

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
GRADUATE STUDENT / ADVISOR HANDBOOK
MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

College of Education
University of Arizona

Revised April, 2009

MASTER'S PLAN OF STUDY

The master's program (M.A.) in educational psychology provides a foundational understanding of the concepts, methods, and theories related to the discipline of educational psychology. Students hold undergraduate degrees from diverse academic fields. Many are experienced educators who have chosen graduate work in educational psychology to increase their knowledge and skills. The program exposes these students to knowledge emerging from educational psychological research and theory, preparing them for a wide range of professional positions in education, government, and industry.

MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS

The MA degree focuses on research. The total number of graduate hours of coursework is 36. All requirements must be completed within 6 years of beginning the master's degree program.

CURRICULUM

The following courses are considered core to the Master's degree program in Educational psychology:

- 502 Motivation and Development in the Classroom (required)
- 505 Seminal Readings in Education and Educational Psychology (required at advisor's discretion)
- 510 Learning Theory in Education (required)
- 511 Theories of Instruction/Instructional Theory (required at advisor's discretion)
- 531 Counseling Over the Lifespan (required at advisor's discretion)
- 541 Statistical Methods in Education (required)
- 558 Educational Tests and Measurements (required)
- 560 Introduction to Educational Research (required)

Independent Study

Independent study courses (599, 699, and 900) are an important way to provide students useful learning activities in a flexible way. However, clear documentation of the learning process is important and the independent course must be approved by the advisor and the department head before the independent study begins. Independent study applications are available in the Educational Psychology office (room 602). The student petition should provide the learning goals of the experience and how student progress will be evaluated.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Admissions

Requirements for admission to the program are based upon the successful completion of a baccalaureate degree in education, psychology, or a related field. The Graduate College requires a minimum grade point average of 3.0.

Advisement

Students will be assigned an advisor upon admission to the department. In addition, students will request two other members of the graduate faculty to serve on the students' Master's Committee. See the section, "M.A. Degree" for further information on constituting this committee.

Graduate Events and Deadlines

It is the responsibility of the student and his/her advisor to ensure that necessary forms are submitted to meet Graduate College deadlines.

Plan of Study

The Plan of Study identifies (1) courses already completed at The University of Arizona which the student intends to apply toward the graduate degree; (2) additional course work to be completed to fulfill degree requirements; and (3) courses the student intends to transfer from other institutions. The Plan of Study must have the approval of the student's major professor and department head (or chair of the Graduate Committee) before it is submitted to the Graduate College. Log on to My GradColl (<https://grad.arizona.edu/gc/>) to obtain a copy of this form. There is a [Plan of Study fee](#).

MASTER OF ARTS (MA) DEGREE

Consistent with Graduate College regulations, the MA program must include a minimum of 36 semester hours of graduate credit.

Obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval to Conduct Research Involving Human Subjects: Students pursuing the M.A. Plan A or Plan B (regardless of whether they are conducting an empirical study) must complete the Human Subjects Protection Program qualifying exam in the first month of their program (see: <http://www.irb.arizona.edu/training>).

Thesis or Outcome Assessment

There are two separate program plans within the MA, the thesis (plan A) and the outcome assessment (plan B). Both plans are designed to emphasize research. Regardless of the student's degree track (determined by the type of written document submitted to the respective committee), the committee should consist of the student's primary EDP advisor (tenured or tenure eligible) a second member of the EDP department (tenured or tenure eligible), and a third member who may be outside the EDP department (tenured, tenure eligible, or adjunct faculty approved by the Graduate College). With department approval, one substitute member may serve if the original member is not available. In order to successfully complete the MA degree program, students must receive a 2/3 passing vote from their committee for both the written document and the oral exam. If the student does not initially pass the written and/or oral parts of the exam, the student may either prepare a new document ONCE or retake the oral exam ONCE within one-semester of the initial presentation.

When the student's department determines that the student has completed all degree requirements, a [Completion of Master's Degree Requirements form](#), signed by the three faculty members of the student's committee and the department head will be submitted to the Graduate College. Approval of this form by the Dean of the Graduate College will certify completion of degree requirements. For dates by which requirements must be met to graduate in a particular semester, refer to the Deadline Sheets, available in departments, in the Graduate Degree Certification Office, and online at the [Graduate College website](#). Modifications in the Plan of Study may be made on the Completion of Degree Requirement form or on the Changes in Student's Records form. Modifications may consist of changes in coursework, changes in addresses, or changes in names.

Plan A (THESIS)

For Plan A, a thesis is defined as an original research study conducted by the student and requires 6 hours of 910. Students must submit a *Request to schedule master's thesis defense form* to the department secretary AT LEAST TWO WEEKS prior to the scheduled defense date. Submission of the thesis to the Graduate Degree Certification Office, for publication by University Microfilms, Inc. and inclusion in The University of Arizona Library archives, is optional. There is a [fee](#) for microfilming and for copyrighting should a student choose those options. For more information consult the Manual for Theses and Dissertations available online and from the Graduate Degree Certification Office. Here are links for the [Manual for Electronic Submission of Theses and Dissertations](#) and the [Manual for Paper Submission of Theses and Dissertations](#)

Plan B (PROJECT)

For Plan B, students may either write a review of literature or conduct a secondary data analysis. A review of literature is defined as an in depth examination of a current problem, issue, or critical theme of the Educational Psychology literature. Secondary data analysis is defined as a research study that uses existing data rather than original data. Both the review of literature and secondary data analysis require 3-6 hours of 909 (at least 3 credit hours for writing the review and defending). The topic of the master's project must be approved by the committee prior to initiation. The format of the project should be written in a form appropriate for submission to a professional journal following the publication guidelines of the American Psychological Association.

When the student and advisor have agreed upon an outcome assessment OR thesis topic, the student should share a 1-2 page document (approved by the advisor) with committee members for their review and approval.

Once committee approval is obtained the proposed project should be filed with the department's administrative assistant. In some cases advisors may want to request a formal meeting of the committee to approve a topic before the student begins work on a project.