organizations. If you are persistent and use these resources well, your graduate education will be excellent.

The single most important faculty member for you, especially in the early part of your graduate work, is your faculty advisor. This individual, along with the other members of your advisory committee, are your primary resources and are responsible, with you, for a major portion of the paper work necessary for the orderly administration of the graduate program. **BASED ON YOUR INTERESTS, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU CONTACT ONE OF OUR FACULTY TO BE YOUR POTENTIAL ADVISOR PRIOR TO APPLYING TO OUR PROGRAM.** Your first step is to learn about the research conducted by our various faculty members, which can be found on our website: [Department of Psychology and Special Education](#). Our program is oriented around scientific research, and the only way you can succeed is to attach yourself immediately with a faculty advisor whose research interests you share. Remember that you will need to be flexible in this pursuit – it is unlikely that you will find a faculty member who conducts exactly the kind of research in which you are interested. Just pick someone who is willing to work with you – this will get you on the fast track to starting your empirical thesis/dissertation!

There are a number of rules, regulations, and procedures applicable to graduate study. To the extent that you take time to become informed about these, you will experience fewer frustrations. It is especially important that you become well acquainted with the rules and regulations contained in the [Graduate Catalog](#). It would be a good idea to keep the graduate catalog that was current during the year you were admitted to the Department of Psychology. The University also publishes a [student handbook](#), which addresses policies and responsibilities associated with student conduct (for students at a distance, please request a copy be sent to you from the departmental office). Much of this information is also available on the [University homepage](#) and the homepage for the [Department of Psychology and Special Education](#). University policies, including time requirements for completion of degrees, policies on academic honesty and plagiarism, and are also available [here](#).

In addition to these online sources, the main offices of the Department are in Henderson Hall, Room 201A and 201B. Faculty offices are located on the second floor of Henderson Hall and connected Binnion Hall. Mailboxes for faculty and graduate assistants are located in Room 203. Various bulletin boards for graduate students are located in the hallways near the departmental office and near faculty offices.

The Ph.D. Program in Educational Psychology

The Department of Psychology and Special Education offers the Doctor of Philosophy degree (Ph.D.) in Educational Psychology. The Educational Psychology program has an interdisciplinary perspective, with a strong foundation in the science and methodology of psychology. The focus of the Educational Psychology program is human cognition and instruction. Students will acquire an in-depth knowledge of human learning and cognition, instructional strategies, research, and evaluation. This emphasis will prepare students to integrate knowledge of human cognition and instructional practice across a variety of occupational, educational, and content matter domains, with emphasis on applications of learning technologies.

Vision Statement for the Ph.D. Program in Educational Psychology

The vision of the Department of Psychology and Special Education is to offer a premier Ph.D. program in Educational Psychology by providing an optimal combination of on-line instruction and face-to-face interaction, instruction, and mentoring.

Mission Statement for Ph.D. Program in Educational Psychology

The mission of the Ph.D. program in Educational Psychology is to prepare students to produce, integrate, and apply knowledge and understanding of human cognition, learning, research methodology, program evaluation, instructional design, and educational applications of technology to create and manage life-long learning environments and processes for individuals and organizations.

Brief History of the Department

The Department of Psychology and Special Education was established at East Texas State University in 1962. In 1970, the Department was designated by the Texas Coordinating Board of Higher Education as a doctoral degree-granting program with emphasis areas in Educational Psychology and general Psychology. In 1989, the Departments of Psychology and Special Education were merged into a single department. In 1992, the department undertook a comprehensive review and reorganization of the doctoral program. By 1994, the first class of twelve doctoral students was admitted to the “new” doctoral program in Educational Psychology. Since the establishment of the Department of Psychology and Special Education there have been six Department Heads: Dr. J. E. Franklin, Dr. Monroe Lanmon, Dr. Glenn Fournet, Dr. Paul Zelhart, Dr. Raymond Green, and Dr. Tracy Henley. During the last two decades, the Department has grown to 20 full-time faculty members and more than 75 doctoral students have graduated with a Ph.D. in Psychology.

Organization of the Department and Educational Psychology Program

The Department of Psychology and Special Education currently provides undergraduate degree programs in Psychology and Special Education, including Master’s degree tracks in Applied Psychology, School Psychology, Educational Psychology, Special Education; certificate programs in Special Education, and a Ph.D. program in Educational Psychology. All of these programs and

their associated faculty, staff, and resources are under the direction of the Department Head, Dr. Tracy Henley. The Coordinator of the Educational Psychology Program is Dr. Curt Carlson. The Educational Psychology Program Committee consists of at least three faculty members appointed by the Department Head. At least two of the members should be full professors with graduate faculty standing. The Educational Psychology Program Coordinator is a committee member. The general purpose of the Educational Psychology Program Committee is to provide direction, oversight, and recommendations regarding policy and direction of the Master's and Ph.D. Educational Psychology degree programs.

Goals of the Ph.D. Program in Educational Psychology

- Provide students with an understanding of the past, present, and future development of the science of Psychology and the discipline of Educational Psychology.
- Provide students with the understanding required for ethical decision-making and professional practices in the roles of researcher, student, and Educational Psychologist.
- Provide students with an understanding of the processes and principles that underlie the discipline and science of Educational Psychology, including cognitive development, learning, cognition, and instructional design.
- Provide students with the skills and understandings needed to design, execute, and evaluate research.
- Provide students with an understanding of pedagogy and support the development of the knowledge and skills needed to select, apply, and evaluate the use of educational technology to assist learning, teaching, and training.

Graduates of the Educational Psychology degree program will be prepared to enter careers as Educational Psychologists in industry, government, military, higher education, and public education. Graduates will provide expertise and resources needed to: 1) understand human cognition, motivation, and development, 2) conduct research and program evaluation, 3) employ technology to promote effective learning and training, and 4) promote and support organizational and individual goals related to optimizing learning, motivation, training, and product and process quality.

Criteria for Entrance into the Master's and Ph.D. Programs in Educational Psychology

In evaluating and admitting students to the graduate programs of the Department, the faculty act as a committee of the whole. Holistic evaluation using both quantitative and qualitative criteria will be employed. Admission decisions are based upon multiple criteria; no exclusive criterion is used, nor are there minimum cut-off levels for quantitative criteria, other than the GPA minimums required for entrance into the Graduate School. Each candidate's qualifications are evaluated individually and in comparison to previous and current applicants, currently enrolled students, and graduates.

The following information is required for admission:

1) Resume or vita

Particular attention will be given to successful employment experience, particularly in fields

related to the foci of the degree program such as training and education, and to any relevant special abilities or skills, such as bilingualism or computer skills.

2) Goals statement

Applicants whose career aspirations are inconsistent with the mission and focus of the degree program will be disadvantaged in the selection process.

3) Transcripts (including undergraduate and graduate GPA and all completed coursework)

Applicants are not required to have completed an undergraduate or graduate major in psychology, nor any prerequisite graduate coursework required for admission.

4) GRE (verbal, quantitative, analytical or verbal, quantitative, writing)

In rare cases, such as students with doctoral degrees in other fields, the department retains the option of waiving the GRE for admission.

5) Letters of recommendation

Follow the Graduate School requirements for doctoral programs.

It is expected that applicants who compare most favorably across all criteria to enrolled and graduated students and to previous and current applicants will be preferred in the selection process. In this regard, the following levels for quantitative criteria are typical of candidates that have been accepted in the past:

Undergraduate GPA (last 60 hours or in major): 3.2 and higher

Graduate GPA (for at least 18 hours of completed graduate coursework): 3.5 and higher

GRE verbal for native English speakers: 500 and higher

GRE quantitative: 550 and higher

GRE writing: 4.5 and higher

Faculty Advisor and Advisory Committee

Prior to admission to the doctoral program, it is each student's responsibility to find a faculty advisor. The program coordinator, Dr. Curt Carlson, in consultation with the student, will prepare a degree plan that states the requirements for graduation. Also, the degree plan provides an opportunity for the advisor and student to determine what, if any, courses should be transferred in from other programs. These transferred courses should be marked on the degree plan but will need to be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The degree plan should be returned to the Graduate School for their records—there is a form provided by the Graduate School for this purpose. Once filed with the Graduate School, the degree plan can be modified at the request of the student's faculty advisor or the coordinator. The degree plan is used to determine if the student has met all the requirements for graduation, so it is important to keep the degree plan updated. In addition to designing a degree plan, each student's faculty advisor will select two additional faculty members to serve as members of the student's advisory committee. It is the responsibility of this committee to guide the student through the program until such time as the student is ready to form the dissertation committee. Specific duties of the advisory committee include advisement and consultation, liaison between the faculty and

student, and monitoring student progress in the program.

Ph.D. Curriculum Description

The University requires 90 hours for all incoming students, regardless of whether or not you enter with a completed Master's degree in another field. However, the cognate (minor) part of your degree plan can be filled with Master's level courses transferred in from another university. The program coordinator addresses this during the student's first year in the program. If entering with a Master's degree and completed empirical thesis, the doctoral faculty conduct a meeting to evaluate whether or not to accept the thesis, and decide on which courses to transfer. If the thesis is accepted, the student is on a 60 hour degree plan, rather than 90 hours.

To meet Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board requirements, no more than 49% of a student's coursework can be taken online and used for credit toward the degree. In other words, **at least 51% of coursework taken from the university MUST BE IN THE FORM OF FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES IN COMMERCE.** This is VERY IMPORTANT to consider prior to applying to the doctoral program. We have a summer residency program in place (see below) to help with this requirement for students who live far from Commerce, but it alone will not provide enough face-to-face credit hours, unless a large number of graduate hours are transferred, which is not typical of most students.

The program has five components: Program Core, Doctoral Tools, Electives, Cognate area, and Research Credits (i.e., thesis and dissertation). More specifically: (*Italics = online offering*)

Program Core: (21 hours – pick 7 courses) (* = recommended as first courses to take)

Psy 505 Introduction to Educational Psychology (or Psy 511 Cognitive Science)*

Psy 509 History and Systems of Psychology

Psy 594 Ethical Issues in Organizations

Psy 618 Group Dynamics*

Psy 620 Human Learning and Cognition*

Psy 621 Advanced Cognition (req 620)

Psy 622 Research and Design (may not be required for students with a thesis in-hand)*

Psy 625 Cognition and Instruction I

Psy 627 Social Cognition

Psy 675 Advanced Topics in Educational Psychology: (18-21 hours)

Doctoral Tools: (5 required)

Psy 695 Research Methodology (Doctoral Tools 1)

Psy 612 Psychological and Educational Statistics (Doctoral Tools 2)

Psy 681 Intermediate Statistics (Doctoral Tools 3)

Psy 610 Nonparametric Statistics (Doctoral Tools 4)

or *Psy 670 Multivariate Statistics* (Doctoral Tools 4)

Psy 671 Advanced Tests and Measurements (Doctoral Tools 5)

Electives:

Psy 514 Theories of Human Learning

Psy 515 Neuromechanisms/Biological Bases of Behavior
Psy 517 Introduction to Human-Computer Interaction Design
Psy 527 Social/Cultural Bases of Behavior
Psy 535 Applied Behavior Analysis
Psy 539 Forensic Psychology
Psy 545 Developmental Psychology
Psy 572 Psychological Assessment and Measurement (if taken prior to 671)
Psy 601 Perception
Psy 605 Single Subject Designs
Psy 626 Cognition and Instruction II (req 625)
Psy 661 Organizational Change and Improvement
Psy 679 Program Evaluation
Psy 680 Professional Development
Psy 689 Directed Independent Study (up to 6 hours)

Cognate Area: (18 hours). The cognate area is similar to a minor. This should be a grouping of courses that ties into an area of specialization relevant to your academic and career goals. This area should be constructed in consultation with the director of the doctoral program. Final approval of the cognate area is in the hands of the Coordinator and the Graduate School.

Example Approved Cognate: Computer Science

CS 504 Introduction to Computer Applications
CS 514 Internet Development
CS 515 Fundamentals of Programming (req 504)
CS 520 Information Structures and Algorithm Analysis (req 515)
CS 531 Java Programming (coreq 520)
CS 538 Artificial Intelligence (req 520)

Research Credits: (12-18 hours)

Psy 518 Thesis (6 hours required of students without an empirical Master's thesis)
Psy 718 Dissertation (12 hours required)

Summer Residency Program

This exists to take some of the burden of taking so many courses face-to-face in Commerce off of students who do not live near by. Keep in mind, however, that, depending upon how much graduate coursework you may transfer in, YOU MAY NEED TO TAKE FACE-TO-FACE COURSES IN COMMERCE DURING SPRING OR FALL IN ORDER TO MEET REQUIREMENTS, OR TAKE PART IN MORE THAN FOUR SUMMER RESIDENCIES. Below you will find a logical course sequence for the summer residence, but these specific courses will not always be offered in a given summer.

First June at Commerce

Psy 505 Introduction to Educational Psychology OR Psy 511 Cognitive Science
Psy 622 Research and Design

Second June at Commerce

Psy 620 Human Learning and Cognition

Psy 627 Social Cognition

Third June at Commerce

Psy 625 Cognition and Instruction I

Psy 671 Advanced Tests and Measurements OR approved elective substitute

Fourth June at Commerce

Psy 675 Advanced Topics in Educational Psychology

Psy 618 OR approved elective substitute