A Guide for the Perplexed:

Frequently Asked Questions
Concerning the Graduate Program in Psychology at UC Berkeley

What am I doing here?

Graduate training in any field stands on three legs: coursework, research, and teaching. The Graduate Program in Psychology is intended to address all three elements. Each student takes a series of courses (mostly proseminars and seminars) to provide both breadth and depth of preparation in the field; there is a graded series of research opportunities, culminating in the dissertation; and every student in the program, regardless of source of support, serves as a teaching assistant (known at UCB as a Graduate Student Instructor, or GSI).

This guide, organized around a number of Frequently Asked Questions (or questions that should be asked more frequently), is intended to help you construct a framework for your time here. Note that each graduate area has its own particular course requirements; furthermore, due to accreditation requirements, the program in Clinical Science involves a number of specialized and applied courses, breadth courses, and an internship. So you should consult your area's Graduate Advisor for specific advice about how to navigate through the program.

If your question is not answered here, or you need clarification,
ask the Graduate Student Services Advisor or the Head Graduate Advisor.
We'll get you an answer, and then post the information here as well.

Coursework

What courses do I have to take?

The Department requires each student to complete a set of common courses (covering professional socialization, statistics, and teaching): a set of proseminars, two to four in your area of specialization; and a small number of additional courses or seminars. Consult the *Graduate Student Handbook* and your area's Graduate Advisor for specific area requirements.

What are proseminars?

The proseminars are intended to give you a broad survey of psychology in your area of specialization, with special emphasis on the "Berkeley" point of view. One or two such proseminars are offered by each area every semester, on a rotation cycle. In many instances, you can complete the proseminar requirement by the end of your first year; at worst, it may be necessary to wait until your second year for a particular proseminar to come up in the rotation. In either case, you will be able to complete your proseminar requirement in a timely manner, by the end of your second year in residence, and be prepared for the Qualifying Examination in your third year. Equally important, the proseminars offer you shared intellectual experiences with your classmates. Do not defer completing the proseminar requirement: complete it by the end of your second year.

Can I take courses outside the Department?

Yes, but because the proseminars are intended to expose graduate students to the perspectives of faculty in the Department of Psychology, courses outside Psychology may not substitute for required proseminars.

I have transferred in to Berkeley from another graduate program. Can I skip the proseminars?

No, for the same reason in the last answer, and also because the proseminars are intended to promote group cohesion among the graduate students. Transfer students are not permitted to "place out" of them, even if they have already taken comparable courses at other institutions.

Do I have to take both of the statistics courses?

It depends on which area you are in, so consult your area's Graduate Advisor. The statistics courses are intended to give you a solid grounding in data analysis. Even if you think you have already had lots of statistics, and you think you might be able to "place out" of this requirement, you should not seek to do so. Psychology 205A and 205B now comprise an integrated year-long course including core statistical procedures, experimental design and the analysis of variance and covariance, correlation and regression analysis, the analysis of categorical data with multiple classifications, including log-linear and logistic regression, and additional techniques as appropriate. The statistics courses should be taken in your first year.

Depending on your research interests, you may wish to substitute other statistics courses for one or both of the Department's courses. This is possible. For any substitutions be prepared to justify your choice in terms of the sorts of research you plan to do, make sure you have the approval of your advisor and your area Graduate Advisor in writing, and present the GSSA with the written approval prior to enrollment.

I took a lot of statistics before I got here. Why can't I place out of these courses?

Statistics courses taken for another degree, such as a bachelor's or a master's degree, whether at Berkeley or someplace else, cannot substitute for the required statistics course -- any course can count for only one degree.

Should I take additional statistics courses?

You should consider taking additional statistics and methods courses, (e.g., in mathematical or computational modeling, multivariate analysis, or neuroimaging), depending on your research interests, but this is not a formal requirement of the Department.

What courses should I take beyond the proseminars and statistics?

The additional courses or seminars are intended to give you depth in one or more topic areas. When selecting courses, please consider that there is psychology to be learned outside the formal boundaries of your graduate program, as well as outside the Department itself, such as Cognitive Science, Neuroscience, Vision Science, Public Policy, and Public Health, etc.

Each area also requires attendance at its colloquium series, so you should register for the appropriate course (229, 239, 249, 259/269) each semester you are in residence. The various colloquium series present talks by Department and outside speakers, mostly faculty, sometimes students, covering the whole range of research and theory within your area of specialization.

Also, remember that there is more to psychology than your particular area of specialization. To that end, the Department sponsors occasional Department-wide colloquia, with guest speakers representing the different fields of psychology. The interdisciplinary programs in Cognitive Science, Neuroscience, and Vision Science also offer regular colloquia. You can attend colloquia in other departments, as well, if they interest you. Check the *Berkeleyan* for announcements.

How many units should I take each semester?

Unlike undergraduate school, there is no requirement at UCB that you accumulate any specific number of credits (units) before you take your doctoral degree. However, a full four- to five-year program is the rough equivalent of 120 units. Therefore, as a graduate student, you should enroll for at least 12 credits every semester. (Enrolling in a minimum of 12 units is a Graduate Division requirement for graduate students who have not yet advanced to doctoral candidacy.) Enroll in your courses, and then fill out the schedule with Research (299) credits until you hit a total of 12 units. Not only does this keep you on track, but (and here we are being very frank) this practice helps the Department out. The California State Legislature keeps track of both faculty teaching loads and student course loads, and a schedule of 12 credits is an easy way to make sure that, at the level of State government, both faculty and students actually get credit for the educational activities that actually go on. But you should not enroll in more than 15 credits except in exceptional circumstances.

To advise you to enroll in 12 to 15 credits per semester is not to advise you to enroll in four or five three-credit courses. Courses, while valuable, can be a distraction from research, and

unless you complete a progressive program of research culminating in the dissertation, you cannot take the doctoral degree. And unless you take the doctoral degree within five years, you are in danger of losing your financial support. There is a temptation to take lots of courses -- not just because it is easy to take classes, and not just because many classes are interesting, but because many seminars are offered only once on any topic, and you will not want to miss anything. Do not succumb to the temptation to take every seminar that every faculty member offers, in the belief that you will never have the chance again. You will get that chance. You may be able to audit the course, learning the topic without investing precious time and effort in presentations or papers (though it must also be said that unless a critical mass of students enrolls for credit, the seminar may be canceled). You can get the syllabus and do the reading independently. You can also get the syllabus, update it, and teach the seminar yourself once you are in a faculty post.

Do not take courses in a vain attempt to learn everything there is to be learned before you take your degree. There is always something new to be learned, and to be a scholar is to be engaged in a lifelong process of learning. And do not take courses as a way of avoiding research. The bottom line is that you should enroll for just enough courses to fulfill the Department and area requirements, plus any additional courses that really stimulate your intellectual interests, and then fill out the remainder of your dance card with research units.

Should I take courses for a grade?

The angel on your right shoulder says "no", on the grounds that you will not be asked to show your transcript when you apply for positions in academe or industry. Moreover, taking courses satisfactory / unsatisfactory (S/U; a grade of S is the equivalent of a B- or better) cuts through the tendency toward grade competitiveness which you may have brought with you from undergraduate school. You are here to learn, not to accumulate A's. Faculty generally prefer just to work with students, teaching them and learning with them, without grades hanging over our collective heads.

But the fact of the matter is that there is a devil on your left shoulder. That is to say, you may well be asked to present a transcript at some point, if you should apply for certain pre-doctoral or post-doctoral fellowships or internships (e.g., NSF, NIH). It is a sad fact of life that, in the review process for these fellowships, applicants who have taken their courses P/F or S/U are at a competitive disadvantage over those who have taken the same courses and earned A's.

Moreover, the Graduate Division limits courses taken S/U to 1/3 of the total units a student has taken at Berkeley for their degree. This count excludes courses numbered 299, 300-399, 400-499, and 600-699. So, the advice from this quarter is to take the required proseminars, statistics, and other required courses and seminars for a grade, so that you will satisfy the University requirement, and also have a transcript that will help you with fellowship and internship applications.

How do I enroll in courses?

Enrolling in courses is quick and easy. All you need is Web access, your Calnet ID and passphrase, and course control numbers (CCN). Each course has a course control number, which is available in the online schedule of classes (http://schedule.berkeley.edu). The CCN for Psychology 298 (Directed Study) and Psychology 299 (Research) are not in the online schedule

so contact the Scheduling Coordinator and request the CCN for the faculty members with whom you will take the Psych 298 and/or 299 courses. Be sure to do this for every semester you enroll in Psych 298 or 299 as each faculty member's CCN changes each semester.

Once you have the CCN you need, log on to Tele-Bears, Berkeley's online enrollment system, at https://telebears.berkeley.edu/telebears/home with your CalNet ID and passphrase. Enter your PIN and select your courses (a total of 12 units is standard), In the summer, a course load of 3 or 4 units is the norm.

Research

When should I begin my research?

The first thing that most students learn in graduate school is that taking classes is fun, and teaching is rewarding, but research is hard and sometimes frustrating. Therefore, there is a tendency to focus on the first two legs, and put off either the initiation or the completion of the third. This is a mistake; all graduate students should be involved in research from the first day of their graduate careers. If you do not yet have a clear idea for a research project, ask your advisor -- s/he will help you find a project. As you progress through the program, you will become increasingly independent of your advisor. However, science is necessarily a collaborative enterprise, and it is the rare (and not necessarily the most successful) student whose dissertation is entirely independent of other work going on in her or his advisor's laboratory. Most of your research will be conducted in collaboration with your advisor, but it is a good idea to do some research with someone else in the program. It broadens you intellectually.

The Department requires a second-year research project of all students, but you should be involved in research at some level during your first year as well – not least because it takes more than one year to get a research project off the ground and see it through to fruition. The purpose of the requirement is to ensure that students are involved in research throughout their careers as graduate students. Accordingly, the second-year project should reflect work done at Berkeley since the time of your matriculation in the doctoral program.

Note that it often takes two years to complete even the simplest study. Accordingly, do not put the initiation of your second-year project off until the end of the first semester of your second year. You should have a clear idea of what you are going to do before the end of your first year, so you can complete data collection, analyze your data, and write the project up before the end of your second year. It may seem silly to say so, but do not plan on a five-year longitudinal follow-up study for your second-year project. And, because of the pressure on the machine and its vulnerability to breakdown, do not plan on using the fMRI machine, either.

Should I take the master's degree on route to the Ph.D.?

The Department does not require you to take a master's degree on route to the Ph.D. While the Department offers a non-terminal master's degree option for its doctoral students, it does not necessarily encourage its students to complete the M.A. In fact even if your intention is to turn your second-year project into a master's thesis, preparing a formal master's thesis, and assembling a committee of three faculty members to read it, is a lot more difficult than turning in the first draft of an APA-style manuscript for your advisor and your area's Graduate Advisor to

read. If you think you will be stepping out of the program for a while before you take your Ph.D. degree, or if you intend to supplement your income by teaching off campus (e.g., at CSU), a master's degree may get you a little more money. But otherwise, the effort is likely not worth it.

Teaching

How much will I have to (get to) teach?

Teaching is important. If you are funded as a GSI, you will get plenty of teaching experience (though not so much as to interfere with your normal progress through the program). But even if you are supported on fellowship or grant funds, the Department requires that you do some teaching (at present, this amounts to two semesters of service). You are being trained to be scholars, and teaching is part of the enterprise of scholarship. Therefore, teaching is a critical element in your graduate training, as important as training in research methods. It is training so avoid thinking of it as employment

Teaching experience is also in your best interest: most academic positions are faculty positions, and most faculty positions involve a serious commitment to teaching and teaching reasonably well. There was a time when many faculty at major research institutions thought that if they were good enough at research, they would not have to teach -- or, at least, that they could "buy off" enough time with grant funds that they would not have to teach undergraduates. Some universities, in an attempt to attract "star" faculty, even released them from any obligations to the undergraduate curriculum (and in some cases, remarkably enough, from any teaching responsibilities at all).

That worldview was passed down to many graduate students, who were led to believe that if they were good enough at research, *they* would not have to teach either. That worldview was always a bad idea, in my view, and in any event that time is past. Aside from the fact that teaching is the most rewarding and honorable part of our job description, the fact of the matter is that there are many more "teaching" colleges than there are "research" universities, and even the major research universities (including Harvard, Yale, and UCB), require every faculty member to contribute substantially to undergraduate instruction. "Buyouts" are increasingly rare.

The fact is that graduate students who are enthusiastic and skilled teachers, able to contribute to all levels of the undergraduate curriculum, are at a competitive advantage in the job market. It will be taken for granted that you can teach in your broad and narrow areas of specialization (e.g., cognitive psychology or memory or whatever they happen to be for you). The question will be whether you can do anything else. Department chairs are always under pressure to staff "bread-and-butter" courses such as intro, stats, methods, and certain mid-level "survey" courses. Applicants who are enthusiastic and skilled teachers of these courses will be at a special advantage in the marketplace.

Which courses should I teach?

The best way to learn to teach is to do it, learning from your own successes and failures, and to watch other teachers and learn from their successes and failures. Experience as a GSI gives you the opportunity to do both, the former in a relatively low-risk environment. Accordingly, my advice is to organize your GSI experience so that you serve in at least one "bread-and-butter"

course (intro, stats, or methods) and at least one mid-level "survey" course (e.g., 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, or 160). If you are able to teach more than two semesters, then you should request courses that directly relate to your research and/or give you breadth in the field. Frankly, the more you can teach the better, as long as teaching does not interfere with your progress toward your degree. Think about teaching a course in summer school, or at Berkeley Extension, as time permits.

How much time will I spend teaching?

To some extent, this depends on your sources of financial support, as well as your own interests. As noted earlier, the Department requires all graduate students, regardless of their source of support, to serve for at least two (2) semesters as a GSI. These are typically “half-time” appointments, meaning that they should not average more than 20 hours per week. Most weeks, you’ll spend much less time than that; some weeks, such as when there are exams or papers due, you’ll probably spend more; but it should average out to 20 hours.

Here is an example of how GSI time may be spent one week in Psychology 1, where there are multiple-choice, computer-scored exams, and no papers:

Attendance at lectures	2 hours
Assist with preparing lectures and exams	1 hour (maximum)
Conduct 3 discussion sections per week	3 hours
Preparation of discussion mini-lecture	6 hours (maximum)
Group meeting with instructor	1 hour
Scheduled office hours	2 hours (students will rarely show up)
Grading of exams	5 hours (bank unused time)
WEEKLY TOTAL	**20 HOURS (with lots of wiggle room)**

And here is an example of how GSI time may be spent one week in an upper-division course, where there are short-answer and short-essay exams, as well as some writing assignments:

Attendance at lectures	2 hours
Conduct 3 discussion sections per week	3 hours
Preparation of discussion mini-lecture	5 hours (maximum)
Scheduled office hours	2 hours (students will rarely show up)
Grading of papers and exams	5 hours (bank unused time)
Reviewing homework assignments	3 hours
WEEKLY TOTAL	**20 HOURS (with lots of wiggle room)**

GSIs are represented by a union which is supposed to collect this information from each instructor. In any event, before you agree to serve as a GSI in any course, you should get something like this from the instructor, so that you’ll know what’s expected of you.

But I spend an average of more than 20 hours per week teaching. What can I do?

First, make sure it's true. We're psychologists, and we know that impressions can be inaccurate. Start by keeping a log of the time you spend on various duties relating to your GSI appointment. If, after a couple of weeks, you really find that you're averaging over 20 hours, compare notes with other GSIs who are teaching with you (or who have taught the same class before). Maybe there are some places where you're spending too much time, and you can cut down a little. If you're all having the same experience, then you should show your log to the course instructor, and see what he or she can do – either to cut back on the workload, or to help you find ways to economize.

Another way is to collaborate with your fellow GSIs, if you have them, to share the workload. If there are two of you, you can rotate developing lesson plans for discussion sections that you both lead; and if there are more than two, all the better! Even if you're the only GSI for a course, you may be able to get some concrete plans from another graduate student who has GSI-ed for that course. Check in the instructor's manual for some suggestions. If your textbook doesn't come with an instructor's manual, see if you can find the instructor's manual that goes with some other textbook. Even the instructor's manual for an introductory textbook will have useful material. The Department's Teaching Resource Center (check out the key from the main office) almost certainly has some materials that you can take off the shelf. And, in fact, it wouldn't be a bad idea for GSIs to place their more successful lesson plans in a repository for the use of future GSIs. Or maybe the graduate students could construct a Wiki for this purpose.

Where can I get help with grading term papers and essay exams?

These are definitely the hardest chores for any GSI – and, for that matter, any faculty member, no matter how experienced. First thing, try to get your course instructor to provide you with as much structure as possible. If he or she can be persuaded to use multiple-choice or short-answer questions for exams, grading should be a cinch. But if the exams involve longer essays, ask your instructor to provide you with samples of what a good answer would look like, as well as guidelines for assigning partial credit.

The same strategy applies for term papers and other writing assignments. What you need is a "grading rubric", or a more-or-less explicit framework for evaluating written work. Ask your course instructor to develop one. Or develop one on your own, following the advice of the Graduate Division's GSI Teaching & Resource Center, http://gsi.berkeley.edu/resources/grading/introduction.html.

But it still takes an awful lot of time!

Yes it does. Even with a lot of external support and structure, anything more than a computer-scored multiple-choice exam is going to take a big chunk out of your week. So the thing to do is to plan for this, so that your decks are cleared in preparation for the exam. In addition, make sure (as in the examples above) that your "normative" weekly schedule has built into it enough time that you can "bank" in advance of exam weeks.

How can I find out which courses and faculty make the most demands on GSIs?

Ask around. The advanced graduate students will be more than happy to tell you who's who and what's what. It may not be possible to avoid the most demanding courses and faculty members in every instance – and if you get stuck, use the advice given here to get as much structure from the instructor as possible. Who knows, once the instructor is made aware of the problem, his or her behavior may change!

Financial Matters

How much financial support will I receive?

The Department guarantees all matriculated students five (5) years of financial support. This package includes tuition (in the first year) and fees, and a stipend covering ten (10) months of the year, August through May (the first paycheck is September 1, the last June 1). This support typically comes in the form of appointment as a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI), but other possibilities are available. Some students hold a fellowship, either from the University or from an outside source such as the National Science Foundation. Others may be supported on a training grant. Others may be supported as Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs), paid from faculty research grants.

Why do GSIs get paid less than GSRs?

This structural inequality is an inadvertent result of a University-wide policy over which the Department has no control. Various steps have been taken to reduce the inequality, and others will come in the future.

How can I support myself in the summer?

GSI stipends run for ten (10) months of the year, so you have to take some steps to make sure that you have money to live on in the summer. Some students are able to save from their ten-month stipends for the July and August, and if you are able to do this – even a little – that is all to the good. If your advisor has grant support, he or she may be able to appoint you as a GSR for the summer months. In fact, if your advisor has grant support, you might consider supporting yourself as a GSI during the academic year, in order to conserve grant funds for the summer. Discuss the possibilities with your advisor. Some graduate students are able to serve as GSIs, Readers, or even as course instructors, in the Summer Session.

I'm an out-of-state student. Do I have to establish California residency?

Yes, if you are a U.S. citizen or a U.S. permanent resident. The Department has funds to provide remission of educational fees charged to California residents, but it can only provide remission of tuition charged to non-residents for their first year of graduate study. So, during your first year of graduate study, you should establish California state residency. The deadline for doing this is, roughly, the start of classes of your second year of graduate school. If you do

not establish California residency by then, you will be responsible for full nonresident tuition. The Department cannot pay this for you: it simply does not have the funds.

How do I establish California residency?

This is a cumbersome, but actually fairly straightforward, procedure. Basically, you have to show that you are a permanent resident of California, meaning that you have resided in California for at least one year for some purpose in addition to education (residing in California for the sole purpose of education does not qualify you as a California resident). For a checklist of required documents and deadlines, go to http://registrar.berkeley.edu/DisplayMedia.aspx?ID=grreschecklist.pdf. But the following list of examples will give you ideas of what you need to do.

Because you must show, by roughly the start of instruction of your second year of graduate study that you have been a resident of California for at least one year, you must accomplish certain tasks *very early in* your *first* year of graduate study.

- Show that you arrived in California before the beginning of classes.
- Obtain a California driver's license *within ten days* of your arrival.
- Register your motor vehicle (if any) *within twenty days* of your arrival in the state.
- Register to vote *before October 1* of your first year of graduate study and vote. You can register to vote when you get your driver's license or motor vehicle registration.
- Open a bank account at a California bank.
- Obtain your UC Personnel Action Form (PAF) confirming your employment (e.g., as a GSI) during your first year of graduate study.
- Keep copies of W-2 forms (e.g., from your service as a GSI), as well as California state and Federal tax returns filed by April 15 of your first year of graduate study, and showing a California address.
- You may even be required to provide your parents' tax returns, showing that they *did not* claim you as a dependent during the year in question.

Comprehensive information on establishing California residency is available at http://registrar.berkeley.edu/Default.aspx?PageID=legalinfo.html.

What happens if I don't establish California state residency by the deadline after my first year of graduate study?

As of 2009-2010, California state residents pay roughly $11,000 in fees *per year* to attend the University of California. Nonresidents pay that, *plus* another *$14,694* in nonresident tuition per year. The Department simply cannot pay nonresident tuition after the first year. It is possible, if you are supported as a GSR, that your advisor may be able to pick up these costs from his or her research grant, but unlikely. It is most likely that this burden will fall on you, so as soon as you arrive for graduate study, get started on establishing California residency.

Can I be employed more than 50% time?

It is possible for graduate students to be on the University payroll for more than 50% -- for example, by combining a 50% GSI with a 25% GSR. This is not recommended, and such requests are subject to strict scrutiny both by the Department and the Graduate Division. A petition to be employed at more than 50% has to be approved by the Head Graduate Advisor, and then by the Graduate Division.

The Program

A specimen program is attached to these FAQ. Its underlying philosophy is that as soon as you fulfill one requirement you should start working on the next one; it also assumes that you will take no more than two substantial courses in any semester. There is no reason why you cannot complete your degree in four years, five years at the maximum, even if you are supported entirely as a GSI for the duration of your studies, and even if you are in the Clinical Science program, with its additional obligations. The Department's requirements are designed to enable, even encourage, you to do so.

What are the major milestones of the doctoral program?

- **Second-Year Research Project**: Completion of the second-year research project by the end of the Spring Semester (i.e., May) of your second year in the Program. (This *must* reflect work done at Berkeley since you matriculated. Work completed as an undergraduate, whether at UCB or elsewhere, will not suffice.) According to Department rules, you may not meet this requirement merely by presenting a poster at a national scientific meeting, such as the American Psychological Association, Association for Psychological Science, Psychonomic Society, or Society for Neuroscience.

- **Qualifying Examination**: Passing the Qualifying Examination (QE) by the end of your third year in the Program. Students need four (4) committee members, including at least one UCB Academic Senate faculty member from outside the Department. Normally, students are examined on three discrete areas of their own choosing, and are expected to present their committee with a reading list in each area, so that the Committee can prepare questions. Students should feel free to submit suggested questions to the Committee. The written examination can consist of a combination of questions and papers, but – again – the advice from here is to go with only questions, spend a day at the keyboard answering them, and get it over with (review comments above on Qualifying Exam). In any event, the written examination is followed by an oral examination, usually held one week after completing the written exam (10 days if the exam includes one or more papers in lieu of questions).

- **Advancing to Candidacy**. University guidelines specify that advancing to doctoral candidacy be done in the semester following completion of the QE. In practice, students often delay advancing to candidacy after completing their qualifying exams. Advancement to candidacy involves forming a dissertation committee and filing paperwork. All graduate students in the Program are *required* to advance to candidacy no later than *the last day of the Fall Semester of their 4th year*. Failure to complete this requirement may result in funding cuts.

- **Dissertation Advisory Committee & Proposal:** Assembling your Dissertation Advisory Committee, and approval of your dissertation proposal, by the end of your fourth year in the Program (preferably by the end of your third year). Note again that the person who chairs your Qualifying Examination Committee may *not* also serve as chair of your Dissertation Committee. Students are discouraged from scheduling oral and dissertation committee meetings during the summer (June-August), because faculty members are under no obligation to attend summer meetings.

- **Dissertation**: Completion of the doctoral dissertation by the end of your fifth year in the Program (preferably by the end of your fourth year). Note that UCB permits dissertations to include previously published or co-authored material, provided that the published material is "incorporated into a larger argument that binds together the whole dissertation or thesis". So, the advice from here is to take a coherent subset of the research you have done while a graduate student, rewrite whatever has already been published, unite it with as-yet unpublished material, and call it a dissertation. Nobody reads it anyway except your committee and your mother (actually, your mother won't read it either). For everything you wanted to know about the dissertation but were afraid to ask, check out the pamphlet, *Instructions for Preparing and Filing Your Thesis or Dissertation,* published by the UCB Graduate Division (http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/policies/pdf/disguide.pdf).

What is required for the Second-Year Research Project?

The second-year research project is intended to make sure that you get an early start on research. It might be the sort of thing that leads to your doctoral dissertation, or it might not. Students present their second-year research projects at a Department-wide "Second-Year Research Poster Session", which is held in mid-May of every year. In addition, students must prepare a written account of their second-year research project -- a complete draft of a written paper describing their research, either as a master's thesis or in a format (e.g., "APA style") suitable for eventual journal publication. A first draft is fine, but the draft must be complete, including an abstract, introduction, method section, results with appropriate tables and graphs, discussion, and reference list. The draft manuscript must be read and approved by your advisor and your area's Graduate Advisor by the last day of classes in the Fall Semester of your third year of graduate study.

When should I take the Qualifying Examination?

Third-year students *must* set a date for their exams *by the first day of instruction in the Spring Semester* of their 3rd year (Fall Semester of the fourth year for Clinical Science students), and that this exam *must* be completed no later than *the last day of regular classes that same semester*. If this is not accomplished, the area Graduate Advisor may assign a committee and a date for the examination. Students who do not appear for their orals will automatically fail.

There is a tendency among students to view the Qualifying Exam (QE) as some kind of make-or-break exercise, which you are not ready for unless you know everything. This is not true. If you have been paying attention in your proseminars and other basic courses, attending your area colloquia, and keeping up with your chosen field, the QE should present no problem. Do a good job, but do not obsess. Just do it.

What does the Qualifying Exam look like?

The QE consists of a written section and an oral section. The written section represents departmental policy, whereas the Graduate Division requires the oral section. The written section is usually completed a week prior to the oral portion.

The written portion of the QE can take many different forms. The default option is that students are examined on three discrete topics of their own choosing, in which case students are expected to prepare a reading list in each area, in consultation with the committee members. The written examination is followed by an oral examination, usually held one week after completing the written exam (10 days if the exam includes one or more papers in lieu of questions).

Can I write a review paper to substitute for the Qualifying Exam?

Departmental policy permits students to substitute papers for the examination questions normally included in the preliminary exam. Different areas permit different combinations of papers and questions, so the student should consult with the area Graduate Advisor. The advice from here is: Do only exam questions. If you do the three exam questions, your preliminary examination will be over in one day (plus half a day for the oral exam). However, if you write a paper in lieu of an exam question, that task will consume weeks and months of your time as you obsess over every piddling detail, and then assemble a reference list -- weeks and months that you could be devoting to your research program. Don't use any papers unless you have a really good reason.

How do I organize my Qualifying Exam?

The specific details of this depend a lot on the exact form that your QE will take. The following advice assumes that you're taking the default option of three questions:

1. In consultation with your advisor, identify three topics on which you wish to be examined. These should be reasonably broad swaths of material in your area of specialization.
2. Again in consultation with your advisor, identify at least three other people to serve on your four-person QE committee. One of these has to be from outside the Department (the Student Services Office has a list of eligible faculty) and a member of the UCB Academic Senate, the other three are normally from the Department. One trick is that the person who chairs your Qualifying Exam Committee *may not* also serve as chair of your Dissertation Committee. Because your advisor is the most likely chair of your dissertation committee, your advisor cannot chair your QE committee. So consult with your advisor to identify a person to serve as chair.
3. Go to the other faculty members, present them with your topics, and ask them to serve on your committee.
4. Once you've assembled your committee, you should consult with each member to develop lists of about 20-30 items, books, chapters, and papers, for each topic.
5. You should also consult with them to set a mutually agreeable date and time for the oral portion of the QE. The written QE will occur one week before the oral.
6. Once you've assembled your committee and set a tentative date and time, the Graduate Division must formally approve the QE committee the exam. To this end, the *Qualifying Examination Application Worksheet* needs to be completed and submitted to the Department's Graduate Student Services Advisor at least six weeks prior to the

scheduled oral exam. This form can be found on the Resources page on the Department's website: http://psychology.berkeley.edu/resources/resdir.html.

7. About a month prior to the date of the *written* portion of the QE, you should distribute final versions of your three reading lists to all committee members. It's also a good idea to provide them with some sample questions, so they will have a better idea of the scope and focus of your reading.
8. Your QE committee chair will then solicit questions from the other committee members, and assemble the exam.
9. About two weeks before the scheduled written part of your QE, check with your QE committee chair to make sure that everything is progressing on his or her end.
10. The precise procedure for the written portion of the QE depends on what you have arranged with your QE committee chair. Typically, it is a closed-book, closed-notes exam, though you may have access to your reading lists. You might have two hours per question, with an hour's break between questions, and another hour at the end to edit. Often, the exam is delivered by email, you sit for it wherever you like, and you deliver the exam to your committee (and a copy to the Student Services Office) the same way at the end of the day.
11. A week later, you meet with your committee for the oral portion of the exam. This meeting typically takes place in the Krech Room (4207 Tolman Hall). Again, the details of the procedure will vary, depending on the arrangements you have made with your QE committee chair. First thing, the committee will excuse you so that they can discuss your exam privately. When you come back into the room, there may be a "warm-up" in which you talk about yourself, your interests in psychology, and the research you're doing (sometimes this takes the form of a formal presentation). Then the committee asks questions and makes comments about your writings for the written exam. At some point, you'll be excused again so that the committee can deliberate privately. The exam may continue afterwards, or it may not. If the exam continues afterwards, that is not necessarily a bad sign: the committee may be having a good time. The oral part of the QE usually lasts two (2) hours to three (3) hours. At the end of the QE, the committee will inform you whether you have passed, and report the result to the Student Services Office, which will pass it on to the Graduate Division.

Can I take the QE over the summer?

Yes, if you can get your committee to agree to it, but don't depend on it. Students are discouraged from scheduling QE and dissertation committee meetings during the summer (June-August), because faculty members are under no obligation to attend summer meetings.

What should I expect in terms of the doctoral dissertation?

There is a tendency to view the doctoral dissertation as one's best work ever. It is not and should not be viewed that way. It is merely the final milestone on the way to the doctoral degree. It is different from the research you did before it in that it is, perhaps, somewhat more independent; and different from the research you will do after it in that no degree hangs in the balance. It is nice if doctoral dissertations are earth-shattering, but they hardly ever are. Ask your advisor about his or hers; then check with the rest of the faculty. See what I mean? The only necessary feature of the doctoral dissertation is that it be completed. Do a good job, but do not obsess. Just do it.

When do I defend my dissertation?

Amazingly, there is no oral defense of the doctoral dissertation at Berkeley. Once you have the approval of each member of your dissertation committee, as indicated by their signatures on the Approval Page; that is it. However, students in some areas are also encouraged to present their dissertation research at a formal colloquium sometime in their last year in residence. (This may, and probably should, take the form of a practice job talk.)

So how do I get approval of my dissertation from my committee?

Members of the dissertation committee must be given ample time to review the draft version, and the final version, before submission of the dissertation to the University. Therefore, do not plan to present your committee members with a *fait accompli* one day before the University's filing deadline for the degree. As a general rule, you work up the first few drafts in consultation with your advisor. Once the draft is pretty much in hand, give the rest of your committee members at least two (2) weeks to review the penultimate full draft, and at least another two (2) weeks to review the final version. Assuming that you will need at least two (2) weeks to consult with your advisor on changes in the initial draft, you should submit the first full draft of your dissertation to your committee members no later than six (6) weeks before the filing deadline for the degree. For your own protection, make sure that your committee members agree to review the draft, and the final version, within two weeks.

What happens if I do not fulfill a requirement by the deadline?

Do not be misled by advanced students who may tell you that the faculty do not take these deadlines seriously. We do. If they got away with something, that was then. This is now. Do not assume that you can take an extra year, or more, or even an extra semester, to reach some particular milestone. And do not assume that you can take the summer after the formal deadline to meet some requirement. Faculty may have other plans for their time. Failure to meet certain deadlines can result in probationary status, jeopardizing your ability to receive financial aid or even to register for the next semester.

How long will it take to complete my degree?

The Department considers the "normative time to degree" to be five years. The group of Departmental graduate students in their sixth year and beyond is very small, and the faculty is determined to tighten up even more in this respect.

See Specimen Program on Next Page

If your question is not answered here, or you need clarification,
ask the Graduate Student Services Advisor or the Head Graduate Advisor.
We'll get you an answer, and then post the information here as well.

Specimen Program

This specimen program does not include teaching experience as a GSI.

Year 1	
Fall	***Spring***
Proseminar 1	Proseminar 2
Statistics (205A)	Statistics (205B)
Professional Issues (292)	
Research (299)	Research (299)
Colloquium (2x9)	Colloquium (2x9)
Teaching Psychology (300)?	

Year 2	
Fall	***Spring***
Proseminar 3?	Proseminar 4?
Teaching Psychology (300)!	Professional Issues (293)
Other Course or Seminar	Other Course or Seminar
Research (299)	Research (299)
Colloquium (2x9)	Colloquium (2x9)
	2nd-Year Paper & Poster Presentation!

Year 3	
Fall	***Spring***
Other Course or Seminar	Other Course or Seminar
Research (299)	Research (299)
Colloquium (2x9)	Colloquium (2x9)
Qualifying Exam?	Qualifying Exam!
Assemble Dissertation Committee?	Assemble Dissertation Committee?
Dissertation Proposal Approved?	Advance to Candidacy?
	Dissertation Proposal Approved?

Year 4	
Fall	***Spring***
Research (299)	Research (299)
Colloquium (2x9)	Colloquium (2x9)
Assemble Dissertation Committee!	Dissertation Proposal Approved!
Dissertation Proposal Approved?	Dissertation Completed?
Advance to Candidacy!	Present Dissertation?

Year 5	
Fall	***Spring***
Research (299)	Research (299)
Colloquium (2x9)	Colloquium (2x9)
Dissertation Completed?	Dissertation Completed!
Present Dissertation?	Present Dissertation!