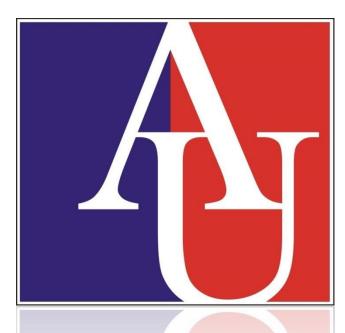
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

MASTERS PROGRAM HANDBOOK 2019-2020



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Which Handbook Applies to Me?

All graduate students should follow the requirements in the Masters Program Handbook published by the Graduate Curriculum Committee in the summer prior to their first enrollment in the program.

Requirements described in this Handbook do not negate our University's rules found at <u>Graduate Academic Regulations (https://www.american.edu/provost/grad/current-graduate-academic-regulations.cfm</u>), but refine and augment them. If a more stringent requirement is provided in the Masters Program Handbook than in University regulations, the requirement in the Handbook applies. Requests for exceptions to GCC or University regulations must be made by petition from the student, approved by the student's faculty advisor and degree program director, to the <u>GCC Chair</u> or <u>Provost</u>.

It is the responsibility of each graduate student to keep current on the general Department and University regulations. Minutes of the GCC and of our Department Council communicate changes in regulations, and describe exceptions granted and declined. Copies of these minutes are available from the departmental Administrative Assistants.

This Handbook is revised annually by the GCC. Suggestions for improvements are welcome.

The Three Tracks

The MA program currently has three tracks. All tracks offer a thesis option. One track also offers a nonthesis option. We will first describe some distinctions between these tracks, then the difference between the thesis and nonthesis (limited to the General Track) options, and then information common to all the tracks.

General Psychology Track

The psychology courses for this track must include **at least 2 courses** from the Social Sciences group, and at least 2 courses from the Natural Science group (Courses in both groups are listed below). There is also a required course in statistics (STAT-614 or higher or PSYC 640).

For the general track, students must choose either the thesis or nonthesis option (see below for the additional requirements).

Personality / Social Psychology Track

The psychology courses for this track must include **at least 4 courses** from the Social Sciences group, and **at least 2 courses** from the Natural Sciences group. (Courses in both groups are listed below). There is also a required course in statistics (STAT-614 or higher or PSYC 640).

Students in this track must choose the thesis option (see below for the additional requirements).

Experimental / Biological Psychology Track

The psychology courses for this track must include **at least 4 courses** from the Natural Sciences group, and **at least 2 courses** from the Social Sciences group. (Courses in both groups are listed above). There is also a required course in statistics (STAT-614 or higher or PSYC 640).

Students in this track must choose the thesis option (see below for the additional requirements).

Changing Tracks in the MA Program

Students who wish to establish or change tracks in the MA program should communicate their wish and their course plans in writing to the Director of the MA program.

Thesis and Nonthesis Options

Thesis Option.

The thesis option is only available to students who have secured support from a faculty advisor to sponsor their thesis research. Students pursuing the thesis option also must conduct, write, and successfully defend a research thesis. Students who choose the *thesis option* must take PSYC 650: Psychological Research as well as 6 credit hours from the following: PSYC 685: Seminar in Psychological Research and PSYC 797: Masters Thesis Research. For more information on Masters Theses in general please see the separate section below.

Requests to switch from thesis to nonthesis options may not be granted. Masters Thesis Research will not count toward the 33-credits required for the nonthesis option. Therefore we suggest that students do not take Masters Thesis Research until they are certain they will complete their thesis.

Nonthesis option.

The nonthesis option is available only in the General Track. Students in this track (see below) are discouraged from opting for the thesis option unless they are certain they will complete and defend thesis research. Requests to switch from thesis to nonthesis options may not be granted. Masters Thesis Research will not count toward the 33-credits required for the nonthesis option. Therefore we suggest that students do not take Masters Thesis Research until they are certain they will complete their thesis.

Students taking the nonthesis option must take PSYC 698: Directed Research and PSYC 650: Psychological Research. In addition, students taking the nonthesis option must write an indepth paper that is approved by two faculty readers as satisfying masters level work. Customarily, this paper is written as a culmination of the PSYC 698: Directed Research course, and one of the readers is the supervisor of the course. The second reader is assigned by the Graduate Curriculum Committee.

Requirements for All Tracks of the MA Program

Courses.

11 courses (33 credits) comprising

- 1 statistics course (STAT-614 or higher or PSYC 640; additional statistics courses can count as electives for MA students; those who might apply to either the Clinical Psychology or the Interdisciplinary Behavior Cognition and Neuroscience Ph.D. programs at American University should note that STAT-614 will not count in that program's statistics requirement.
- PSYC-650: Psychological Research
- Two other research courses (if thesis track) or 1 other research course (if nonthesis track), as specified above (additional research courses can count as electives)
- Seven other courses in psychology (if thesis track) or 8 courses in psychology (if nonthesis track), while satisfying distribution requirements for your track as specified below, plus additional elective courses to sum to 24 credits

MA program course requirements differ by track. With the help of their faculty advisor, students should choose one track in the program. Students must consult with and receive authorization from their advisors each semester before registering for classes. It is, however, the responsibility of the graduate student to verify that she or he is fulfilling all requirements for the degree.

For all tracks of the MA program, psychology courses are categorized as Social Science or Natural Science:

Social Science Group:

PSYC-515	Psychology of Music (counts toward either the Social Science or Natural
	Science requirements, but not both at the same time)
PSYC-521	Ethnic & Minority Issues
PSYC-533	Cognitive Behavior Therapy
PSYC-545	Psychology of Sex Similarities and Differences
PSYC-	Topics in Psychology. A section of PSYC-597or PSYC 697 does not count
597/697	toward the Social Science requirement unless it has been specifically
	approved by the MA Program Director <u>and</u> the GCC as being in the Social
	Science group.
	Do not assume approval when registering for courses. Also, the university's
	DARS (Degree Audit Report System) is not able to know which courses do
	and do not count toward the Natural Science and Social Science
	requirements.
PSYC-605	Advanced Personality Psychology
PSYC-614	Industrial/Organizational Psychology
PSYC-622	Stress, Coping, and Emotion

Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice
Psychological Assessment I
Advanced Social Psychology
Psychopathology
Advanced Developmental Psychology
Behavioral Medicine

Natural Science group:

Psychology of Music (counts toward either Social Science or Natural
Science requirements, but not both at the same time)
Advanced Human Neuropsychology
Conditioning and Learning
Topics in Psychology: A section of PSYC-597 or 697 does <u>not</u> count toward the
Experimental/Bio requirement unless it has been specifically approved by
the MA Program Director <u>and</u> the GCC as being in the Natural Science
group.
Do not assume approval when registering for courses. Also, the
university's DARS (Degree Audit Report System) does not seem able to
know which courses do and do not count toward the Natural Science and
Social Science requirements.
Advanced Memory and Cognition
Physiological Psychology
Neuropharmacology: The Biochemistry of Behavior
Principles of Neuropsychological Assessment
Independent Study Project in a recognized area of
experimental/biological psychology (Note that this counts for the
Natural Science group only for students in the
Experimental/Biological track.)

Any other courses above 500 can count as free electives. The therapy practicum courses, PSYC-652 or PSYC-654 are not open to students in the Masters Program.

Table of Requirements for All Tracks of the MA Program

	General track		Personality / Social track	Experimental / Biological track
minimum requirements	nonthesis	thesis		
Social Science courses (PSYC-500 or higher)	2	2	4	2
Natural Science courses (PSYC-500 or higher)	2	2	2	4
Statistics course (STAT-614 or higher or PSYC 640)	1	1	1	1
PSYC-650 (Psychological Research)	required	required	required	required
other research course(s) required	PSYC-698 Directed Research (3 credits)	PSYC-685 Seminar in Psychological Research (3 credits)	PSYC-685 Seminar in Psychological Research (3 credits)	PSYC-685 Seminar in Psychological Research (3 credits)
		PSYC-797 Master's Thesis Research (3 credits)	PSYC-797 Master's Thesis Research (3 credits)	PSYC-797 Master's Thesis Research (3 credits)
electives (500-level or higher courses)	4 (12 credits, up to 2 courses can be outside PSYC)	3 (9 credits, up to 2 courses can be outside PSYC)	1 (3 credits, can be outside PSYC)	1 (3 credits, can be outside PSYC)
research thesis and successful oral defense	not required	required	required	required
In-depth paper	required	not required	not required	not required
total courses required	11	11	11	11
total credits required	33	33	33	33

At the start of the degree program, the faculty advisor and student should meet to develop an individual Program of Study for fulfilling all requirements for the degree. Completion of this Program of Study plan is required by our University.

The program of study should be designed to meet annual goals for completion of degree requirements that have been set by the GCC and our University.

Testing Out of Required Courses

Students may test out of required courses by passing an exam prepared by the professor who teaches the course. Except for entering first year students, students should notify the professor of their intent one month prior to the start of the course. Students may test out of a maximum of three courses. If a graduate student fails such an exam, they may not retake it.

Transferring Courses Taken Elsewhere Before Matriculation

Students may transfer up to 6 credits into the program for courses taken prior to first enrollment at AU and at accredited institutions outside of the Consortium of Universities of the Washington metropolitan area, if the following conditions are met:

- a. Before the end of the first semester of participation in their AU degree program, students must petition, in writing, the GCC for consideration of transfer credits. This petition should attach relevant syllabi and an official copy of all transcript showing courses requested for transfer.
- b. Students' petitions must be approved and countersigned by their advisors and by their degree program director prior to submission to the GCC. Petitions not approved by advisors will be returned to students. All transfer of courses also must be approved by the GCC.
- c. Courses taken at other universities must have a grade of at least B (3.0) in order to be transferred into the graduate program. B- is not acceptable.
- d. Courses transferred from other schools must not have been taken more than 5 years prior to admission to AU.
- e. The courses proposed for transfer were not used as credits toward a completed undergraduate or graduate degree in a similar field, including any area of psychology or public health.
- f. Independent Study, Directed Research or Internship courses cannot be transferred.
- g. Course transfers approved by the advisor, program director, and GCC will be forwarded by the GCC to the Director of Graduate Academic Programs in the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences together with the graduate action form and the student's official transcript.

Transferring Courses Taken Elsewhere After Matriculation at AU

a. <u>Residency requirement</u>: According to University regulations, master's degrees require a minimum of 18 semester credit hours of in residence graduate course work, not counting

- PSYC 797. For elective courses, students must have the permission of the advisor and of the instructor (if any) of the same course at American prior to enrolling in the course.
- b. For required (not elective) courses, the student must have approval from the GCC prior to enrolling in the course.

Information on Masters Theses

Thesis Committee

A student's masters thesis committee must consist of at least three members (at least 2 must be full-time faculty in our Department of Psychology). Students must have at least one core committee member who has demonstrable expertise in the area being investigated. Students are reminded that they may select the faculty members for their committees from the *entire* faculty, not just faculty from their area of specialization.

One of the three members will preferably be from outside the Department and will be chosen by the student and the chair of the thesis committee. "Outside" members of thesis committees must be approved by the chair of the committee and must have clear, proven expertise in the area of the thesis. In order to preclude any misunderstandings, it is essential that the details concerning how the committee will operate and the respective role of each member of the committee be discussed and agreed upon at the time the committee is formed. It is important that students and faculty understand that even signed thesis proposals are not contracts that in any way obligate acceptance of the product of the proposed research by the committee

Members of thesis committees cannot include former American University graduate students who have graduated less than 5 years before the date of the oral examination.

Thesis committee membership must be approved by the Director of the program (University regulation).

Oral Defense

Scheduling and Attendance.

Master's orals must be public. It is the student's responsibility to reserve a room that will accommodate at least 20 people. Students are also responsible for asking a department administrative assistant to notify all faculty and graduate students in our department of the date, time, and room of the defense at least two weeks (14 days) in advance of the defense. Graduate students are required to either upload a copy of their thesis to the departmental thesis and dissertation website at least one week before the defense, or to place a printed copy in the main office of the Department. Faculty and a departmental administrative assistant can upload the thesis to the website, which currently is on the university's Blackboard platform: LIBWEB-999-067: Theses and Dissertations.

For the masters orals, at least two of the three committee members must be physically present and the third committee member must be either physically present or participate via phone or computer connection.

Oral Defense Procedures

- a. The chairperson will determine the examination procedure and the sequence of questioning.
- b. It is expected that final oral examinations will require approximately two hours.
- c. Questions from visitors will be taken at the discretion of the chairperson, but only after an initial round of questions by the committee members has been taken. Questions may be submitted in advance of the examination by interested faculty and students not planning on attending. Such questions should be submitted to the chairperson, at whose discretion they may be raised during the examination.
- d. Following the oral defense, the candidate and all visitors will be excused from the room. However, the committee members may request consultation from one or more visitors who have attended the examination. All noncommittee members must leave the examination room before a final decision is made concerning the candidate's performance.

Written Format and Revision Timeline

The format for the thesis must follow University guidelines. A manual titled "Requirements for Preparation of Theses and Dissertations" is available from the Dean's office. Issues not discussed there should follow the APA format, as per the Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition (2009).

After the oral defense of the thesis, students are expected to make requested revisions and to submit the revised manuscript to the thesis committee chair within two months. The final manuscript should be submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies within six months from the date of the oral defense.

Dismissal Due to Poor Grades

Graduate students are dismissed from the University if their cumulative grade-point average (GPA) remains below 3.00 for two consecutive semesters. According to university regulations, the Registrar places graduate students on probation if their cumulative GPA falls below 3.00, and permanently dismisses the student if the cumulative GPA does not rise to 3.00 or better the following semester.

Receiving a second C (or lower) grade can result in probation or dismissal (Departmental regulation), even if the cumulative GPA is 3.00 or higher.

Annual Evaluation of Graduate Student Progress

Individual faculty advisors are responsible for monitoring graduate student progress. Also, the director the program appoints an advisory committee of faculty who review the progress of all students in the program at least once a year. The results of this review are forwarded to faculty members of the GCC for possible action. (Student members of the GCC are excluded from review of fellow students' progress, as this can involve disclosure of course performance course grades, as well as other personal matters).

All graduate students are required to complete progress report forms to facilitate this review of progress. The evaluation form, and a deadline for its completion, are sent to students each Spring by the program director.

If evaluation of a student's progress is favorable, a recommendation for a favorable evaluation of progress is made to the faculty members of the GCC. The GCC communicates its evaluation of each student's progress to the student and the faculty advisor of the student.

If the advisory committee's evaluation of a student's progress is unfavorable, the committee will report the nature of the problems to the GCC faculty, along with recommendations for action by the GCC faculty (e.g., warning, academic probation, or dismissal from the degree program and University). The GCC faculty will decide what action to take and will communicate this action to the student, student's file, faculty advisor, program advisory committee, and department chair.

Time Allowed to Complete Degree Requirements

Full-time MA students should be able to complete their studies after the Spring semester of their second year. Part-time MA students may take longer, but all requirements must be completed by the end of the third year. In some cases, up to three 1-year extensions may be granted if the GCC deems that the extenuating circumstances are sufficiently compelling. Requests for each 1-year extension of the statute of limitations will be denied unless there is an advisor's letter of support.

Time Limits on Courses

According to the graduate academic regulations courses completed more than six years before finishing a master's degree or certificate may not fulfill degree requirements.

Due Process and Grievance

A student may come into disagreement with a faculty member or with the policies and actions of an academic unit as they affect the student's progress toward completion of their degree. In cases of complaint or disagreement over academic matters not resolved by consultation among the parties, the University provides the student the right to initiate a grievance procedure, as described in the Student Academic Grievance Policy located on the Office of Undergraduate Studies website under Academic Policies (https://www.american.edu/policies/upload/Academic-Grade-Grievances-Policy.pdf).

Students should have protection through orderly procedures against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled. Evaluation of students and the awarding of credit must be based on academic performance professionally judged and not on matters irrelevant to that performance, such as personality, physical disability, age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, degree of political activism, or personal beliefs.

Judgment regarding standards of evaluation for a student's academic performance is a faculty responsibility and is not grievable. Normally, only questions relating to whether a faculty

member complied with the stated requirements of the course and applied standards of evaluation fairly and equitably are potentially grievable.

Note that there is also a University grievance policy on disability-related accommodations (https://www.american.edu/policies/upload/Reasonable-Accommodations-Grievance-Procedures-for-Students.pdf).

Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity Code for American University defines honorable conduct, outlines attendant rights and responsibilities, and describes procedures for handling allegations of academic misconduct. All graduate students should be sure to read the code (https://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm) and to conduct their studies with intellectual honesty.

Nondiscrimination Policy

American University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy or parenting, age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual's genetic information or any other bases. The University expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation and stalking. For more detailed information regarding University policy on nondiscrimination, please see this webpage:

https://www.american.edu/policies/upload/Discrimination-and-Sexual-Harassment-Policy.pdf

Administrative Support

The department senior administrative assistant (Lefteris Hazapis) is available to assist you with navigating paperwork, registrations, filing, and other administrative tasks. Britten Rollo, senior administrative assistant, is available for budgetary support for research labs, research awards, and travel awards.

Graduate Student Participation in Committees in the Psychology Department

The Psychology Graduate Student Council elects officers, usually in the spring. The council is allotted a certain amount of money each year, to be distributed in any way the students decide. Officers include:

- a. President
- b. Vice-President
- c. Secretary/Treasurer
- d. Representative to the Graduate Student Council of the University. This council meets regularly, and the representative will have a role in University policies as a source of student input.

As detailed in the Department Constitution provided elsewhere in this handbook, there are several departmental committees upon which graduate students can serve. Elections for these representatives are held approximately two weeks into the fall of each year, and the elections are run by the previous year's President of the Psychology Graduate Student Council.

Faculty of the Psychology Department and Research Interests

Contact information for full-time faculty and additional information are available in the <u>website</u> of the Department of Psychology.

- ANTHONY H. AHRENS, Professor, Ph.D. from Stanford University. Depression, gratitude, mindfulness, fear of emotion.
- LAURIE BAYET, Assistant Professor, Ph.D., University of Grenoble. Early visual, cognitive, and social-emotional development, with particular focus on facial emotion perception in infancy and early childhood. Her laboratory uses electro-encephalography, behavioral methods, and statistical or computational tools such as multivariate analysis to investigate the early development of representations involved in the processing of facial emotions and other high-level visual stimuli, and their relation to broader mechanisms of perceptual, social-emotional, or cognitive development
- NICOLE E. CAPORINO, Assistant Professor, Ph.D. from University of South Florida. Anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, cognitive-behavioral therapy with children and adolescents.
- MICHELE CARTER, Professor, Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University. Assessment and treatment of adult anxiety disorders; psychotherapy outcome; interpersonal relationships; African-American issues.
- TERRY DAVIDSON, Professor, Ph.D. from Purdue University. Neural basis of learning and memory; biological and associative controls of energy and body weight regulation.
- LAURA DUVAL, Professorial Lecturer, Ph.D. in Social Psychology from Tulane University. Her research interests include stereotyping and prejudice, media violence and other applications of social cognitive constructs.
- NOEMI ENCHAUTEGUI-DE-JESUS, Assistant Professor, Ph.D. from New York University. Job stressors, work-family balance, and coping resources in low-income families and communities; African-American and Latino issues; women and child/youth well-being.
- BRYAN D. FANTIE, Associate Professor, Ph.D. from Dalhousie University. Human neuropsychology, neural mechanisms and correlates of behavior and cognition (emotion, language, memory, attention, etc), brain dysfunction, closed head injury, autism, schizophrenia, dementia, behavioral neurology, diagnosis.
- MARIA GOMEZ-SERRANO, Senior Professorial Lecturer, Ph.D. from American University. Neuroscience, basic physiology, epigenetic factors in drug abuse, maternal behavior in drug use and abuse.

- JAMES J. GRAY, Professor, Ph.D. from Fordham University. ABPP in Clinical Psychology. Behavior therapy; psychotherapy; training of behavior therapists; abnormal psychology; psychology of religion.
- KATHLEEN C. GUNTHERT, Associate Professor, Ph.D. from University of Delaware. Stress and emotion regulation, depression, anxiety, neuroticism, experience sampling methodology.
- DAVID A. F. HAAGA, Professor, Ph.D. from University of Southern California. Cognitive assessment, cognitive therapy, rational emotive behavior therapy, cigarette smoking, depression.
- ERICA HART, Professorial Lecturer, Ph.D. from American University. Implicit bias, cross-cultural psychology, health disparities, body image.
- NATHANIEL HERR, Associate Professor, Ph.D. from University of California, Los Angeles. Interpersonal functioning, emotion regulation, and identity disturbance among individuals with borderline personality disorder and related affective problems.
- LAURA M. JULIANO, Professor, Ph.D. from State University of New York at Binghamton. Tobacco, caffeine, drug expectancies, placebo effects.
- DAVID KEARNS, Associate Professor, Ph.D. from American University. Learning, conditioned inhibition, stimulus control, drug self-administration.
- BARRY W. McCARTHY, Professor (Full Time, reduced load). Ph.D. from Southern Illinois University. ABPP in Clinical Psychology. Behavior therapy and behavioral groups; training and utilization of paraprofessionals; sex therapy and human sexual behavior; crisis intervention.
- ZEHRA PEYNIRCIOGLU, Professor, Ph.D. from Rice University. Cognitive Psychology, human memory, inhibition in memory, nonverbal memory.
- ANTHONY L. RILEY, Professor, Ph.D. from University of Washington.
 Psychopharmacology; drug use and abuse; animal models of addiction; conditioned food aversions.
- ARTHUR SHAPIRO, Professor, Ph.D. from Columbia University. Visual perception and cognitive neuroscience, color, motion, visual camouflage, and low-light-level vision.
- ALAN M. SILBERBERG, Professor. Ph.D. from University of Pennsylvania. Experimental analysis of behavior; autoshaping; choice behavior; microstructural analysis of rate.
- CATHERINE STOODLEY, Associate Professor, Ph.D. from University of Oxford. The neuroscience of cognitive development, particularly the role of the cerebellum in learning and skill acquisition.
- JONATHAN TUBMAN, Professor, Ph.D. from Pennsylvania State University. Health risk behaviors among adolescents in treatment for substance abuse problems; brief motivational interventions for reducing sexual risk behavior and related risk behaviors.

BRIAN T. YATES, Professor. Ph.D. from Stanford University. Program evaluation; cost effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis; development and training of self-management; drug abuse treatment; health psychology and behavioral medicine.

Faculty Emeritus/Emerita

- ELLIOT M. McGINNIES, Professor Emeritus, Ph.D. from Harvard University. Functional analysis of social behavior; persuasion and attitude change, cross-cultural research.
- SCOTT PARKER, Professor Emeritus. Ph.D. from Columbia University. Psychophysics, scaling, and measurement; perceptual and judgmental processes; sensation and perception; mathematical and statistical models.
- BURTON M. SLOTNICK, Professor Emeritus, Ph.D. from University of Illinois, Urbana. Neuroethology; neuroendocrinology; olfaction.
- CAROL S. WEISSBROD, Associate Professor Emerita, Ph.D. from Northwestern University. Clinical child psychology; gender issues in parenting; sports psychology; gender and competitiveness.

Faculty, Staff, and Student Roles (Please note that "TBD" means changes each fall. They will be replaced with names in the on-line version when the elections/appointments are complete later in the fall)

Department Chair	Anthony Ahrens	ahrens@american.edu
Senior Administrative Assistants	Britten Rollo	brollo@american.edu
	Eleftherios Hazapis	ehazapis@american.edu
Graduate Degree Program Directors	Clinical Ph.D.: Kate Gunthert	gunthert@american.edu
	Masters Program: Zehra Peynircioglu	peynir@american.edu
Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC) Chair	TBD	TBD
Director of Animal Research Facility	Tony Riley	alriley@american.edu
Human Participants Committee Chair	TBD	TBD

	Graduate Students	
President	TBD	
Vice President	TBD	TBD
Social Chair	TBD	TBD
Treasurer	TBD	TBD
Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC) representatives	TBD	TBD
Merit Committee representative	TBD	TBD
Human Participants Committee representative	TBD	TBD
Department Council representatives	TBD	TBD
Department Council representative	TBD	TBD