

**Department of Psychology Mentoring Framework**  
**Approved by the Psychology Faculty on March 17, 2020**  
**Revised and Approved by Faculty on January 6, 2021**

The Department of Psychology at the University of Chicago is committed to providing every Ph.D. student with the mentoring they need to achieve excellence in research, teaching, and professional skills. Below we describe the roles of faculty, staff, and students themselves in contributing to effective mentoring for the graduate program. Although there will inevitably be variations in how individual graduate students are mentored, these guidelines will create a framework for mentoring in the Department, and help all students progress smoothly through the Ph.D. program.

A focus on academic and research excellence is of central importance to students' success in graduate school, and also is a central focus of faculty advising. However, it is also important that faculty provide their students with advice about professional development and career goals. Our mentoring framework highlights the importance of each of these intertwined aspects of advising. Additionally, our newly developed Mentored Teaching Experiences are intended to ensure that the faculty are supporting the development of students, themselves, as teachers and mentors, both for graduate students in their lab and graduate students who serve as educational roles in their courses. We will also make students aware of resources other than the faculty to address these aspects of their development (e.g., UChicago Grad for career advising and preparation; Chicago Center for Teaching).

This mentoring plan will be readily available to all members of the Department of Psychology. It will be included on the Department website and will be included in materials given to graduate students at Orientation. The mentoring plan will be reviewed annually, during a spring faculty meeting. However, if desired, changes can be suggested and approved at any time during the academic year. The Graduate Student Affairs and Curriculum Committee (GSAC) will be in charge of gathering feedback from faculty and students and for recommending changes to the Department's Mentoring Plan, which will require approval by a majority of the faculty.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Faculty and Staff**

Faculty Advisor. Faculty advisors support the development of graduate students in multiple ways, including mentoring of graduate student research, teaching, and professional development, including career advising. In addition to the direct explicit advising that faculty provide to students, they serve as important role models for graduate students. Graduate students benefit from observing the ways that faculty develop and carry out research, and the ways they mentor and teach their graduate students, as well as how they support research through grants, and develop and teach undergraduates. Faculty also serve as models of good citizenship through their participation in Departmental and broader University activities, including regularly attending department colloquia, workshops, and brown bags and serving on departmental and university committees as well as through their service to field. Advisors also play an important role in helping students deal with any obstacles or frustrations they may encounter during graduate school. Through all aspects of their mentoring, advisors help students develop the skills they need to succeed in academia, industry, and other professions.

A critical aspect of mentoring is providing students with detailed and constructive feedback about all aspects of their performance and progress in the program on a regular basis. Students need this information in order to address weaknesses and as recognition of their strengths. Timely feedback not only helps students succeed in graduate school but also helps them succeed in achieving career goals. In order to ensure that students are benefitting from the mentoring they receive, advisors should periodically discuss with students whether their mentoring needs are met and how to improve this mentoring. These discussions can help advisors and students make adjustments that are beneficial.

Advisors should schedule regular, individual meetings with each of their advisees, and be open to scheduling more frequent meetings if a student requests. Although these meetings typically focus on designing research and discussing research progress, including analyzing findings and writing up findings for publication, these meetings also provide important opportunities to discuss professional development issues such as: presenting findings at conferences, writing papers and authorship of papers; career goals. Additionally, these meetings can be used to address any concerns or challenges students experience. Importantly, career goals, which often change during the course of graduate school, should be discussed at least annually. Regardless of whether they plan to pursue academic or non-academic careers, students are expected to be able to openly discuss their future careers with their advisors.

Advisors also often hold small group meetings with students to discuss collaborative research projects. Advisors also typically hold regular lab meetings with all members of the lab to discuss research projects. These meetings serve as a forum to receive input from others in the lab about research projects and also to practice conference talks and other presentations. If a graduate student would like to attend the lab meetings of a faculty member other than their advisor, it is recommended that they discuss this with their advisor and the other faculty member. Different lab groups have different kinds of lab meetings but such cross-talk is encouraged.

Each advisor should make sure that they clearly communicate expectations about participation in their lab to all students working in their lab. For example, students should be told when they are expected to be in the lab, and what kind of support they can expect from their advisor in terms of research, professional development, and resources they need for travel, equipment, etc. and how student progress on projects will be monitored and feedback provided.

Frequency of Meetings. It is not uncommon for students to meet advisors on an individual basis weekly or bi-weekly, in addition to research group or lab meetings, but there is variability and flexibility in frequency of meetings. Advisors and their students will inevitably work together in different ways, depending on a variety of factors, including an advisor's style and students' needs and preferences. Some students, for example, may need to meet with advisors more frequently than others in working on research. A variety of factors may contribute to these varying needs, including students' previous experiences in carrying out laboratory research. Additionally, the frequency of faculty-student meetings is likely to vary for all students depending on the phase of their research and stage of their graduate career. It is also possible that factors such as some individual differences (under-represented minority group, first generation student) may contribute to the benefits of more one-on-one meetings with advisors, although this should be assessed based on student needs. Students have diverse experiences and life circumstances both prior to and during graduate school, which can influence their individual needs and preferences for advice and mentoring. Importantly, when students have greater needs for an advisor's time, every effort should be made to meet those needs and prioritize student training and guidance.

Our Department strives to manage the number of students in different labs so that no lab has too few or too many students. To do this, when new graduate students are recruited, priority is given to faculty with the fewest graduate students and also to junior faculty members, particularly those who are new to the University and need to build their labs. That said, there are variations among labs in terms of the number of graduate students that different faculty members view as ideal, which can result in some differences among labs. Because of this variability, when advisors are recruiting PhD students into their lab, it is imperative that advisors and current lab members discuss the lab culture and research expectations with the potential student. In this way, the potential students can know what kind of time commitments or other commitments will be expected of them in that particular lab.

Faculty Advisory Committee. In addition to having an academic advisor, each student will have an advisory committee throughout graduate school. This committee will include their faculty advisor and two other faculty members. At least two of the members of the committee must be psychology faculty. When forming these committees students should discuss membership with their faculty advisor. The members of this faculty advisory committee may change as students' research interests develop. In some years, this committee may be the same as the Trial Research Committee, whereas in other years this

committee may be the same as the Dissertation Committee (see Milestones section, below). The primary role of the advisory committees that students have throughout their graduate school careers is to provide students with advice about research. Advisory committee members will also help students with professional development, career planning, and solving problems they may face during their graduate school career.

Faculty Advisory Committees are required to meet with each student at least once a year for annual evaluation and feedback. This meeting may coincide with the preparation of the student's Student Activities Report in Spring, but it may occur at other times depending on the student's situation and progress in the program. Regardless of the timing, the outcome of this meeting must be documented in the Student Activities Report. At this meeting, in addition to discussing the details of students' research, students and their committee should discuss students' progress on research, coursework, mentored teaching experiences, professional development, and issues and obstacles that the student has encountered. Finally, at the annual meeting, the graduate student should be asked about what is going well in terms of their advising, and what can be improved. Importantly, this meeting provides a formal opportunity for students to provide feedback on the quality of the mentoring they are receiving, including what they feel could be improved. If a student has issues with the advising they are receiving that they do not feel comfortable discussing at this meeting, there are other resources they can make use of (See section entitled Resources for Students Experiencing Difficulties). Advisory committee members are also open to meeting with students individually, upon request from the student.

It is important to note that all faculty members are open to discussing issues about research, academic development, professional development, or career goals, even if not officially designated as an advisor to a student or a member of an advisory committee.

Student Affairs Administrator. When graduate students need information about courses, requirements toward their degrees, or have other needs related to their academic progress, the Student Affairs Administrator is often the first stop for specific information and a critical source of help. When a graduate student faces a problem, the Student Affairs Administrator can also help address the problem or assist in finding someone who can do so. The Student Affairs Administrator works closely with faculty, including the DGS and the Department Chair, as well as the Dean of Student's office, and can guide students to the right person if follow-up is needed. The Student Affairs Administrator also handles the processing of student petitions and other formal requirements, and keeps track of progress toward requirements.

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The DGS is available as someone whom all graduate students in the Department can talk to about any aspect of their progress or development in the program. Furthermore, the DGS can serve as a point person in addressing concerns of graduate students about their progress, their research, their lab, or their career. The DGS is often a faculty member that students turn to if they seek advice from a faculty member beyond their primary advisor or other members of their faculty advisory committee.

In order to receive feedback from graduate students in the Department about any concerns they have with any aspect of the graduate program, the DGS will schedule a meeting with the PGSO once per year (e.g., a town-hall style meeting, along with the Department Chair) and will be available to meet more frequently with this group upon request. Individual students may request a meeting with the DGS in order to get advice, to discuss a concern about the program, or to discuss a grievance.

The DGS also serves as the head of the Graduate Student Affairs and Curriculum Committee (GSAC). Other members of the committee are typically the area heads for each program in the Department. The GSAC is responsible for addressing all student petitions, e.g., petitions to count a specific course toward a requirement, or to count courses taken at other institutions to meet a requirement. Additional area-specific curricular requirements are monitored by area heads. The GSAC is also

responsible for reviewing student progress during each year of their programs and for monitoring the feedback that students receive about their progress. Each year the GSAC will send each student a letter confirming their status in the program, based on an annual review. This review will be informed by input from each student's advisor and advisory committee, as detailed in the Student Activities Report due each Spring. Importantly, the feedback in a completed Student Activities Report form will be sufficiently detailed to highlight areas of strength and areas in need of improvement so that the student is informed about how to focus their efforts in the coming year.

Area Heads. The chair of each program area (Cognitive, Computational Cognitive Neuroscience, Developmental, Integrative Neuroscience, Social) can provide guidance, information, and assistance for students in their respective program areas. They are available to address a wide range of questions, give advice, and help students who are experiencing difficulties.

Department Chair. The Department Chair can be helpful in a number of ways and is available for answering questions, providing advice, and for helping graduate students who have concerns and grievances. Graduate students should also feel free to provide the Chair with positive feedback about their mentors, committee members and course teachers, as excellent mentoring is highly valued by the Department. The Department Chair is available to meet with the PGSO and will hold at least one meeting per year with the PGSO (e.g., a town-hall style meeting, along with the DGS).

The Department Chair plays an instrumental role in ultimately ensuring that all faculty members are attending to their mentoring responsibilities (including MTEs). When mentoring issues or obstacles arise between a student and their advisor that cannot be addressed by interactions with their Faculty Advisory Committee or the DGS, students and faculty should report these issues to the Chair to take additional action. These issues can be raised directly to the Chair at any time, but they also should be explicitly addressed as part of each student's annual review (including mentoring successes, mentoring issues students and faculty have faced, and if so, how each has addressed these issues). The aim of this reporting is to ensure that all faculty members are attending to these important responsibilities, setting high goals, and if needed, engaging in actively improving their mentoring and teaching.

### **Expectations for Students and Faculty Mentors**

Success in the Department of Psychology Ph.D. program depends on graduate students taking an active role in their learning and development. This involves a set of responsibilities for graduate students, and associated responsibilities from faculty, as listed below:

- Graduate students are responsible for successfully completing required coursework and for developing a program of research that will eventually lead to the successful completion of a dissertation. With the help of the faculty, they are responsible for developing research ideas and for reading widely in order to develop their ideas. They are also responsible for carrying out research studies, learning to analyze their data, and writing up their findings in a timely manner.
- Faculty advisors are responsible for monitoring their student's progress and communicating expectations with them regularly. Graduate students, in turn, are responsible for regularly communicating with their academic advisor and seeking help when they need it from their advisory committee and advisor.
- Faculty are expected to make every effort to schedule regular meetings with their students in a timely manner. If graduate students need to meet with faculty mentors/committees more often than regularly scheduled meetings, they should communicate this with their advisor/advising committee.
- Graduate students are expected to establish relationships with faculty members other than their advisor and their faculty advisory committees. These kinds of relationships often

fuel productive research collaborations and also provide additional support in the program. For example, students interact with faculty and other students during courses, MTEs, workshops, lab meetings, and meetings associated with professional societies. Collectively, these and other kinds of structured interactions between students and faculty are encouraged because the network of people that students interact with during graduate school can help broaden and deepen their thinking about their research program and help them develop collaboration skills.

- Faculty are expected to provide mentored teaching experiences for graduate students, and students are expected to develop their teaching and mentoring skills through the MTE requirement (see Department MTE requirements for details). Graduate students also have the opportunity to co-mentor undergraduate and MAPPs/MACSS students who are working on research projects, an activity that can provide valuable experiences. These kinds of opportunities should be discussed with the student's primary faculty advisor, who ultimately is responsible for student mentoring in the lab. Finally, graduate students are encouraged to take advantage of teaching and mentoring resources available through the Chicago Center for Teaching at the University.
- In the spring quarter of each academic year, the student and their faculty advisor should work on the Student Activities Report. The student will initiate this report with a self-evaluation, and the advisor will provide constructive feedback on the student's progress. The advisor will ask the student about what is going well for them in the program, and what could be improved. They will also specifically ask the students about whether their mentoring needs are being met and what can be improved. The other two members of the student's faculty advisory committee also need to provide their feedback and sign the Student Activities Report. This feedback will be informed by an annual meeting between the student and the Faculty Advisory Committee. This annual meeting may or may not coincide with completion of the Student Activities Report, depending on the timing of the student's progress (see Faculty Advisory Committees section, above).
- In addition to completing a self-evaluation, an important and expected aspect of the Student Activities report is for students to provide an evaluation of the mentoring they are receiving, including the mentoring they receive from their advisor and their faculty advising committee. This evaluation will be submitted to the GSAC Committee via the Student Affairs Administrator, as part of the annual Student Activities Report. Students also will evaluate their mentored teaching experiences (see Appendix A for this procedure for MTEs).
- Faculty and graduate students need to be active citizens of the Department. It is our culture for both students and faculty to regularly attend colloquia, workshops and brown bags, and graduate students should make every effort to attend these events. Being an active citizen of the Department also includes activities such as participating in PGSO, and taking on various leadership roles that align with their particular interests and meet Departmental needs.

### **Resources for students experiencing difficulties**

- When a student encounters difficulties in graduate school, including difficulties with an advising/mentoring relationship, they are encouraged to try to address this problem with their advisor. If this does not work or is not possible, there are many people in the

Department who can provide advice and help them, including members of their mentoring committee, the Director of Graduate Studies, their program area Chair, and the Chair of the Department. Additionally, all faculty in the Department are available as resources to all students in the Department.

- If the student requests confidentiality, that will be honored. It is important to note, though, that if a student is repeatedly encountering problems with their advisor and wants to maintain confidentiality when seeking advice, this can limit the ability of other faculty to help solve the problem (i.e., if other faculty cannot discuss the specific issues with the advisor, the advisor may not be aware of the issues, and faculty cannot take corrective action). In these cases, students should consider requesting a meeting with their primary advisor and other faculty that might help mediate the discussions and establish a common ground (e.g., Faculty Advisory Committee, the DGS, the Department Chair, or others).
- In certain situations, a student may prefer to seek help outside the Department, and in this case, the Dean of Students office is a key resource.
- Importantly, when students and their advisors do not mesh well, and differences cannot be resolved, students have the option to leave the lab and find another advisor. Past history has shown that both students and faculty in the Department can be flexible in terms of finding new labs and developing their graduate career and future profession. However, students considering this should realize that switching advisors may require that the student be flexible in their research focus, in order to take advantage of the specific resources in the new lab, as well as ensure a good fit with the research goals and expertise of the new faculty advisor.

## Major milestones for Ph.D. students

The Department has established a set of milestones for all graduate students in the Ph.D. program, that are designed to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and portfolio of work they need to succeed in their careers - both academic and non-academic. Our Ph.D. program is designed to be a five-year program, and the milestones enable students to complete the program in this time frame. Importantly, students can petition for a 6th year of funding, but this petition needs to demonstrate that the student can complete the dissertation in the 6th year and needs to be approved by the student's dissertation committee.

### Curricular Requirements:

The Department has established a set of curricular requirements that include core requirements for all students as well as requirements that vary depending on the particular program the student is in (Cognitive, Computational Cognitive Neuroscience, Developmental, Integrative Neuroscience, Social). These requirements are detailed on the Department's webpage and in the requirements that the Student Affairs Administrator shares with each incoming cohort of students. The most current requirements are maintained by the Student Affairs Administrator. There is some flexibility in these requirements in order to meet students' particular academic goals, and students can petition the GSAC with requests for course substitutions. Most students complete their course requirements during the 2nd or 3rd year of graduate school.

As detailed below, each year, the student completes a Student Activities Report form, which includes a self-evaluation and a mechanism through which faculty advisors are expected to provide students with constructive feedback on their progress. Students and their faculty advisor will review and discuss these evaluations, which will inform and sharpen the student's goals for the following year. The Student Activities Report along with an MTE report form and the student's CV will be included in the annual review of each PhD student's progress by the Faculty Advisory Committee and the GSAC, as described elsewhere.

### Key milestones:

This section lays out key milestones in the PhD program, including annual program requirements as well as evaluation and feedback processes. These milestones are intended to provide a general framework so that both students and faculty have the same set of expectations about their respective roles as students and advisors.

## **YEAR 1**

### Coursework:

- In the fall of Year 1, all students take the Proseminar. This course introduces students to the research of faculty in the Department. In this course, all students write a proposal for NSF Graduate Research Fellowships Program or prepare a comparable application. This requirement provides students with an opportunity to formulate a research project and to articulate its importance in terms of theoretical contributions and broader impacts.
- In the Spring of Year 1, all students take the Trial Research Seminar, which helps them make progress on this project and clearly communicate their research ideas to others. In the Trial Research Seminar, students also discuss important research issues, including the ethical conduct of research and the importance of diversity in research.

- During Year 1, students also typically take Statistics, and in Year 1 or 2, they typically take Experimental Design. Both of these courses are designed to provide students with critical tools they need to carry out research.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Year Faculty Advisory Committee and Trial Research Committee:

In consultation with their advisor, the student should form a 1<sup>st</sup> Year Advisory Committee by the end of Fall quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> year. As early as possible, but no later than the end of the summer quarter, the student, in consultation with their advisor, forms a Trial Research Committee, which consists of the students' advisor and two other faculty members. This committee may or may not be the same as the student's original Year 1 advisory committee, but it becomes the advisory committee once formed.

### Evaluation:

In the Spring of each year students complete a Student Activities Report, which also is completed and signed by their faculty advisor and two other members of their Faculty Advisory Committee by May. This activities report starts with a self-evaluation of the student's progress in the program, including their coursework and research, and their goals for the following year. It is important that the student meet with their advisor to discuss this self-evaluation and receive feedback from them on their accomplishments and goals. It is important, in turn, for the advisor to provide detailed feedback on the student's progress, including recognition of successes and candid assessment of areas that need development. Written feedback should be summarized under the Advisor section of the Student Activities Report. Students also should discuss this annual evaluation and receive feedback from other members of their Faculty Advisory Committee, either as part of their annual meeting with the FAC or as end of the year updates.

At the end of each academic year, each graduate training area and the GSAC reviews each student's progress towards program requirements. This review includes information on the Student Activities Report and input from the Faculty Advisory Committee. The GSAC then sends each student a formal letter evaluating their progress and status in the program. These letters are typically sent over the summer.

## **YEAR 2**

### Coursework:

During the second year, students continue taking their required coursework as well as other classes that are relevant to their development as scholars. Students often complete their required coursework by the end of Year 2, although some students complete their coursework during Year 3. Throughout graduate school, there may be courses that students elect to take in order to further their knowledge.

### Trial Research:

The student should initiate discussion of their trial research project with members of their Trial Research Committee (TRC) as soon as possible, but preferably no later than the end of the second week of Fall quarter. By the end of the fall quarter Year 2, the student's TRC should meet to approve the student's trial research project proposal. At a minimum, this meeting consists of a student presentation of the proposed work and discussion of the plan with the committee. By the end of Spring quarter, students must submit their written Trial Research Paper to their TRC committee, in preparation for the trial research defense meeting. By the end of Spring quarter, students should defend their trial research project at a meeting with their TRC committee, which will also assess the depth and breadth of students' knowledge of their research problem. At this point, if the students' trial research project is approved by the committee and their required coursework is completed, they are eligible to receive a Master's Degree in Psychology.



### Evaluation:

In addition to the Trial Research requirement, in May of Year 2, as in Year 1, students complete a self-evaluation and discuss this with their advisor and other members of the Faculty Advisory Committee. At this point, the FAC will usually be the student's Trial Research Committee. The self-evaluation will include questions about the student's course work, research, and if applicable, mentored teaching experiences, as well as their goals for the next year. The student and faculty on the FAC will discuss the self-evaluation and the faculty will provide constructive feedback to the student. By the end of Year 2, each student receives an evaluation of their progress in the program from the GSAC, with input from the student's Trial Research Committee. With the completion of the Trial Research Project and all or nearly all coursework, this evaluation is flagged as an important evaluation point, where students could leave the program with a Master's Degree.

## **YEAR 3**

### Faculty Advisory Committee:

By the fall of the 3rd year, students should form their post-trial research Faculty Advisory Committee, which could be the same or different from their TRC. This new committee may eventually become the student's Dissertation Committee, but not necessarily.

### Mentored Teaching Experiences:

Historically students start fulfilling their five required mentored teaching experiences (MTEs) in Year 3, after having completed all or most of their coursework in Year 2, but students can request MTEs as early as their second year in the PhD program. Each year, students will be asked to request their preferences for their MTEs, which may be undergraduate core courses or larger undergraduate elective courses. The Department will do its best to meet students' requests although this will depend on openings and the number of students requesting the same courses. Students are required to have completed five MTEs before completing the Ph.D. program. Note that students must complete all coursework before being eligible to defend their dissertation proposal and being admitted to candidacy, but fulfilling the MTE requirement is not a precondition for entering candidacy. However, the general expectation is that students will have completed most or all of their MTEs prior to proposing their dissertation and entering candidacy.

### Evaluation:

As in prior years, students will complete a self-evaluation and discuss this with their advisor. The advisor will provide feedback to the student. Based on input from the student's advisor and advising committee, each student will receive an evaluation from the GSAC. An important element of this evaluation is whether the students' research progress and productivity are adequate to support their career goals.

## **YEAR 4**

### Faculty Advisory Committee:

Students must form a dissertation committee no later than Spring quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> year, at which point this committee becomes their Faculty Advisory Committee for the remainder of the student's time in the program.

Dissertation Committee Membership. A student must form a three-member dissertation committee consisting of a chairperson and two other faculty members. Typically, the chair is the student's primary research advisor. The chair of the dissertation committee must be a faculty or emeritus faculty member in the Psychology Department. At least one other member of the committee must be a faculty, emeritus faculty or affiliated faculty member in the Psychology Department. The third member of the committee

may be a University of Chicago faculty member from outside of the Psychology Department, provided that the chair of the dissertation committee gives his or her approval.

Dissertation Proposal:

By the end of Spring quarter of the 4th year of graduate school, students should provide their Dissertation Committee with their written dissertation proposal and hold a meeting to discuss this proposal with the committee. If the committee approves the proposal, and all of the student's required coursework has been successfully completed, the students will be "in candidacy".

Evaluation:

This is the same as in prior years.

**YEAR 5**

Faculty Advisory Committee: In year 5, the Dissertation Committee will be the student's Faculty Advisory Committee.

Dissertation Completion:

Resources:

In addition to meeting the Departmental requirements specified below and on the website, the UChicago Library has detailed requirements for the formatting of dissertations and the online submission of dissertations. For deadlines and specifications, consult the Dissertation Office's webpage at [www.lib.uchicago.edu](http://www.lib.uchicago.edu). The Student Affairs Administrator is also a helpful resource for students preparing to fulfill their dissertation requirements.

Dissertation Defense:

During the 5th year, students should work on carrying out their dissertation research and writing up the results. Many students will defend their dissertation in the Spring of the 5th year, on time to meet the UChicago Library's dissertation deadlines and receive their doctoral degree at the Spring convocation. The completed dissertation paper must be submitted to all three committee members. When the student's advisor agrees, the student may schedule an oral defense of the dissertation. The oral exam is administered by four members of the University community: the three members of the dissertation committee and an outside reader. The outside reader may be a faculty member at the University of Chicago, or a scientist at another institution. The outside reader must be approved by the thesis advisor. If, after the oral defense, all committee members approve the thesis, the student has met the Psychology Department's requirements for the Ph.D. degree.

Petition for Year 6 funding:

Students requiring an additional year of funding to complete their dissertation must petition the GSAC by a date set each year to obtain funding for a 6<sup>th</sup> year of enrollment. Essential to the success of this petition is a plan to complete the dissertation by the end of Year 6, and support for this plan by the students' advisor and Dissertation Committee.

Evaluation:

Prior to submitting a petition for Year 6 funding, students should complete their self-evaluation and discuss the request and a clear timeline for thesis completion and defense with their advisor and the rest of their Dissertation Committee.

## **Appendix A: Department of Psychology, Mentored Teaching Experience Requirement**

### **Purpose:**

Students in the Department of Psychology will be required to complete five mentored teaching experiences (MTEs), with the possibility of additional teaching experiences for those students seeking advanced pedagogical training. These experiences may include being a Course TA and/or a Mentored Instructor of a stand-alone course (when applicable). This mentored teaching requirement achieves several pedagogical purposes. First, MTEs ensure that students are well prepared to teach (e.g., how to develop a lecture, lead a discussion, develop a syllabus, give feedback, test development, advise students on paper topics, etc.). Second, MTEs enhance a PhD students' knowledge of the field. Through the process of teaching, student instructors gain a deeper understanding of the research literature and methodologies in the field. Third, MTEs are a critical mechanism for building professional development skills, including communication, organization, and leadership, which are valuable for students who pursue academic as well as non-academic career paths.

Any student with questions or concerns about their ability to complete their Mentored Teaching Experiences should speak with the Director of Graduate Studies as early in their graduate career as possible.

The Department's Student Affairs Administrator will keep track of student MTE assignments, and will work closely with students and faculty in running the MTE program. To achieve the goals of the MTE requirement, the Department has adopted the following requirements for MTEs:

### **Eligible Courses for MTEs**

Courses with psychology content that are taught by psychology faculty and staff are eligible as an MTE. Students will need to petition to count other courses as fulfilling an MTE. Petitions need to include a mentoring plan for the course submitted by the instructor, and an explanation of how the course is related to the PhD student's course of study in Psychology. These petitions should be submitted directly to the Student Affairs Administrator, who will forward them to the Department's Graduate Student Affairs and Curriculum Committee (GSAC) for deliberation.

Course TA opportunities in the Department of Psychology provide opportunities for students to gain MTEs. As TAs, graduate students learn how to provide constructive feedback on writing assignments, craft a lecture, and lead discussions, which they often do independently after meeting with the faculty member teaching the class to plan the discussion section. Importantly, for all MTEs, faculty will provide students with feedback on their teaching performance and will help them hone their teaching skills.

### **MTE Point System:**

Students will earn 1 MTE for each quarter they TA in a Psychology course. Lectureships that students may obtain in more advanced years of graduate school also can count as 1 MTE (Mentored Instructor), provided there is a plan for mentorship. For stand-alone Instructor opportunities (e.g., Dewey), students must develop a tailored plan for receiving mentorship on their course (e.g., plans to get feedback from a more seasoned instructor in the Department). They must submit this plan to the Department's Graduate Student Affairs and Curriculum Committee (GSAC) for approval of the teaching experience as an MTE.

### **Breadth Requirement:**

Breadth of teaching experience is important in students' mentored teaching portfolio. Thus, our mentored teaching experiences provide students with a variety of experiences and opportunities to gain teaching skills with guidance and modeling from skilled faculty. To achieve breadth, students may complete no more than 3 MTE with the same class/instructor.

**Typical Sequence:**

Students may start their MTE requirement as early as Year 2, but the timing of these experiences will vary depending on individual circumstances (e.g., students' schedules, availability of relevant MTE in the Department). Typically, students will complete some TA ships prior to becoming a lecture of a course (e.g., Dewey or Mind).

**MTE Assignment:**

Prior to MTE assignment, students submit their course preferences to the Department's Student Affairs Administrator. The Student Affairs Administrator, in consultation with faculty teaching courses, the Department Chair and the Department's Undergraduate Student Affairs and Curriculum Committee (USAC), will coordinate assignments based on student preferences and Department needs (e.g., the Department may prioritize MTE assignments for courses with large undergraduate enrollments and well-established mentoring outcomes).

**Other MTE Requirements:**

In addition to completing 5 MTE, students are required to engage in several other activities to promote their pedagogical development.

**Teaching Orientation:** Prior to starting their MTEs, students must attend the annual teaching orientation sponsored by the Chicago Center for Teaching (CCT). In addition, the CCT offers ad hoc workshops and programs that can help students improve their teaching (e.g., Inclusive Pedagogy Workshop), and students are encouraged to take advantage of these resources.

**Teaching Evaluations:** After completing each MTE, students will be required to submit a MTE Evaluation Form including four parts: (1) a self-evaluation summarizing the teaching experience, including what they learned and goals for improving their pedagogical skills. (2) On this form, they will also be required to summarize the teaching evaluations they received from students in the class, and to reflect on these evaluations. (For courses in Spring quarter, when course evaluations are not ready until the end of the quarter, the MTE form will be part of the annual review in the subsequent academic year.) (3) Course Instructors will be required to meet with the student at the completion of the MTE to discuss their experiences and performance. Students should summarize this meeting with the Instructor on their form too. (4) Students also will use the MTE Evaluation Form to report on the quality of the mentoring they received during their MTE – what worked well, what needs improvement. This MTE form, along with the student's CV and Student Activities Report, will be submitted to the Student Affairs Administrator, to be included in the annual review of each PhD student's progress. Issues that arise surrounding the quality of MTE mentoring will be evaluated by the Department Chair, who will be responsible for monitoring the quality of the mentorship provided by the faculty, and for providing feedback to the faculty.

**Teaching Statement:** Prior to earning their degree, all PhD students are required to work with the CCT to prepare a "Teaching Statement" suitable for the academic job market. If the student is applying for a non-academic job, their statement could address how their teaching experiences are relevant to that career. It is expected that they will draw on their MTE experiences to help craft and refine the statement (and teaching practice).

**Advanced Pedagogical Training Track:**

Students who have already completed 5 MTEs but desire additional pedagogical training will be eligible to apply for the Department's advanced pedagogical training track, which requires additional teaching experiences (e.g. TA, Intern, or lectureship). Students considering this track should consult with their faculty advisor and ensure the additional teaching requirements will not hinder dissertation progress. To

join this track, students must apply in writing to the GSAC. Applications should include (i) a justification for how each teaching opportunity will advance their career goals, and builds upon their previous MTEs, (ii) a plan for receiving mentorship on the desired teaching experience(s), and (iii) approval of the plan by the student's faculty advisor. In these cases, students are strongly encouraged to also fulfill the requirements for a Teaching Certificate, which is a program managed by the Chicago Center for Teaching that is available to all PhD students who have completed some teaching experiences.